Procedures of power and school restructuring: A phenomenological study

Wayne Milford Youngward

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PROCEDURES OF POWER AND SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING: 
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

By

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Presented in Partial Fulfillment 
of the Requirements of the Degree of 

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2002

Approved by:

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Chairman, Dissertation Committee

Dean, Graduate School

Date

6-12-02

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This study, based on a phenomenological design, followed a small group of teachers in one high school as they attempted to implement a self-generated curricular reform, in order to discover what procedures of power—an analysis of the cluster of power relations among people—were at work in the group. Qualitative data was collected by interviews with the participants and others who impacted the reform attempt, by extensive observer's comments in the form of a journal, and by artifacts. Data was collected over a period of approximately one year; the bulk of the data was collected in the last six months, which represented the planning and pre-implementation phases of the project. The researcher was a part of the group attempting the reform, and so acted as a complete participant in the study.

Interviews and meetings of the group were tape-recorded, then transcribed. These transcriptions, along with the journal entries and the artifacts, were analysed, with some help from the participants, to find recurring themes. Circumstances beyond the control of this research prevented the participants from being fully involved in the analysis. There was, nevertheless, some involvement. Data was reported in detailed narrative form.

This study found that three theme groupings emerged from the data: (a) procedures of power that were negative, or impeded the group's efforts, (b) procedures of power that were positive, or aided the group's efforts, and (c) procedures of power that were ambivalent, that is, both aided and impeded the group's efforts. Negative procedures of power discovered were (a) destining the shape of the vision (trying to take command over the group's vision and replace it with another), (b) destining who gets resources, (c) the negative effect of educational jargon, and (d) the exigencies of the teaching profession. Positive procedures of power discovered were (a) destining the shape of a vision (using singlemindedness to prevent the vision from being taken over), (b) purposeful cooperation among members of the group, and (c) interpersonal care among members of the group. Ambivalent procedures of power involved (a) the number of people involved, both in the group and in the school, and (b) job action. This last procedure of power was outside the scope of the study, per se, but impacted the group and its efforts tremendously, nonetheless.

This study also found that the cohesiveness and collegiality of the subject group stemmed partly from its perception of an outside enemy. The culture of the group was in many ways defined by the tension between it and negative outside forces. Another finding was that contemporary theories about leadership practice and power held generally true, even at the very small scale of this group.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my chairman, Dr. John C. Lundt, for his guidance, his wisdom, and his unfailing patience through our journey of discovery in uncharted waters. I thank him also for his inspired teaching throughout my doctoral studies, and for the many ways he helped me clarify and achieve my objectives.

My heartfelt appreciation also goes to the members of my committee. To Dr. Roberta Evans, Interim Dean of Education: thank you for taking the time from your very busy schedule to help me. I appreciated your valuable input. Thanks also for all your work as my program advisor. To Dr. Dean Sorenson: thanks for your keen observations and suggestions, which immeasurably strengthened my work and added to its validity. To Dr. William McCaw: I am grateful for your valuable input to both the content and structure of the dissertation. And finally, to Dr. Gerry Evans: your perspective from outside The School of Education was very beneficial. I could not have wished for a more knowledgeable or supportive group from whom to learn.

To the teachers of “Black Rock High School”, and especially to Ms. B.—your patience with my endless questions, your unfailing co-operation, and your collegiality in the deepest sense of the word, made this study not only possible, but a joy. Mere words cannot express my gratitude.

Finally, to my wife, Susan, and my family, thanks for putting up with my endless typing, the stacks of books on the desk and the floor, and especially for putting up with my mind, which has been ‘otherwise occupied’ for so long. It’s been a long trip.
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Chapter One

Introduction

The Problem

"And schools are still like prisons, 'Cause we don't learn how to live…"
Arlo Guthrie, The Watergate Rag

If there is one consistent issue throughout recent educational history, it is how to change schools. For much of the twentieth century, this change effort was directed towards making schools more efficient, that is, better bureaucracies, but in “…the reform effort of the 1980s, the word restructuring quickly became the buzzword of the entire education establishment. Any change…became known as the school’s restructuring effort” (Short and Greer, 1997, p. 4). Short and Greer go on to define restructuring as changing the basic organizational structure of a school, and use such examples as the middle school, the ungraded primary classroom, and the school-within-a-school.

The forces that prompted those restructuring efforts abide: the problem is still, how can we change schools to best serve the needs of their stakeholders? This qualitative study, using a phenomenological approach, looks at a different kind of restructuring effort than the ones listed above, concentrating on one specific ad hoc group of teachers in one specific school, attempting one kind of restructuring. However, it looks at this restructuring not from the perspective of efficiency, effectiveness, alignment with learning theories, or any other educational question; important as they may be in their own right. Rather, this study asks questions about power. Where does the power to effect and sustain
school restructuring originate? Is it a single phenomenon or does it have multiple aspects? Are there conflicting and/or congruent kinds of power at work? What can thwart it? What role do various leadership designations (formal or contingent) have in the exercise of power? Are the concepts enough power or too much power meaningful and relevant to the issue of school restructuring? These are some of the questions that led to this study.

**Background Of This Restructuring Effort**

In 1999, the Department of Learning of the Province of Alberta announced a three-year funding program called the Alberta Improvement of Schools Initiative (AISI for short) that provided all jurisdictions with money aimed at locally initiated projects. School jurisdictions could choose the method by which this money was spent. Our local jurisdiction decided to hire two co-ordinators to oversee the disbursement of these funds. Groups of schools, schools, groups of teachers, and individual teachers were invited to submit proposals to access this money for any professional development activity designed to improve teaching and learning. An ad hoc group of four teachers at one high school, lead by a senior member of staff, developed a proposal based on designing and implementing integrated curricula for grade eight students. This proposal was discussed both formally at staff meetings, and informally among staff. It easily achieved the stated approval of the rest of the staff and the express approval of the building administration. The proposal was accepted for funding by the co-ordinators after a long process of negotiation that is described as part of this research.
Importance Of The Study To The Researcher

I have had a long and varied career in education, teaching many subject areas to a variety of age groups, in many different kinds of schools of varied sizes. I have also held a variety of administrative positions during that time. Along with the successes, naturally there have been many frustrations, as there would be in any career that is so dependent on interpersonal relationships. The greatest of these frustrations, however, had more to do with the nagging feeling that the 'mode of delivery' of schools was all wrong—that the whole concept of school as a place of transmission, to use Miller and Seller's (1990) term, contradicted what we knew about learning, the self, and democracy. Blades (1997) reports a similar feeling that originated, for him, with a fairly familiar student question.

It was, as I remember, a hot Friday afternoon. I was teaching a rather obscure concept in a senior chemistry class when Albert raised his hand. "Sir," he asked sincerely, "why are we learning this crap?" Phrased poorly, I had to admit it was a good question. I turned to the blackboard and stood facing the notes and diagrams I had so carefully crafted during the past fifteen minutes. Why were my students learning this, I wondered. I could honestly see no connection to their lives, no use, no real reason a student in high school should learn what I had been teaching. "I suppose..." I responded slowly, "so you can continue in your science classes at university." I could tell neither of us felt comfortable with the answer! The
lesson concluded and the students were dismissed, but Albert's question stayed after class. (p. 21)

Both the stated and the understood purpose of the schools in which I've taught was to 'transmit' needed knowledge and skills, as well as societal norms, mores, and expectations, to the students. For close to thirty-five years I've been very good at doing a task the value of which, at least at some level and at least to some degree, I, like Blades, have doubted. During all that time, however, the opportunity to break out of this mode has never been evident. I don't say that it hasn't existed, but I've never been aware of it. I've never seen the possibility of restructuring what I do without losing the principles that I want to conserve. The restructuring effort studied in this research may well be that opportunity. What puzzles me most, though, is why I, or any number of other educators, have failed to act on our frustrations in any consistent or effective way. Why have we been so powerless to change the way things are done? Thus, this study is conceived to help understand at a deeper level the procedures of power at work in schools that aid or thwart the efforts of building educators to shape and control their educational practices.

Importance Of The Subject Of The Study

Taken from its broadest perspective, research such as the one described here “…illuminates the process of schooling and opens it up to evaluation by all those concerned with education” (Burgess, 1985, p. 177). If this study does “illuminate” some of the processes of power at work in school restructuring efforts—or, for that matter, in any other aspect of school operation—then those
involved may gain some insight into their own or others’ behaviour. I believe that knowledge of behaviour is the first step in modifying it.

**Delimitations Of The Study**

This study is concerned solely with the way power, as defined in Chapter Three, affects the way one specific group of educators in one specific school setting has dealt with one school restructuring issue. Qualitative data such as interviews, observations, journals, and artifacts, was collected from this site and from these participants only.

The study is not concerned with the school restructuring effort *per se*, that is, its history, appropriateness, success, or effectiveness. Rather, the study is delimited to how one aspect of human interaction—power—with concomitant issues of leadership and followership, organizational structure, and bureaucracy, impacts this group of educators in their quest for change. Further, the study is delimited to the one-year-long initial planning and implementation phases of this restructuring effort. Data was collected from the very beginnings of the effort’s “life” until that phase was complete, at the end of January, 2002.

**Limitations Of The Study**

The purposive nature of the sample under study naturally limits the generalizability of the findings: the study is not necessarily generalizable to all school-based restructuring efforts, nor is it necessarily generalizable to the way power affects these efforts. It is hoped, however, that the examination in this study of the issues around the concept of power will add to the knowledge base,
and thereby assist teachers who are looking at ways to help them succeed in their plans for change.

Another way of looking at generalizability is offered by Stake (1980), who sees the value of a study deriving from its being “in harmony with the reader’s experience.” That is, the value of this research will be decided by the reader: do the findings match the reader’s experience and therefore speak to the issue? Or, perhaps, do the findings contradict the reader’s experience, and therefore raise other issues? Stake (1998) notes that “how we may learn from the singular case ultimately derives from how the case is like and not like other cases…” (p. 94).

As Lancy (1993) says, “this is comparable to the law where the applicability of a particular precedent case must be argued in each subsequent case. The reader must decide whether the findings apply or not.” (p. 165). Stake (1998) adds that “knowledge is socially constructed…and thus…researchers assist readers in the construction of knowledge.” (p. 95). Thus, even though this study’s findings may not be generalizable in the traditional concept of that term, the understandings gained through this study will help others in their quest for school restructuring and improvement.
Chapter Two
Review Of The Literature

Qualitative vs. Quantitative Research

The truths I am seeking are not singular, objective, nor quantifiable in the way normally understood by statisticians. They involve complex feelings and understandings rather than scores. The context of the research is as important (or perhaps even more important) as any other variable. The research is exploratory in that little similar work has been done; there is, therefore, no accepted theory base for the study. Thus, hypotheses for testing are difficult to postulate a priori. These hypotheses, rather, were allowed to emerge as part of the coding process of this study. Creswell (1994) identifies these conditions as possible reasons for selecting the qualitative paradigm, as I did here.

Power and its processes are aspects of everyday life in just about any social setting. However, as Erickson, Florio, and Buschman (1980) point out, the most obvious aspects of everyday life are not always apparent to those involved with them, as they become too used to these aspects happening around them. These aspects need to be rediscovered, and I believe that qualitative research such as participant observation can provide the concrete detail needed for this rediscovery.

This study is reported using the first person pronoun, which is controversial even in the qualitative paradigm. However, Creswell (1994) states that the "Rhetorical Assumption" for this paradigm is "informal" and involves a "personal voice" (p. 5). Bogdan and Biklen (1982) suggest that certain material,
such as narratives like this research, are "...not so distanced, and the writer not so hesitant to use ‘I’ (p. 181). The APA Publication Manual (2001) counsels the writer to use the first person to avoid the mistaken impression that the writer did not take part in his own study (pp. 37-38).

**Related Literature On Power**

The concept of power is, in one way or another, a fundamental force of social interaction, and has been defined throughout the ages in vastly different ways to fit different contexts. In the past, power was often expressed through political, cultural, and religious prescriptions and proscriptions (for example, the Old Testament books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy) as a means of controlling and directing a people. There are as many “thou musts” as “thou shalt nots” in such writings, and there are multiple and graphic examples of the consequences of non-compliance. Greek and Roman tragedies, medieval morality plays, Elizabethan tragedies and Jacobean revenge tragedies all provide examples of power, in a myriad of forms, as control over human activity—the audience is duly warned and chastened. From ancient time, writing, whether myth, religious symbolism, or history, is also filled with images of what it means to be powerful, to have dominance, to have the ability to change and shape the world—control of one’s destiny and that of others. (Lips, 1981; McClelland, 1975)

Lips (1981) outlines how psychology approaches the study of power on five different levels. First, power can be studied as “a quality that is attributed by one person to another”. That is, we view another person as being powerful for various reasons and to varying degrees. Second, power can be seen as a
“motivation to act”. That is, it is a basic but complex human need. Third, power is a “social influence process”; stated more simply, getting one’s own way. Fourth, power is a “trait or state of the individual”. This examines what it means to feel powerful or powerless. Fifth, power can be examined from the viewpoint of “social structure”. This examines how hierarchies and status levels work in societies or organizations. Lips then goes on to examine images of power in modern society, with particular emphasis on gender-differences in these images (p. 4).

Nyberg (1990) provides us with a brief survey of how power has been variously defined through the years. Some examples follow. Hobbes (1651/1968) thought that “The power of a man, (to take it universally), is his present means, to attain some future apparent good” (p. 150). Russell (1938) said that “Power may be defined as the production of intended effects” (p. 35). Lasswell and Kaplan (1950) believed that “Power is a special case of the exercise of influence: it is the process of affecting policies of others with the help of (actual or threatened) severe deprivations for nonconformity with the policies intended” (p. 76). May (1972) said that “Power is the ability to cause or prevent change” (p. 99).

Berle (1969) went further than definition, offering five “natural laws” of power:

(1) power invariably fills any vacuum in human organizations; (2) it is invariably personal; (3) it is always based on a system of ideas; (4) it is
exercised through institutions; (5) it is invariably confronted with a field of responsibility (p. 37).

Each of these theories is instructive, but is clear from these examples that no one definition or view of power exists. In fact, I almost get the feeling that I am encountering Humpty Dumpty in Alice Through The Looking Glass, for whom words could have any meaning he chose. Lukes (1974) tried to bring order to the competing views of power by organizing them into three categories—the one-dimensional view, the two-dimensional view, and the three-dimensional view.

The one-dimensional view is represented by Dahl (1957), who wrote, “My intuitive idea of power is something like this: A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do” (p. 202). Power is one-dimensional in that it is the influence that one person has over another in a field of conflicting interests. As Weber put it (cited by Lukes, 1974), power is “the probability of individuals realizing their wills despite the resistance of others” (p. 20).

The two-dimensional view goes one step further: it defines power not only by the issues and participants who are involved, but also by the issues or participants who are excluded or suppressed. That is, it studies not only who has power in any conflict, but also who is powerless. (Gaventa, 1980)

According to Lukes, (1974) the three-dimensional view has the proposition that “A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B’s interests” (p. 34). The difference in this view is that there may not necessarily be any overt conflict involved in the actions of A or B, but rather they might be the
result of historical patterns, complex social forces, or institutional practice. Nyberg (1990) claims that “Basic to all view of power is bringing about consequences, usually but not necessarily of some significance, by some agent—which could be a person, a class or group, or a system” (p. 51).

The foregoing is a brief survey of power in general terms. Leadership studies have often looked at power in a much more specific way. Seminal research on the sources of power held by individuals in organizations was done by French and Raven (1968). They delineate five sources of power held by the individual, as shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of power</th>
<th>Based on</th>
<th>Others comply because</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legitimate</td>
<td>a person holding a formal position</td>
<td>they accept the legitimacy of the position of the power holder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward</td>
<td>a person's access to rewards</td>
<td>they want the rewards the power holder can offer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coercive</td>
<td>a person's ability to punish</td>
<td>they fear punishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>a person's expertise, competence, and information in a certain area</td>
<td>they believe in the power holder's knowledge and competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referent</td>
<td>a person's attractiveness to and friendship with others</td>
<td>they respect and like the power-holder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: French and Raven (1968)*

An individual has access to the first three of these sources of power because of the position that that individual holds (Davis, Schoorman, and Donaldson, 1997). If the position or title is taken away, legitimate power no longer exists. Reward power and coercive power are similarly based on the position or title that grants legitimate power. In organizations, individuals having legitimate power often have
access to the resources to reward, and to the ability to punish. If these resources and abilities are lost, so is the power held by anyone relying on them. The reaction of followers to those who wield these types of power is most commonly resistance or grudging compliance. (Nahavandi, 2000)

Expert power and referent power do not derive from an organization or title, but are personal (Davis, Schoorman, and Donaldson, 1997). Nahavandi (2000) notes that “In the case of expert power, a person has influence over others because he or she has special expertise, knowledge, information, or skills that others need. People will listen to the experts, follow their advice, and accept their recommendations” (p. 81). An individual may hold considerable expert power even if that individual does not have a formal title or any legitimate power. It is common for people to ignore formal lines of authority in order to access needed information or skills from peers or subordinates, thus vesting power in those with this expertise. A good example is the young and inexperienced computer expert. Much more senior and experienced employees in an organization who are, nevertheless, not computer-literate, will defer to that person's expertise. (Nahavandi, 2000)

Similarly, referent power is personal, and is a result of being liked and respected by others in the organization. As with expert power, it is not a function of any title or position, but of personal attributes. The person with referent power is a role model for others in the organization. Nahavandi (2000) notes that whereas the three types of position power tend to engender resistance or compliance, the two types of personal power tend to engender commitment and
acceptance. This derives from the fact that followers welcome and even seek out the influence process with these two types of power. Yukl and Falbe (1991) found that the use of expert and referent power leads to higher follower satisfaction and performance.

Another seminal study in this area was done by Yukl (1989), whose conclusions were similar to French and Raven's. Yukl divided the sources of power in organizations into three types, Position Power, Personal Power, and Political Power. The first, Position Power, has five aspects, the first three of which match French and Raven exactly. There is formal authority (French and Raven's Legitimate Power), control over resources and rewards (French and Raven's Reward Power), and control over punishments (French and Raven's Coercive Power). Yukl also adds two other aspects to this type of power, control over information (which French and Raven would class partly as Expert Power), and ecological control, an overarching control over the working environment.

Yukl's second type of power is Personal Power, which has three aspects, expertise, friendship and loyalty, and charisma. The first aspect matches French and Raven's Expert Power, and the second two would be classed as Referent Power by French and Raven. Where Yukl differs most from French and Raven is in the third type, Political Power. Here, Yukl separates from either Personal or Position Power such aspects of power as control over decision processes, ability to form and change coalitions with other power entities, ability to co-opt other power entities, and the ability to use the bureaucratic, hierarchical, and structural aspects of the institution. Despite minor differences in organization, Yukl and
French and Raven are in essential agreement about the sources of power in organizations.

The use of one or more of the five types of power outlined by French and Raven (1968) to influence others in an organization has also been researched (Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson, 1980; Yukl and Falbe, 1990; Yukl and Falbe, 1991). Nahavandi (2000) provides a synthesis of this research in the following table, which shows influence tactics and their consequences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence Tactic</th>
<th>Power Source</th>
<th>Appropriate to use with</th>
<th>Effectiveness and Commitment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rational persuasion</td>
<td>Expert and access to information</td>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational appeal</td>
<td>Referent</td>
<td>Subordinates and colleagues</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Subordinates and colleagues</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingratiation</td>
<td>Referent</td>
<td>All levels</td>
<td>moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal appeal</td>
<td>Referent</td>
<td>Colleagues</td>
<td>moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange</td>
<td>Reward and information</td>
<td>Subordinates and colleagues</td>
<td>moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalition building</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Subordinates and colleagues</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legitimate tactics</td>
<td>Legitimate</td>
<td>Subordinates and colleagues</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure</td>
<td>Coercive</td>
<td>Subordinates</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Nahavandi (2000)*

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The table illustrates how each influence tactic relies on one or more source of power, and is appropriate to use with different hierarchical levels. Each tactic tends to lead to a particular level of commitment on the part of the person(s) influenced by the tactic.

How the use of power changes through a leader’s career has been researched by Kotter (1985). Kotter found that the leader, early in his or her career, has to establish an adequate base of power through personal power—expert and referent. Credibility can be established by gathering information and developing expertise, as well as deliberately becoming visible in the organization. Referent power can be established by developing a broad base of interpersonal relationships. In mid-career, a leader can use this personal power, in the form of credibility, competence, and loyalty by colleagues, to develop legitimate power as indicated by formal titles. The leader has to ensure that his or her accumulated power is used wisely and ethically for positive personal and organizational goals. (Kotter, 1985; Nahavanni, 2000)

The relationship between power and leadership in organizations runs the gamut from what many would consider sinister to the determinedly humanistic. Korda (1976) provides an example of the sinister: “All life is a game of power. The object of the game is simple enough: to know what you want and get it” (p. 11). Bennis and Nanus (1985) provide an example of the humanistic: “Power (is) the basic energy to initiate and sustain action translating intention into reality,” particularly when people try to work collaboratively. (p. 15) The ambivalent way many theorists and writers view power in organizational terms is summarized by
Zaleznik and Kets de Vries (1975): on the one hand, “Power is an ugly word. It connotes dominance and submission, control and acquiescence, one man’s will at the expense of another man’s self-esteem.” However, “…power, the ability to control and influence others...provides the basis for the direction of organizations and for the attainment of social goals.” (p. 3).

The concept of power is widely studied in terms of leadership in business and industry, but it is a common topic in educational research as well—for example, there are over thirty thousand entries in the ERIC database under that descriptor. Just as the term has been used in so many ways throughout history, and means so many different things in so many different contexts, so also is it used in relation to education—so much so as to make that number of ERIC citations inconsequential. Recent seminal theories and studies, such as the ones cited below, relating power to educational leadership, usually in the realm of change-agency, have concentrated on a specific aspect of power—the concept of empowerment of followers and colleagues by leaders. There is a high degree of agreement among researchers into effective leadership, cited below, that the key element is the quality of human relationships. Bennis (1989) talks about leaders being guides, and that there must be mutual trust between leaders and followers. To Bennis, leaders use power wisely, in order to change what someone wants to happen into something that does happen. Blanchard and Johnson (1982) talk about empowerment turning followers into leaders, giving people the ways and means by which they can do their jobs. Covey (1989) talks in terms of win/win situations, defined as “a frame of mind and heart that
constantly seeks mutual benefit in all human interactions” which lead to transformational leadership, where the individuals involved as well as their interrelationships are changed. (p. 207) This term also used by Burns (1978), Bass (1985), and Yukl (1989). Fullan (1991, 1993) advocates evolutionary planning and consensus building, and building collaborative work cultures. Wilkins, in *Developing Corporate Character* (1989) talks about negotiating a shared vision. Blanchard and O’Connor (1997) advocate *Managing By Values*. These are just different facets of the same observation—that leaders lead when they have a genuine mutual relationship with followers, built on trust and integrity.

Another aspect involving leadership and change-agency is recognized by Marris (1974)—any change will lead to conflict. This conflict stems from the feeling of those who have to undergo or implement the changes that they are losing something familiar and safe. Thus there is a need for followers to find their own meaning in changes before they can live with them; if they cannot come to terms with the changes, they are likely to subvert them. According to Marris, leaders have to recognize that resistance to change is natural and expected, but quality relationships where that resistance is valued and respected will help to overcome its negative effects.

Organizations become successful, says Wheatley (1999), to the extent that they operate with a clear understanding of who they are—in other words, with a vision. Implementation of vision does not happen without the energy of leadership (Deal and Bolman, 1984). However, a number of researchers (Fullan, 1992; Wilkins, 1989) warn that just like any innovation that cannot be imposed
top-down, vision has to be the developed, shared, vision of everyone involved in
the process. Wheatley maintains that it is the leader's task to embody the
principles of the organization, then help the organization to also embody those
principles, to live by the values. The leader has to have faith that the organization
has the resources to solve its own problems, but the leader also has to recognize
that change will occur in an organization only if the members see that change as
a means of preserving itself. The leader therefore has to be able to discover what
is meaningful to the members. (Wheatley, 1999)

All of these leader-tasks in the post-modern era can be summed up by
Wheatley's advice: learn to live in a process world. Leaders cannot lead through
change if they cannot live through change. And, the posture they adopt must be
as a member of a community of networked workers. This vision of the power of
leadership, especially leadership for change, is radically different than the logical
and bureaucratic illusions outlined by Goens (2000). Goens's first illusion is that
the world is "a logical place that succumbs to the power of logic" (p. 30). Chin
and Benne (1976) call this the empirical-rational approach to effecting change. In
this approach, the assumption is made that people "...will follow their rational
self-interest once this is revealed to them" (p. 23). So, if a change is proposed
which is "...desirable, effective, and in line with (their) self-interest," they should
adopt that change (p. 23). Theorists like Wheatley (1999), however, show the
world to be illogical and chaotic. Also, for Rothstein (1996) to be able to conclude
that "schools still base their practices on ideas that were popular more than a
hundred years ago" (p. 173), that approach cannot have been very successful,
given the uncountable numbers of reform attempts that continue to be made in schools. Rothstein sums up the problem with the empirical-rational approach very simply: "It is easier to talk about the problems of schools than to solve them" (p. 172).

Goens's (2000) second illusion is that "leaders control and make things happen" (p. 30). Chin and Benne (1976) refer to this as a "power-coercive approach to effecting change" (p. 39). However, Fullan's (1993) very first 'lesson' in his "Eight Lessons of Change" is that "you can't mandate what matters" (p. 125). The modern leadership concept sketched above shows that collaboration and vision do that. Goens concludes that "force moves people but it does not motivate them. Power can cause people to do things but it controls them only as long as the force continues" (p. 31).

Goens's third illusion is that "important things can be quantified, measured or benchmarked" (p. 31). Much of what current leadership theory deals with is the intangible "richness and poetry of human spirit, imagination and heart that lifts people to great heights" (p. 31). The fourth illusion is that "power is finite and should be hoarded" (p. 31). At the center of current theory is the concept of collaboration and empowering of others. The fifth illusion is that "structure concerns roles, role expectations and organizational charts" (p. 31). Modern writers stress values, ethics, beliefs and principles. Goens's last illusion is that "risk taking concerns decisions about programs, money or political strategy" (p. 32). Goens echoes writers such as Covey (1989) when he says that "leaders take the true risk to be their real selves" (p. 32).
How important this new attitude is, and these inter-relationships are, is summed up by Wheatley (1999):

Many writers have offered new images of effective leaders. Each of them is trying to create imagery for the new relationships that are required, the new sensitivities needed to honor and elicit worker contributions. Here is a very partial list of new metaphors to describe leaders: gardeners, midwives, stewards, missionaries, facilitators, convenors. Although each takes a slightly different approach, they all name a new posture for leaders, a stance that relies on new relationships with their networks of employees, stakeholders, and communities. No one can hope to lead any organization by standing outside or ignoring the web of relationships through which all work is accomplished. Leaders are being called to step forward as helpmates, supported by our willingness to have them lead us. Is this a fad? Or is it the web of life insisting that leaders join in with appropriate humility? (p. 165)

Research Directly Related To This Study

Despite the wealth of literature involving power, there have been relatively few attempts to examine the power relationship (as defined in Chapter Three) in a curriculum- or school-restructuring context. One such attempt (Blades, 1997) concentrated on how aspects of power dominated and changed (Blades would claim, subverted) a provincial institution of an STS-style (Science-Technology-Society) curriculum for secondary students in public schools. Blades was a participant-observer in that, as a graduate student at the University of Alberta, he
was invited to contribute to the writing of the curricular documents and the student resource. He was also able to directly observe many of the aspects of the process of developing this curriculum, had access to documents and other artifacts, and was able to interview many other participants.

Blades codified his discoveries (data) in two main ways (using the term ‘destining’ as the modernist concept of enframing, or as Heidegger (1977) would say in German, *Gestelle*), as “destining who can speak in a curriculum discourse” (p. 134) and “destining what can be said in a curriculum discourse” (p. 150). Under the main code “who can speak”, he sub-codified “the modification and legitimization of hierarchies (p. 134), “bureaucratization” (p. 136), “silence” (p. 137), “active marginalization” (p. 139), “voices without a voice” (p. 140), “personal invasion” (p. 141), “the voice of critics (p. 143), and “the strategy of consultation” (p. 145). Under the main code “what can be said”, he sub-codified “the production of knowledge” (p. 150) and “the production of truth” (p. 155).

Blades used these codes to organize his investigation into how the whole process unfolded as it did: who did what to whom, and when. Blades’s discoveries seem on the surface bleak and hopeless, almost nihilist: procedures of power were used (mis-used?) by some of the participants to prevent a substantial curriculum change from occurring, and the status-quu was maintained. However, Blades concludes that the act of investigation itself, his research act, was a struggle against procedures of power and thus a procedure of power in and of itself. Using a phrase from Leonard Cohen’s song *Anthem*.

> Ring the bells that still can ring.
> Forget your perfect offering.
There is a crack in everything. 
That's how the light gets in.

Blades concludes that

By a constant trachealization of power where it exists the cracks in enframing (Ge-stell) appear, and that's how the light gets in. Thus illuminated, we can begin to see our way out of the darkness, from the modern to the post-modern. (p. 218)

In other words, Blades is claiming that, despite the fact that his research concentrated on one very specific situation that was inherently non-generalizeable, his research was illuminating important aspects of the way humans interact in relationships of power.

Phenomenology

Blades (1997) was attempting to understand at a deep level the workings of power as a phenomenon amongst all those involved with the attempted curricular change described above. Although his research was conceived originally as a case study, Blades recognized the inherent limitations in such an approach where the subject is human relations, not a problem to be solved. Marcel (1971) notes that problems can often be studied objectively in order to achieve a definite result, but such methods cannot be successfully applied where an understanding of the lived feelings of those involved is crucial. Marcel calls such a situation a mystery. Blades chose to organize his findings as a journey-narrative towards such a mystery. As Blades says, "...story telling is more than entertainment but an invitation to reflect together through the communion of story so that our shared wisdom might reveal possibilities otherwise covered by the
business of living” (p. 7). Following Blades's example, a phenomenology in narrative form, then, attempts more than just a reporting of the phenomenon under study. It is a way of attempting to understand on a deeper level what happens among those who are involved in a specific life situation.

Although some of the recent theorizing about power and leadership attempts to approach them as intangible phenomena (for example, Wheatley, 1999), power is most often seen as the way by which 'things get done'. There may have been a quantum shift from bureaucratic managing techniques to humanistic and value-based collaboration, but the essence of an objective getting things done abides. On the other hand, phenomenology attempts to understand the essence of experiences about a phenomenon, and the meaning this phenomenon holds for individuals (Creswell, 1994). Van Manen (1990) points out that

Phenomenology asks, 'What is this or that kind of experience like?' It differs from almost every other science in that it attempts to gain insightful descriptions of the way we experience the world pre-reflectively, without taxonomizing, classifying, or abstracting it. (p. 9)

A phenomenological approach to power, then, would go beyond a concept of power as a 'thing' or a 'method'. Rather, as Bruyn (1966) shows, it would attempt to enter the field of perception of those involved in the situation being studied, to understand how power works in those people's lives, as they see and understand it.
Chapter Three
Methodology And Procedure

Definition Of Power

Since this study is centrally concerned with the concept and uses of power, that term needs to be carefully defined both in general terms and in the specific ways it is used here. As the previous chapter shows, the word means many different things in many different contexts, but I shall concentrate on how it is used only in the interpersonal sense. Nyberg (1990) outlines the historical uses of the term in the social sciences, outlines its common core, and proposes a theory of power for education. Nyberg's theory includes the proposition that "whenever at least two people are related in some way relevant to at least one intended action, power is present as a facet of that relationship" (p. 52) and defines power from three aspects—social, psychological, and instrumental.

The social aspect of power, according to Nyberg, derives from the fact that power exists "whenever at least two people are related through a plan for action" (p. 52). Nyberg concludes that where there is organization, there is power also; where there is power, there is also organization. Power is always social because it always involves two or more people who are related formally or informally to a plan, probably in some kind of hierarchical organization that involves some kind of delegation by the planner. (p. 52)

For Nyberg, the psychological aspect of power involves two parts: the first is a plan (an intention and an idea of how to carry it out); the second is consent by
those involved (p. 53). The instrumental aspect involves the "effects and consequences brought about through intentional concerted efforts" (p. 54).

Nyberg, in these definitions and explanations, comes close to the definition of power I use in this research. I certainly agree with his assertion that "where there is organization, there is power also" (p. 52). However, he then goes on to categorize forms of power, and define authority, empowerment and co-operation in light of those categories. This reification of power, while it does make analysis "cleaner," falls into the trap of modernity. That is, it "enframes" (to use Heidegger's (1977) term; in German, Ge-stell.) power in a fixed technical definition that narrows and focuses in such a way that may eliminate possibilities for understanding. Instead, I rely on Foucault's (1978) conceptualization of power as dynamic rather than fixed: "power is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away" (p. 94). Rather, "power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere (p. 93). Foucault states his concept of power clearly in Power/Knowledge (1980):

Power in the substantive sense, 'le' pouvoir, doesn't exist. What I mean is this. The idea that there is located at—or emanating from—a given point something which is a 'power' seems to me to be based on a misguided analysis, one which at all events fails to account for a considerable number of phenomena. In reality power means relations, a more-or-less organized, hierarchical, co-ordinated cluster of relations. So the problem is not that of constituting a theory of power... ...the only problem is to
provide oneself with a grid of analysis which makes possible an analytic of relations of power. (p. 198-199)

Now, Foucault’s writings about power concern a ‘scale’ manifestly different than the one under discussion in this research. His subjects were as disparate as crime, punishment, and prison structures, the control of sexuality, the concepts of sanity/insanity, medical practices, and language itself. Despite the breathtaking breadth and depth of his scholarship, he always centered on one concern—“...how to study human beings and what one learns from such study” (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p. xiii). Power in human relationships is at the core of Foucault’s work, regardless of the topic.

Carspecken (1996) holds a view similar to Foucault’s, and advocates that any qualitative research take into account that

All acts are acts of power but acts vary in terms of how powerful they are.

Interactive power relations occur when actors are differentiated in terms of who has most say in determining the course of an interaction and whose definition of the interactive setting holds sway. Interactive power is greatest when differentiations of this type are determined without equal communicative inputs from all people involved. (p. 129)

Carspecken suggests a typology of interactive power relations that has as its source the work of Weber (1978). Carspecken’s typology has four components:

- **Normative power**: subordinate consents to higher social position of superordinate because of cultural norms
• **Coercive power:** subordinate acts to avoid sanctions imposed by superordinate

• **Interactively established contracts:** subordinate acts for return of favors or rewards from superordinate

• **Charm:** subordinate acts out of loyalty to the superordinate because of the latter's personality (p. 130)

By itself, this typology does not differ substantively from the seminal power studies cited in this research, but Carspecken advocates its use "in conjunction with attention to the cultural milieu." That is, "every interaction that in some way fits within the typology...will do so because of cultural themes drawn upon by actors" (p. 131). Carspecken indicates that research dealing with power relations must take into account the culture in which these relations occur: thus, research into the power relations affecting an attempt at curricular change in a school must describe and take into account the milieu of the school.

Blades (1997) adopts Foucault's term *procedures of power* in his case study, as I do here. Instead of trying to tightly define power as a 'thing', I see power as Deleuze (1988) defines it: a "relation between forces" (p. 70). Deleuze suggests that "we should not ask: 'What is power and where does it come from?', but 'How is it practiced?'" (p. 71). I have taken his suggestion, and concentrate on observing, reporting on, and attempting to understand in a deep sense how power is practiced in this situation under study. In other words, I concentrate on the procedures of power.
Grand Tour Question And Subquestions

The overarching question this study seeks to examine, following the pattern set by Foucault (1980) and Deleuze (1988), is how power affects the participants in a school restructuring effort, that is, what are the processes of power in this setting? The literature on power, leadership, and change suggest a number of sub-questions. Foucault, in the essay collection Power/Knowledge (1980), makes it clear that in any situation such as the one investigated in this research, we need to ask

- Where do procedures of power originate?
- What procedures of power are at work?
- What are the relationships between power and knowledge?

The seminal works on power and leadership in organizations by French and Raven (1968) and Yukl (1989) suggest that we ask

- How do the procedures of power at work relate to the kinds of power that are present?
- What determines leadership in the context of the restructuring effort?

Blades's (1997) research illustrates a specific example of how procedures of power derailed an effort at substantial change in curriculum practice. This suggests that research such as the one described here ask

- How does power and procedures of power support and/or thwart the efforts of a group attempting a change?
- Can force or procedures of power be consciously or unconsciously resisted by a group attempting a change?
Finally, as a way of investigating a synthesis, a contrast, or a relationship among the traditional views of power and leadership, such as those of French and Raven or Yukl, the more humanistic or naturalistic views such as those of Bennis and Nanus or Wheatley, and the power-as-function theories of Foucault, we can ask

- What is the relationship between leadership, power, and procedures of power?

These subquestions were used in the analysis of the data, in order to uncover the themes involving procedures of power among the participants.

Site And Subject Selection

The site reported in this study was chosen for a number of reasons. First, there was a small ad hoc group of teachers who had been contemplating, then beginning the planning of a major restructuring effort for at least a year. The project had just entered the 'serious' stage at the beginning of the research. I am a member of that group. Second, the members (and a number of external stakeholders) were all more than willing to have research conducted involving them and their efforts. Third, the restructuring efforts involved a number of bureaucratic 'layers' and inter-relationships, allowing the research to delve into the processes among them.

Entry To The Site

Lofland and Lofland (1984) advise the qualitative researcher to “...wherever possible...try to use preexisting relations of trust to remove barriers to entrance” to the research site (p. 25). I have taken their advice. I have worked
with many of the participants for about ten years, and over that time I have built up a positive collegial relationship with them, including mutual trust. I know them to be caring, dedicated professionals, who would be interested in any findings. Also, as I am not researching the restructuring project itself, but rather what would seem to many to be the periphery of it, my observational activities have posed no overt or obvious threat.

Informal consent was obtained from all involved before any research began. Formal informed consent agreements have been entered into as well. In these agreements, I guaranteed a number of safeguards. First, the school is identified by the pseudonym ‘Black Rock High School’, and all participants are identified by initials that do not necessarily correspond to their names. Second, I afforded each contributor the opportunity to participate in the interpretation of the data if they so desired. This atmosphere of trust was essential so that deep feelings could be honestly expressed.

Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected in three main forms: observational notes, artifacts, and interviews. Field notes were taken during each interaction among the participants in the ad hoc group, and between the group and other stakeholders. Artifacts, including but not limited to written communication and documents, were collected. As well, all of the participants were interviewed both in lengthy, formal interview settings, and in casual conversations. All formal interviews were tape recorded with the interviewee’s permission, and the recordings were transcribed. As I am a participant in the group as well as the observer, I, in effect, interviewed
myself, by keeping a running journal. This journal had the dual purpose of
demonstrating my own biases in the interactions described in this research, and
also acting as a method of collecting "observer's comments."

**Participant Observation vs. Participatory Observation**

Stake (1998) makes it clear that a study such as the one described here
can never be purely objective, regardless of how 'detached' an observer is (or
claims to be) from the site itself:

> In private and personal ways, ideas are structured, highlighted,
subordinated, connected, embedded in contexts, embedded with
illustration, laced with favor and doubt. However moved to share ideas,
however clever and elaborated their writings, case researchers, as others,
pass along to readers some of their personal meanings of events and
relationships—and fail to pass along others. They know that the reader too
will add and subtract, invent and shape—reconstructing the knowledge in
ways that leave it differently connected and more likely to be personally
useful. (p. 95)

This process of addition and subtraction, invention and shaping makes any
claims of 'objectivity' rather hollow. This begs the question of how important the
detachment of the observer is. Junker (1960) divided the research into a
continuum of four types: complete observer, observer as participant, participant
as observer, and complete participant. The problem, of course, in linking the
words "participant" and "observer" is that they are by nature opposites—to be a
participant means to be involved with the subjects of the research on a variety of
levels and in a variety of ways; to be an observer suggests detachment, which in turn suggests not having sufficient involvement to truly understand the culture being studied. I became here what Junker calls a “complete participant”, or what Jorgensen (1989) terms “becoming the phenomenon.” Dewalt and Dewalt (1998) caution that there may be 'limits to participation'—involving oneself in activities that are illegal, dangerous, or immoral are questionable, and researcher bias has to be carefully examined. Despite this, Jorgensen recommends the practice of “becoming the phenomenon”, if it is possible to do so, because it...is a participant observational strategy for penetrating to and gaining direct experience of a form of human life. It is an objective approach insofar as it results in the accurate, detailed description of the insiders’ experience of life. In carrying out this strategy, it is important that the researcher be able to switch back and forth between the insiders’ perspective and an analytic framework...Like all scientific findings, the results of participant observation are open to public, peer review. Participant observation, unlike many approaches, requires that the researcher carefully and very specifically describe how methods of investigation were used to produce particular results. (p. 65)

Reason (1998) uses a different typology of participative inquiry, dividing the field into co-operative inquiry, participatory action research, and action inquiry. The second and third of this typology are mainly concerned with transformation—the doing as much as the knowing. Co-operative inquiry is different from the proposed research in one important way: “…all those involved...
in the research are both co-researchers, whose thinking and decision making contribute to generating ideas, designing and managing the project, and drawing conclusions from the experience, and also co-subjects, participating in the activity being researched" (p. 264). In this research, we are all co-subjects, and all were involved in the research in fundamental ways, but the bulk of research tasks themselves was carried out by only one member. Even so, Reason is aware that in co-operative inquiry, it “…does not necessarily mean that all those involved in the inquiry enterprise contribute in identical ways” (p. 264). Reason sees no problem if “one or more members…have initiated the inquiry…(and)…may act as facilitators of the inquiry process” (p. 265), which is essentially what happened here.

Ball (1997), in a synthesis of theoretical positions regarding complete participation in research by the researcher, notes that “There is no fixed protocol for the conduct of participant observation or the parameters of the research role” (p. 311). Rather, there is a “best compromise between an ideal and practical self-as-researcher” (p. 311). However, “The conduct of the research must be organized and the researcher role of the fieldworker must be constructed in ways which are acceptable and workable to the actors in the field and the constraints of the setting itself” (p. 311). This research was designed to satisfy these parameters. Other researchers (Wolcott, 1975; Gold, 1969; Schwartz and Schwartz, 1969; Jones, 1985), while cautioning about the issues referred to above, see the complete participant methods as having definite benefits, not the
least of which is the possibility of a more intimate understanding of the situation under study.

The question also has to be asked if the process of being observed and deliberately studied changed the nature of the interactions among the participants, much in the way of the famous Hawthorne effect. Mayo (1945) found in his landmark study that worker production in a factory improved, not because of any of the treatments provided by the social scientists, but because the workers were afforded an unprecedented level of attention during the study. I considered this question during the planning for this research, and decided it would not be a factor for a number of reasons. First, my history of familiarity and collegiality with the participants makes any level-of-attention changes miniscule. I am not someone coming in “from the outside” to either impress or shy away from. Second, the participants are well-educated professionals who are used to being in the public eye, not only from students and their parents, from Central Office personnel, and from the Department of Learning, but also from the general public’s interest in what happens in public schools. Public school teachers today feel no lack of attention. Third, I am not providing any ‘treatment’ or intervention; I am merely observing. Even the interview situation is made less attention-getting because we (both members of the ad hoc group and the staff in general) tend to have extended discussions about all manner of professional and inter-personal subjects. The data gathering here is just a variation of something they are used to. I therefore felt that the Hawthorne effect would be inconsequential here.
Data Analysis Procedures

According to Blades, “…research is not a smooth process leading to a product that can be presented, but an on-going invitation to critique, an opportunity to crack open the destining of technicality.” (p. 97). This “critique” occurred as part of the coding process.

Coding of data began during the collection phase. Coding categories emerged as data was collected and thus modified the direction, but initial categories concentrated on (as suggested by Bogdan and Biklin, 1992)

1. Perspectives held by participants towards aspects of power
2. Changes over time of the relationship between participants, involving power
3. Participants’ ways of thinking about people and objects
4. Participants’ strategies of dealing with aspects of power
5. Types/manifestations of power, perhaps including relative ‘strengths’

Data is presented in a richly-detailed narrative form that shows how the themes of processes of power emerged during the studied phase of the restructuring project.

Methods For Verification

Verification—assuring validity—of qualitative data is unquestionably difficult, and has led to charges that it is not based in any objective reality (Rist, 1980; Noblit and Pink, 1987). However, the seeming validity of quantitative data resides in the fact that this data can be more easily isolated into discrete, ‘measurable’ bits (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Verification in this study derives from a number of things: first, the fieldnotes, interviews, and artifacts are reproduced
in the study. The reader can then judge both the quality of interpretation and the richness of the data. Second, the original research plan called for every interpretation or coding to be verified with those involved in it. They were to be asked if the interpretations match their understandings of the events and conversations. They were also to be asked to suggest codings and interpretations. Dissentions or points of clarification were to be included in the interpretation. As an overarching method of verification, drafts of the research writings were to be available for participants to respond to. Because of circumstances beyond the control of this research, this set of verification techniques was not able to be completed, for reasons explained in Chapter Four. Some informal verification was done through conversations with some participants, however, and some codings and interpretations were suggested in this way as well.

These methods are not meant as an attempt to objectify the reality being studied; rather, they are what Reason and Rowan (quoted in Reason, 1998) call "critical subjectivity." To them,

Critical subjectivity means that we do not suppress our primary subjective experience, that we accept that our knowing is from a perspective; it also means that we are aware of that perspective and of its bias, and we articulate it in our communications. (authors' emphases) (p. 267)

Validity, then, is the result of "the high-quality, critical, self-aware, discriminating, and informed judgments" (Reason, 1998, p. 267) that are presented in the research.
The Study

With the participant agreements in place and the parameters of the study set, the research began at the beginning of 2001 with research into the literature, informal discussions with colleagues, observations of the site, journal writing, and background writing. The research entered a more active phase in September, 2001, when formal interviews began with all participants, and where coding feedback was sought on an ongoing basis. The following chapter is in two sections. The first gives a context to the study by providing a brief description of the milieu in which the school is set. The second presents the findings, coded with some assistance of the participants.
Chapter Four

Findings

Introduction

If phenomenology attempts to discover, as Van Manen (1990) says, "what is this or that kind of experience like?" (p. 9), then that experience must be investigated from every possible perspective. The experience investigated by this research involves what it is like to be High School teachers in a specific school in a specific town, trying to effect a specific change. It is necessary to provide as much context as possible so that this experience is manifest. There are three contexts that deeply affect the experience: (a) the town in which the school is set, (b) the cultural milieu of the school itself, and (c) the unique nature of the staff of that school. The following background sections are offered to allow the reader to better understand the world in which the research occurred.

Background—A Place Called Black Rock

For anonymity purposes, the town in which the school is located, and the school itself, have been called “Black Rock.” The Town of Black Rock is what many would call a bedroom suburb: only 10 km from the downtown core of its neighbouring city, it has virtually no industry besides a small woodworking shop and a cement unloading facility on the rail line that skirts the town. It has very limited shopping—just a single gas station, a restaurant, a bar/liquor store, and a snack bar. Like most semi-rural areas, mail is not delivered door-to-door but has to be picked up at the Post Office. A main irrigation canal bisects the town. The one thing separating Black Rock from scores of similar bedroom suburbs clinging
to the skirts of prairie cities is a large, brick red mound of rubble occupying a five-acre site on the east side of town.

Ms. B., in her research into the area's history, uncovered some interesting information, and I am indebted to her for sharing it with me. Most of the detail that follows in this section is from her research into public records. Black Rock reached its heyday in the 1930s when it was a prosperous coal-mining town with a full range of stores and services, including regular, frequent passenger train service to its large, modern station. That all ended on December 9, 1935 with a mine disaster—a firedamp explosion—that killed sixteen miners. This disaster later 'killed' the mine (it closed in April of 1936), and eventually almost killed the town itself. The pile of mine tailings, mostly red shale and reject-quality coal, grew no higher after that, but smoldered for years, and to this day is called 'The Dump'. Black Rock became for years a virtual ghost town—a large number of mine-owned houses, an average of forty a month throughout 1936, were even jacked off their foundations and carted into the nearby city, leaving street after street with empty, crumbling concrete basements. The train station was torn down.

Black Rock, responsible as all towns were in those days for relief payments to the unemployed, became bankrupt, and even lost its official town status, becoming an incorporated village. The population, which at its zenith had been many thousands, dropped to a few hundred. The only reminders of the town's heyday are a few well-preserved older homes, a brick building that every few years finds temporary employment as a variety store, a laundromat, or an election headquarters but mostly stands empty—it was the Standard Bank of
Canada, the last bank the town ever had—and an abandoned white clapboard Catholic Church. And, of course, there's the tallest structure in town—the looming shale pile, 'The Dump'.

After World War II, the nearby city began to prosper from a rich agricultural service base, and a new highway system began to connect it with all the surrounding towns and villages. Although the new east-west highway that spanned the south of the province from the Saskatchewan border to British Columbia bypassed Black Rock on the other side of the train tracks, people looking for cheap housing began to notice the mostly empty townsite. They saw that you could buy or build a house there for a fraction of the cost of a city house, and that a fifteen-minute car ride would bring you to any service you needed. The village still had a school, which served the handful of students from Black Rock itself, but also the children from the surrounding farms, ranches, and feedlots. The school population began to grow, until the number of dilapidated wooden buildings scattered around the Village that served as schoolrooms had to be upgraded. The County decided in 1957 to build a new brick building with six classrooms, a science lab, and a gymnasium with a stage at one end. This building still forms the core of Black Rock High School, although it has been extensively changed and added to in the years since.

Over the years, the village grew in fits and starts, without following any plan or vision other than accommodation cheaper than the city. Entrepreneurs have added to its population in three rather disparate ways: (a) by developing a few streets of solid middle-class bungalow-style housing, (b) by throwing up a
number of small apartment buildings euphemistically referred to as “low-rents”, and (c) by developing a number of trailer courts that range all the way from pleasantly-arranged streets where the “t-word” (i.e. trailer) is eschewed in favour of “manufactured home”, to the decidedly ramshackle. However, if there were ever a battle for numerical supremacy between the “manufactured” type, and the ramshackle, the latter would win by a wide margin. As though this socio-economic spread were not wide enough, in the last few years a street of showy two-storey, two-car-garage, beautifully landscaped ‘executive-style’ homes have been built on the edge of Black Rock. All this expansion has made it possible for it to regain the town status lost so many years ago; its population is once again measured in the thousands. However, numbers alone are not enough to turn Black Rock into a community. There is no sense of identity, no recognition of “us-ness,” and this absence of spirit has affected the school in many ways.

Background—Black Rock High School—A Brief Tour

Visitors to Black Rock High School enter via the main doors in the south-facing front of the building. These doors are in the ‘crook’ formed by the old gym and the 1960 addition, and are approached by a concrete walkway that runs along both those faces of the building. This walkway has heaved and broken many times over its lifetime from the effects of both frost and the unstable soil, where the moisture content swings wildly from marshy to hardpan, depending on the rainfall cycle. It has been patched up from time to time, but at present exhibits an abrupt 2 cm rise just to the front of the brick pillars flanking the double doors. Numerous attempts to turn this step-up into a ramp by adding a layer of cement
have been made, only to be eventually foiled by the instability under the slab. In front of the walkway is a gravel parking lot, which is separated from the paved town street by an open drainage ditch full of cattails in the summer. During the infrequent winter snowstorms, the ditch sometimes fills up with enough snow to obliterate the boundaries of the two driveway crossovers, which are made with concrete pipe and gravel fill. Visitors unaware of the location of these crossovers (they are completely without markings of any kind) have been known to drive right into the ditch, prompting another round of requests to the Town to turn the drainage ditch into a covered storm sewer. The latest of these requests, two years ago, resulted in an engineering firm being hired to draw up plans, which were abandoned without any public explanation.

Three sets of wire-reinforced picture windows look out on the gravel parking lot from the hallway inside. These windows are continually being patched up or replaced by the maintenance department of the school division, as their surfaces are chipped, starred, or broken through by gravel kicked up by cars doing spins and “wheelies” in the parking lot. Staff arriving for school on Monday mornings are accustomed to finding bare circles in the parking lot, gravel sprayed over the concrete walkway, and glass shards at the base of the windows.

Assuming a visitor has successfully negotiated both the ditch crossover and the broken sidewalk, he enters the school through steel-framed glass doors into a small foyer area with a metal boot-rack on the right, stairs down to the boiler room on the left, and solid wooden double doors to the library straight ahead across a wide hallway. These doors are completely covered with a
remarkable painting by a student of a mythological scene that includes a rearing dragon. To the left of the library doors are the windows into the school psychologist's office. They are covered with venetian blinds that are usually kept closed. These windows have three large computer-printed posters that announce the three 'school rules'—(a) "Respect Yourself", (b) "Respect Others", and (c) "Respect The School." The walls here, as in the rest of the school, are painted concrete block, and the floors are well-polished asphalt tile. The foyer opens up on both sides to a hallway that runs the width of the building, and then branches at right angles towards the back of the school, equidistant from the left and the right of the entrance, into the two hallways that lead to the two wings of the school. The school is roughly in the shape of a 'U', and this front door is at the bottom-center of the 'U'. If the visitor goes left from the front door, the wall is lined with group pictures of graduating classes from the mid-fifties to the present. The door to the school office is on the right, and the stairs to the old stage area and the door to the lunchroom/drama area are on the left. Between the bottom of the stairs and the lunchroom door there is an area of the concrete-block wall, about three meters wide and two meters high, that is recessed slightly. This used to be an opening into a concession stand. The recessed area of the wall is completely painted by students in flags of the world, and in the center is a telephone for student use, paid for by the Students' Council. Beside the recessed area is a door to a fully-equipped handicap washroom facility that was added when the Special Education area was built. This facility allows paraprofessionals to assist students who have 'toiletting difficulties.' Visitors are expected to report to the
office and enter a reception area so small that any more than a few people tend to overcrowd it. There is a door straight ahead of this reception area to the Vice-Principal's office, and a counter separating the reception area from the Secretary's workstation. Two doors lead from this workstation, one to the Principal's office, and one to a staff workroom containing the photocopier, mailboxes, two computers, coat racks, a fridge and a microwave, and a small worktable. Through a door on the other side of this work area is the staff lounge, with a small set of kitchen cabinets including a sink, a living room set consisting of a couch, a love seat, and a chair, and a motley variety of chairs. There is a set of two coffee tables end-to-end in the middle of the room. There isn’t enough seating in the room for all professional and paraprofessional staff (nor is there room for any more chairs); impromptu staff meetings invariably find a number of people having to stand. Thus, staff meetings are usually conducted in the Library. A recurring joke among staff involves building a ‘second tier’ in the staff room so we can all have lunch at the same time.

On the wall of the staffroom by the door to the workroom is a small cork pinboard with the title “RV Club” at the top, a wooden box with a glass cover containing a beer bottle opener and the words in Dutch Bij dorst glas inslaan printed on the glass, and the letters BOM on a sheet of paper underneath it. Visitors occasionally ask for an explanation of this rather cryptic bit of decoration, but only those who are accepted by an unspoken consensus of the staff are offered a ‘translation’. This includes substitute teachers and student teachers who are felt to ‘fit in’ with the staff. “RV” is the initials of a popular young Vice-
Principal who was killed in a tragic car accident a number of years ago. Social gatherings of staff have since been called the RV Club. As he was of Dutch extraction, the beer bottle opener and case are an advertising joke from Heinekens Breweries—the words mean "in case of thirst, break glass." The BOM refers to the Bar Of The Month, the designated establishment where staff meet after early dismissal (2:10 p.m.) on Fridays. The name of the chosen bar is written out by whoever feels like making the choice—there is never any argument.

Another door from this staff lounge leads to the hallway of the older wing of the school, usually referred to as the High School wing. This wing is lined with lockers on both sides arranged in pairs: two students share a pair of lockers, one full length coat locker, and another with shelves for books and other material. Off this hallway are three regular classrooms, the older science lab, which has a full classroom space and a set of seven lab stations, a computer lab with 25 computers that were upgraded last year, and an auxiliary computer lab with 6 new computers and a dozen older ones. At the end of this hallway, a door leads to the graveled parking lot for students at the back of the school, and also the area where the school buses pick up and discharge students. This door has often suffered the fate of the windows in front of the school—its glass panels have been broken on countless occasions by gravel sprayed from the parking lot.

If the visitor had turned right from the main doors instead of left, he would have gone past the library (and the windows looking out on the parking lot) and made a left-hand turn into the hallway that parallels the Senior High wing. The
Junior High wing, the newer area of the school, has a science lab that has classroom space in the middle and peripheral workstations, three regular classrooms, and an auxiliary area that over the years has been used for Distance Education classes and small group instruction. At the end of this hallway is another door that leads to the back parking lot. The space between the two wings is grassed and has a number of picnic tables, as well as a tree memorializing the Vice-Principal who was killed in an auto accident a few years ago—"RV".

The 'new' gymnasium is at the end of the hallway going left from the front doors: instead of turning into the high school wing, a visitor could walk straight on past the concession run by the Students’ Council and into the gym. This facility is large enough for a full basketball or volleyball court, and has a three-riser set of tiered seating along the side wall. There is the standard stage at one end, complete with a new set of curtains donated by the parents’ organization. The gym is used not only for physical education classes but also for the yearly major drama production for which the school has attained a positive local reputation.

Background—Black Rock High School—A Brief History

Since the original rectangular single-storey red-brick section was built in the fifties, Black Rock High School has undergone many changes. The original gym soon proved too small for the school—the architect who designed it obviously was never a basketball player since it was just slightly too small for a regulation court—so a new larger gymnasium with attached change and shower rooms, a Physical Education equipment storeroom, and a Physical Education office was added to the west side of the building. The old gym space was then
used as an open area whenever teachers wanted larger non-classroom space, and served as a lunchroom as well. The wall between the old gym and the old stage was filled in, and the old stage was used as a pre-school or kindergarten classroom, as the other old school buildings in town had no room for that group. Originally there were six classrooms, one for each grade, seven through twelve, plus a science lab. A few years later these were overflowing, so a new section on the east side of the school was built, with five classrooms, a large science lab with attached storeroom, and a spacious library. The architect used the same low, flat-roof red brick design as in the original section, so the newer wing looks very much like it belongs. The new wing was built at a time when money was flowing freely from the Department of Education coffers, so it also has the luxury of air-conditioning. The addition brought the school up to a capacity rating of about 325 students, and Black Rock High came very close to achieving that number in the late 1980s and early 1990s—very close, but never quite. A number of factors began to emerge about that time which have played a key role in the life of the school (as well as its population), and do so to this day.

One of those factors is the large percentage of students with a wide variety of special needs, ranging from the effects of severe fetal alcohol syndrome, to severe learning difficulties, to behavioural problems. All schools seem to feel that they have been saddled with the hard-to-teach, but our school can back it up with numerical evidence. Out of a school population, grades seven through twelve, of 178 students, 38 students—fully 21%, or twice the provincial average—are officially classed (or, in the bureaucratic jargon, “coded”) as
“Special Education” and receive paraprofessional assistance, ranging all the way from full-time one-on-one to small-groups assistance in regular core subject areas. There are about a half-dozen of these students who have severe cognitive, emotional, or behavioural problems. These students are ‘pullouts’, that is, they spend all their time in a Special Services classroom under the direction of a Special Education teacher, known as the “Consulting Teacher”, who also directs the programs and activities of the paraprofessionals. The rest of these students are integrated either fully or partly in regular classrooms, following the program set out in their Individual Program Plans. There is also a School Psychologist/Counsellor and a Family Services worker, both shared with the Elementary School. We are at the point now where the number of paraprofessionals who work with the special needs students is almost as large as the professional staff. Our special needs student group has become so large that their program could not be delivered in the classroom-sized space that used to contain it. So, two years ago, the large open space that had been the old gymnasium was divided in half. One half remained a lunchroom, and the wall was removed between the old stage area and this half so that the space could also be used for the Drama classes. The other half was converted into a suite of areas that include a small-group classroom, a Special Education office, a large life-skills classroom complete with full kitchen and laundry room, and a time-out room. In many ways, special education has become a focus of the school. Other than the gymnasium, the Special Education suite is the largest space in the
school, and, as Deal and Peterson (1999) point out, “architecture signals what is important” (p. 63).

Why Black Rock High School should have such a large percentage of special need students is not easy to explain. Facile answers that point at the preponderance of low socio-economic levels among school families, the prevalence of broken homes, unemployment, de facto abandonment (we have more than one junior high student who literally cannot tell us where their parents are most of the time), crime and alcoholism all have perhaps a germ of truth. How could those factors not be taken into account? This characteristic of our student population is often the subject of conversation among Black Rock teachers, many of whom have taught at the school for ten years, and some even longer. The consulting teacher offers this take on the subject:

I don’t have an answer for that other than looking back on the numbers in the elementary school, and possibly a reputation that the elementary program built to serve the needs of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome students in particular. For a while there was a lot of talk about their program. I don’t know if it was the result of that, but there has been a large influx of special needs students. Now, whether people felt that this was a good community to come to because they could find services for their special needs students, or just what, but a few years ago there were an enormous number of special needs students in the elementary school, and I think we’re just now feeling that wave hit our school. I think it will pass through and we’ll normalize so that we’re down a little more equal to the normal
numbers in society. But right now, we've got a real blip in the numbers.

(Interview, December 13, 2001)

No one has ever come up with a definitive answer, and maybe there is no definitive answer. They just are who they are, but who they are has a great effect on all that Black Rock teachers say, do, and think. These students are the éminence grise of the school. The running joke among staff is this: every time another student arrives with a folder bulging with psychological reports, IPPs, and intervention histories, somebody on staff will remark, “For heaven’s sake, will somebody please take down that sign on the highway that says, ‘Send us your poor, your problems, your huddled masses....’” Everyone laughs, but it is a grim laugh indeed. Towards the end of the data-gathering phase of this research, I noted in my journal:

It’s happened again. We’ve lost one Junior High kid and gained two, but it was an unfair trade. [Student’s name] has moved away—nicest kid in grade eight, always tried hard, polite, well-behaved, bright. Who did we get? [Student's name]'s brother—shuffled from school to school in the city, one step ahead of expulsion, and the youngest [family name] boy, transferring back here because his mother says he doesn’t get enough help in the city school. Can’t read or write, low academic ability. What in heaven’s name does she expect us to be able to do for him here? (Journal entry, January 16, 2002)

Another factor that determines our ‘ability-mix’ is geography: we are so close to the city that for all intents and purposes (except legally) we are part of it.
Thus, students can—and often do—choose to attend one of the three city high schools, as is their right under provincial law, even though those schools are in a different school jurisdiction. Those schools are larger and are seen as having better facilities for technical/vocational courses, languages, the arts, and honour courses such as the International Baccalaureate. Add to that the simple fact that they have more students and therefore more of a chance to find a niche, a clique, even a gang, and you have an irresistible pull—the bright lights of the city, prairie style. I have had numerous conversations with students who have announced their intention of heading to one of these schools, and their justification (after they give the politically-correct “I can get the courses I need for my career plans” excuse) is invariably that they can find “other kids like me”. By and large these are the solid academic students who leave, although once in a while it will be a ‘banger’ looking for an easier place to ‘score weed.’ From my journal, January 4, 2002:

I ran into [student's name] at the sub shop. He’s in grade 12, and going to [city high school] now. I asked him how he was doing as he was making my sandwiches, because I remember that he was so much of a loner when he was at Black Rock. He said he was doing well and seemed quite happy, but I thought I detected a little bit of wistfulness—he still lives in Black Rock, and it sounds like he misses the school. Not enough to came back, though!

These two realities of Black Rock High School life—the large number of classified special education students, and the dwindling population, especially of
the more academically-inclined students—contribute significantly to its ethos and self concept. It affects how students and staff view the school, and even how students and staff believe the School Division views the school. There are two lingering suspicions shared by teachers, students and their parents. The first is that we always get the 'short end of the stick.' A case in point: when the old gym area was divided into the lunchroom and Special Education center, there was vigorous representation made to the Division to divide the room horizontally as well, that is, to make a second-storey open area to give us room to teach some of the new Career and Technology Studies courses that would undoubtedly be attractive to our students. These pleas were ignored, and there are now often bitter references to the wasted twenty-four-foot ceiling space in these two areas. The oldest part of the building is also suffering from the chronic instability of the soil. Over the years this part of the school has settled in such a way that the floor is showing heaves and sags in many areas, and the roof structure and walls are actually separating in a few places. The tar-and-gravel roof has to be repaired constantly to patch the cracks caused by this shifting. The perception that we seldom get what we ask for in terms of maintenance fuels the other suspicion—that the school will be closed as soon as the Division feels it will be politically acceptable. A former principal remarked to me that

They [i.e. the School Board members] want two high schools left in the Division, one north of the river and one south. They're just waiting until the other two [Black Rock is one of them] get small enough that there won't be a big outcry. (Personal communication, September 19, 2001)
Background—The Staff

Of the 12 professional staff members (two half-time), seven including myself have been at the school for ten years or more. Of those seven, two have been there for more than fifteen years, and one for over twenty. The newcomers include the principal who came to the school last year as vice-principal, and is in an ‘acting’ position, taking over while the principal is on a one-year leave of absence, returning to the classroom in another school for a year of rest from administrative duties. Another newcomer is an experienced teacher who is a transfer from another Division school, switching positions with the former principal. The rest of the staff are younger teachers who nevertheless have a few years of successful experience. So, there is a core of teachers who have invested much of their professional life in the school, and who have developed an esprit de corps and genuine friendship over the years. It is an oft-heard comment among newcomers, and even from substitute teachers, that the staff works together unusually well. On reflection, there may be a little of the ‘circling the wagons’ or ‘us against them’ mentality at work here, given all the forces at work in the school.

Perhaps nowhere is the ‘us-ness’ of the staff better illustrated than in the propensity of groups of staff to commit random pranks on each other. Principals and vice-principals have come to expect their offices to be “themed” from time to time. Over the past ten years, the principal has showed up at his office in the morning to find that it has been turned into, to name but a few examples, a barnyard, complete with hay bales, toy animals, and recorded sounds, a pond.
with real running water (helped along with an aquarium pump), rubber duckies, and an inflatable canoe hanging from the drop-ceiling, or a fashion salon, complete with a scantily-dressed mannequin. The mannequin is actually part of the Fashion Studies course that is offered from time to time, and is nicknamed “Sterlina” after a former vice-principal. This mannequin shows up regularly in the oddest of places, dressed in the oddest of clothes. Students have gotten used to seeing Sterlina in classrooms, hallways, offices, storage closets—anywhere in the school it is possible to prop “her” up. “She” is always there as a result of an in-joke amongst staff; the kids just shake their heads in bewilderment while the staff whoops with laughter. The pranks are not limited to administration, either. The Special Education consulting teacher, who hails from Saskatchewan, came in one day to find her new office turned into a miniature of that province, complete with maps, road signs, and cardboard Saskatchewan Wheat Pool grain elevators. No one ever claims responsibility for the pranks (nor does anyone ever do much sleuthing), although it’s fairly obvious who is involved when they take the alternate form of “visiting.” A chance remark at lunch can easily turn into a visit to a classroom later that afternoon by a couple of teachers in full costume to play up that remark. For example, one lunchtime we were discussing beards (no topic is too arcane!). I made the innocent observation that the reason Hemingway grew a beard was because shaving had become too painful. He had developed skin cancer, likely from staring out over the Caribbean while deep-sea fishing. That afternoon, my class was visited by three long-bearded fishermen in a cardboard boat, wearing garbage-bag slickers, quoting lines from The Old Man
and The Sea. The beards looked suspiciously like hairpieces from the drama props closet. Our students are somewhat used to these pranks, but are usually baffled by them.

One other example: a former principal was called a duck's rear-end (actually, in much more colourful language) by an irate parent. His office door was open, and quite a few of the staff overheard. Soon, we had a full-fledged 'club' going, the D.A. Society. The secretary made everyone computer-printed membership certificates which were awarded to all staff along with stuffed toy ducks. Newcomers are now routinely 'in-duck-ted' into the society. That incident happened four years ago, and it still causes gales of laughter when we come across duck posters, pencils, cartoons, whatever. The secretary has a duck PEZ candy dispenser on her desk. I still get asked by new students why I have a stuffed plush duck jammed between my t.v. and VCR on the wall. I just tell them it's all that is left of a junior high student who "got in my face". They would never understand the real reason it's there.

A typical one of these pranks occurred during the recording of data for this project. The Consulting Teacher, Ms. W., was away at a conference for three days. On her return, the principal's copy of a letter from the Director of Student Services (in Central Office) to the Consulting Teacher was pinned to the bulletin board in the staff room, indicating that a paraprofessional who had left the district four years ago had returned, was hired, and assigned to work with Ms. W. She was horrified. This paraprofessional had been the bane of her existence in his short stay at Black Rock High. Old-time staff still regale newcomers with stories
of his eccentricities, his incompetence, his emotional instability, and his lack of decorum. Ms. W. railed against the insanity of his re-hiring for hours before she found out it was all an elaborate hoax on the part of the secretary and a few staff members, who had even enlisted the help of the Director of Student Services in the joke. Like all the practical jokes that permeate staff life at Black Rock, this was received in good humour. Undoubtedly there will be 'payback'; the perpetrators would be disappointed if there were not. The former paraprofessional's name subsequently showed up on the sign-up sheet for the staff Christmas get-together. I expect to see it often in the next while.

The preceding Background sections briefly describe the milieu in which the restructuring project occurred. As the findings described later in this chapter show, this milieu is as important a player in the drama as any of the individual participants were, shaping and destining the outcome.

**Background—The Project**

In this study, all participants will be identified with randomly-assigned initials to ensure their anonymity. I'll let Ms. B., who initiated the project, explain its background:

It actually led from an experience I had three years ago where I wrote a play, and directed and produced it with the staff and the community, based upon a mining disaster that had occurred in this community in 1935. In doing so, I discovered such enormous interest in students and community, such a pulling together, such enthusiasm for the project, for their history—not just for this community's history but for the history of many students
and their families that had been involved in the coal-mining industry, which at of course one time was similar to living in Alberta and being involved in the energy industry today. The positive impact was just beyond my comprehension, the way it gave dignity and pride to the community where students suddenly were talking to their parents about family history, and so on. It was such a positive experience it led me, through discussions with colleagues to explore the idea of exploiting more the history of our region and the family history of our students through students doing what I had done. That is to research and try and create some kind of performance based upon that research. The positive aspect of the performance was it brought everything to such a real ending where you had to examine the real motivations of people in history, not just dates and events. So, I came up with the notion of a cross-curricular, integrated program where students would explore global issues beginning with local issues—issues of local history, family genealogy, et cetera. That was the seed of it. I felt I was going to go ahead and do it anyway in some form or another, and then found out that there was in fact some funding available from the AISI Project. So I applied for that and it actually became part of my professional development program. And it's rolling slowly due to time constraints and pressures upon myself and my colleagues, but it's going to get there and it will be positive. (Interview, October 10, 2001)

The project began to take shape with informal discussions among an ad hoc group of teachers in the Fall of 2000. Ms. B. mentioned at a staff meeting that...
she was interested in a cross-curricular activity-based project for junior high students, and soon a core of other staff had joined her. This original group consisted of Ms. L., and young half-time teacher who concentrates on Health and French at the junior high level, Ms. R, a mature lady, relatively new to the profession, who teaches Social Studies, Ms. W., the Special Education consulting teacher, and myself. This group applied for and received funding under the AISI Project, and used some of this funding to attend a major educational conference on integrated curriculum. Since then, we have been joined by Ms. H., an intern teacher who will be on staff until Christmas. She will not be able to play a part in the instituting of this project, but asked to join in its planning because she is interested in integrated curriculum. We are also joined from time-to-time by Ms. K., a young and dynamic mathematics teacher who also teaches computer classes to the grade eights.

The interrelationships of this group are as follows: Ms. B. is the *de facto* leader of the group, as the idea for the project originated with her, and she has done most of the organizational work. The AISI Project co-ordinators (in particular Mr. A, who has a connection with the school as a former vice-principal) are connected to the project only in terms of providing funding (and the concomitant task of preparing the proposal). The school administration has expressed unqualified support for the project, but has not been involved directly in its development. The *ad hoc* group held meetings after school on a semi-regular basis with the express purpose of preparing a workable plan to be put into place in second semester, which began in February 2002.
Notes and transcriptions of the group’s meetings, the interviews with participants, combined with the background information, journal entries and observational notes formed the raw data from which codings were made, helped and guided by the questions that were asked in Chapter Two. The following section describes these findings, and how they were organized.

**Procedures of Power—Organization of Findings**

The interviews, meeting notes, and journal entries that form the bulk of the collected data were coded by noting recurring concerns, ideas, terms, and topics on the typescripts of this data. As themes began to emerge from the data, it became clear that there were three kinds of procedures of power at work in the group—(a) those that were positive, aiding or helpful of its work; (b) those that were negative or blocking of its work; and those that were ambivalent of its work. It was decided to gather and group these using the titles of positive, negative, and ambivalent. These procedures of power are summarized in the following table.

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<tr>
<th>Negative Procedures of Power</th>
<th>Positive Procedures of Power</th>
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<td>• Destining the Shape of a Vision—“Highjacking”</td>
<td>• Destining the Shape of a Vision—“Singlemindedness”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Destining Who Gets Resources</td>
<td>• Purposeful Co-operation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The Power of Jargon, or “Educationese”</td>
<td>• Interpersonal Care</td>
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<td>• The Exigencies of the Profession</td>
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Each one of these procedures of power is then illustrated and contextualized.

**Negative Procedures Of Power**

**Destining The Shape Of A Vision—“Highjacking”**

Very soon after the initial discussions, it became very clear that the *ad hoc* group and the AISI coordinators were at odds over almost everything, but especially the vision and the shape of the project. Here were the first manifestations of procedures of power that were observed. These procedures involved a struggle of wills between the AISI co-ordinators and the *de facto* leader of the group, Ms. B., and began as soon as the request was made for funding. One meaning of highjacking is wrongfully taking command, and I am using it in that sense here—an attempted takeover of the direction of the vision developed by Ms. B. Although Mr. A. describes his role as one of “facilitation,”

...our status is as a classroom teacher. We have no supervisory responsibilities. We’ve been very carefully told—our role has been described very clearly that we have no supervisory capacity. We’re opted out from the classroom, so it’s purely a facilitation. Now what that means is that we try to assist people in discovering what they want to do with professional development, and then try to work with them to make that a reality, to realize their goals. Almost a mentoring situation.

He continues:
I think it's important that people shape their own professional development and as a facilitator, I'm there to facilitate, not to intrude, and the rules of the game are set out by the group, and the group says, ‘we've got things in hand, we have the vision, your help has been helpful, but we'll function fairly independently from here.’

(Interview, September 12, 2001)

Ms. B. has an entirely different perception of his “approach.” She describes her experience in dealing with him as a decidedly negative one:

...when it came to applying for the funding—I've often wondered if that was a smart idea or what. I applied for the funding through the AISI Project, and quite frankly there I encountered a certain amount of discouragement. I had to create a proposal, and the proposal was created very honestly. It stated what we wanted it to do, and it was very detailed, but I hit a bureaucracy in which it seemed that—let me back up here. I felt that if teachers collaborated doing something that would improve learning in the school, then professional development would naturally take place in doing so. In fact I ran up against a wall in the proposal for the funding where that didn’t seem to be enough. There had to be collection of baseline data of teaching practice... I ended up re-writing the proposal seven times, and each time I got more and more discouraged. Quite frankly I think that had we not gone the route of applying for funding we might have our unit completed by now. It became unpleasant to go back to it because of constantly fighting a kind of bureaucracy, semantic battles,
the wordings in the proposal. I just wanted to do something positive and it seemed like what was happening on paper that would be tucked away in a file somewhere was more important to these people that what was actually going to occur. It was an academic exercise to them and I did not feel particularly encouraged to go ahead. (Interview, October 10, 2001)

In short, Ms. B. felt that the co-ordinators were attempting to highjack her vision and turn the project into something else. Mr. A.'s expressed understanding of this process is one of focusing, of making sure the project was achievable:

I guess the most important thing that I've been able to do is to some extent ground the high expectations and the high goals and the almost encompassing kinds of things—something that people say as a step in the direction that they wanted to go, but an achievable step. Initially, when we talked about the [Black Rock] project, it was basically to renovate the school, and through our discussions we determined that exploring some basic collaborative strategies and developing a collaborative unit might be the first step in understanding the larger concept. So, I think, grounding it in something do-able was one of the accomplishments, but again as a facilitator—to carry on the dialogue, to find out if this might be something... (long pause)

Interviewer: Like a focusing?

Mr. A.: Yes, like a focusing. (Interview, September 12, 2001)

The two visions were evidently at odds with each other, or at least the "theories-in-use", as Senge (1990) would call them (p. 175), were at odds. The frustration
felt by Mr. A. came through clearly in the interview, and involved the group's (especially Ms. B.'s) lack of willingness to be guided by him:

...the primary frustration is that I would have liked to have been more involved in the ongoing shaping and development of the project. But, early in the project members said, basically, leave us alone, we've got the direction where to go. We'll call you if we need you. So, I've purposely kept an arm's length, so my frustration is not knowing how things are progressing....the staff, the group, says, your role is different now, you're not a colleague, not a collaborator.

(Interview, September 12, 2001)

Mr. A.'s perspective on the application process involving the *ad hoc* group is this, in response to my interview question, "Can you say any more about the characterization of what's different about working with this group than working with another group?":

Initially, because I think the project came from a vision that has been evolving over a number of years—that vision wasn't necessarily a professional development vision, so to get it involved with a professional development focus was maybe a little bit more difficult to move that direction, than in other places. I think primarily the people involved in this one, what they're most concerned about is doing something for the community and something for the kids. What they get out of it is not necessarily professional development. I think it's become more of one. That initial track that the project was on is a difficult one to change. I think
people are committed to that concept, not necessarily a professional development concept. That might be one of the differences. The other difference—and I think it’s a significant one—is the relationship as a colleague, and that shift in roles. In the dynamic that comes with a new administrator, and new administrators being in the school, that took my place, that’s a dynamic that changes things. Then there’s the nature of Black Rock, of Black Rock staff, they’re a unique nature. They look after themselves and for themselves, they work well that way, and don’t necessarily work well with outside influence. (Interview, September 12, 2001)

After transcribing that interview, I wrote in my journal

[Mr. A.] says that we don’t have a professional development focus. I don’t get it. We want to work together to develop a curricular idea, something which is for us new and exciting, that we think will help kids learn. What the heck is p.d. if that isn’t? (Journal entry, September 12, 2001)

Ms. B. and I are in agreement about the meaning of professional development; when asked for a definition, she said that

It seems to me any time teachers collaborate and develop new ways of teaching, they’re obviously learning and developing professionally. They will not be the same teacher at the end of that experience as you were when you began. You’ll have absorbed all kinds of thing from one another. You’ll be rejuvenated and refreshed and ready to move on. Because you’re doing something new you have to find new ways of approaching it.
You will be a better and a different teacher afterwards than you were when you started. Quite frankly, I'd like to leave it to people doing theses to tell me how, because I really don't care, but I know that it happens. (laughs) (Interview, November 20, 2001)

This AISI co-ordinator, Mr. A., attended one of the first ‘formal’ meetings of the group by invitation on January 31, 2001. Near the beginning of the meeting he asked, “Can I be a part of your meetings?” to which Ms. B. replied, “Can we invite you when we need your input? We need to develop our own processes.” Throughout the meeting it was clear that Mr. A’s agenda was to shape the project along his own particular “professional development” lines. At one point he made the strong suggestion that we “Put some time aside for curriculum mapping,” and kept insisting that “The project needs to be grounded in sound methodology.” He offered to make our project the “anchor piece” of the AISI Projects in our Division, and suggested that we collaborate on other projects. The suggestion was that we become the ‘resident experts.’ At one point in the meeting we all took him, rather gently, to task for being so focused on what we considered bureaucratic formality. He replied that “I have accountability to the AISI Project (i.e. the Department of Learning formal setup). I try to negotiate (with the project groups) so you have accountability.” He insisted that “We’ve put a lot of trust in the projects.” When asked by the group how a decision was made whether to fund a project or not he replied, “When we are happy the criteria have been met, it goes ahead.” At one point he made the offer to do some formal structuring of base-line
data, “What if I put something together for you?” but was rebuffed by Ms. B., who said, “It’s more valuable if I do it.” (Meeting notes, January 31, 2001).

After transcribing the notes of this meeting, I wrote in my journal:

What a combination of techniques! Sucking up, promising us recognition, offering help. I wonder what else he would have given us if we’d just do it his way? But more than that—why does he want us to do it his way?

(Journal entry, February 2, 2001)

Almost a year later (January 8, 2002), I made this journal entry:

Mr. A. was in the school today, and he asked me how my research was going. He said he was concerned for me because the project seemed to be foundering and how was I going to complete my research if it did? He went out of his way to stress that he didn’t care how the project fared—it was “out of his hands”.

Not long after three of the *ad hoc* committee returned from a week-long conference about curriculum innovation in Phoenix paid for by the AISI funding, we were asked to meet with the co-ordinators to debrief and share what we had learned. Ms. B., Ms. R, and I met with the two co-ordinators for a supper meeting that was entirely conventional. They asked us questions about what we had discovered and learned, and we answered those questions. We had been excited about some of the ideas we had encountered, and we were happy to share. We agreed that curriculum mapping was a useful technique that could be applied across our Division, and that curricular integration was still the idea that we wanted to go ahead with. After that somewhat politely formal part of the
meeting was over, the evening assumed an almost bizarre shape. My journal entry for February 15, 2001 expresses my amazement:

No sooner had the last plate of nachos been cleared away when [name of one of the co-ordinators]'s tone turned from conversational to pleading— why didn't the other teachers in the Division want to pursue projects? Why weren't they being cooperative like we were? Why wouldn't they do the research like he wanted? Didn't they care about the profession? We were somewhat taken aback, to say the least. The next day [Ms. B.] said to me, "They just don't get it, do they? They're living in a little world all their own."

Mr. A explains his frustration with the ad hoc group in this way:

I'd like them to succeed, and I'd like them to know that they're succeeding because I know that you cannot sustain any change unless you get some feedback that you're actually accomplishing something. If they've spent a lot of time and energy but have never actually moved in the direction they've wanted, it could fizzle. And, I'd like to see them succeed, so, I'd like to know where they're at, and to do that I need more contact. So that's something I'm either going to have to work on or... (long pause)

(Interview, September 12, 2001, author's emphasis)

These interchanges, and the comments at the January 31 meeting, are indications of two procedures of power evident in the relationship between the AISI co-ordinators and the committee—not only are the co-ordinators destining (or, at least, trying to) the shape of a vision, they are also destining who gets resources.
Negative Procedures Of Power—

Destining Who Gets Resources

Although Ms. B. and Mr. A. have worked together with collegiality for a number of years, the relationship abruptly changed as soon as Mr. A. tried to change Mrs. P.’s proposal. The vehemence of her feelings is clear in this interview:

Interviewer: What do you feel about your relationship to the authority structure that the AISI co-ordinators have set up in terms of our project?

Mrs. P.: The relationship....(long pause)

Interviewer: How do you see what they’re doing in relationship to what we’re doing?

Mrs. P.: I’ve been able to hang in with the project but only with a great deal of, quite frankly, manipulation. Game-playing, hoop-jumping. It has hurt the relationship greatly because I feel they’re abusing their power. I believe they’re guilty of displaying intellectual superiority, of nit-picking, of having a total disrespect for my time. For failing to see at times the ultimate purpose. They have not facilitated what we were trying to do. They have in fact discouraged the whole process by turning it into, quite frankly, a bureaucratic nightmare. (Interview, November 20, 2001)

Although the scope of this research is delimited to the ad hoc group project only, the experience that Ms. B. and the group had with the co-ordinators was not unique to us, and a slight digression here is instructive. Each of the schools in the Division has a very small amount of money available for professional
development that comes from Division coffers, and an even smaller amount that comes from the teachers’ association (in effect, a rebate on our dues). These two amounts add up to less than $500 per year per teacher. Given the cost of conferences, resources, and other professional development activities, teachers are severely limited in their choices. So, when the AISI money was announced by the provincial government, there was great hope that this was going to make it easier for more teachers to access professional development. The two coordinators drafted a series of goals and strategies that included the following:

Rather than a large scale, laid-on program that is the same for all schools, this project would focus on providing personal attention to each school, based upon the identified needs and knowledge of its teachers, its community, timing and the overall particular circumstance. The resultant staff development will include various individual, teams, groups, whole school staff and multi-school activities. (School Division document)

It was on the basis of this published strategy that the ad hoc group made its application, as were many other applications made throughout the Division. At the end of the data-gathering phase of this research, January 2002, we are into the third year of the AISI project, yet no other individual project survives. There are large-scale, multi-school projects going on, involving Effective Behaviour Support and Curriculum Mapping, and there is professional development support for a staff that is in the process of creating a new Middle School. As worthwhile as that professional development is, it should be noted that no other project such
as ours is being funded. After attending an executive meeting of the Division
Professional Development committee, I wrote in my journal that

We spent the whole evening talking about the AISI boys and how hard they were making it for people to get projects funded. They've got literally millions of dollars to spend over the next few years but if you won't play their game and do it their way, they bury you under paper. People are really ticked off. (Journal entry, October 20, 2001)

I asked Ms. D., a teacher who is not in the ad hoc group as she teaches only Senior High classes, but who has been involved in the AISI funding by attending a series of in-service sessions on English Language Arts, what she thought of those sessions. Her reply is unequivocal: “I hated them. They were useless.” She was angry that “All four English teachers had to go to all four sessions,” with the subsequent disruption that caused to our small school, to have four substitute teachers. She had two main concerns. One was “all that money thrown out the window. When it's so hard to get money for anything. It's a sore point with me.” She maintains that one teacher could have gone, then shared the information with the others. The other concern is that the sessions were “condescending.”

She described the first session as being “two-and-a-half hours on metacognition. For educated people? It could have been done in fifteen minutes. We had a wonderful [said with a sarcastic sneer] PowerPoint presentation, but they handed out the stuff on paper anyway. It's gone to File 13 already.” (Personal communication, February 21, 2002) In speaking to other attendees of these and similar sessions, I have yet to find a positive response.
I can’t help thinking of the phrase used by Mr. A. when he was expressing the difference between our ad hoc group and the proposals made by other groups: “I can move in and become a partner in their projects more easily.” (Interview, September 12, 2001) The “moving in” apparently achieved something other than a partnership. Ms. B. notes that we have managed to hang with it, but just what I hear via the grapevine, three out of every four projects have failed because the people simply gave up. They wouldn’t play that system. They didn’t have the time to play that system and they bailed out early.

The way that the disbursement of AISI money was organized by the Division—putting two co-ordinators in charge who have, for all intents and purposes, sole discretion—seems to have guaranteed that they can control to a great extent the shape and direction of professional development Division-wide.

A side-effect of the tension and disagreements between the ad hoc committee and Mr. A. was a distancing that I perceived between him and the research. During our extended interview at the beginning of the school year, he expressed interest in following up on some of the issues we raised, and this was certainly in my research plan. However, it never happened. There was never any overt refusal to participate, but there was always something else that had to be done. It was as if he lost interest when he realized he had lost control.
Negative Procedures Of Power—
The Power Of Jargon, Or “Educationese”

Ms. B.'s bitterness about how the co-ordinators tried to change her vision suggests another theme as well, that of the animosity towards those who have advanced degrees, or who can “talk the talk” with the latest educational catch-phrases. Ms. B. complains that

My idea of how it (i.e. the project) dealt with professional development just wasn’t good enough. I had to use the jargon and the phrasing of their textbooks. I was being asked to pigeonhole it. It seems to me that my project intrinsically—and I’m sure many of the other projects did too—involved professional development. Those fellows were paid a lot of money to spend a lot of time sitting at a keyboard and could have easily have written up how it would aid professional development rather than expecting me to. They’re familiar with the jargon, they could have done it, it was self-evident. Like I say, we have managed to hang with it, but just what I hear via the grapevine, three out of every four projects have failed because the people simply gave up. They wouldn’t play that system. They didn’t have the time to play that system and they bailed out early. It was very frustrating, and I look back sometimes and quite frankly I think I could have done the project without it, when you consider the amount of hassle I had to go through. And in fact it got to the point where I would be talking to the AISI co-ordinators and asking, well, what exactly is it you want, tell me what you need to see on paper. Well, they’re not quite prepared to do that,
they want to have a big semantic discussion. No just tell me what you want to see, so I can write it down and give you the bloody thing so that you're covered. Because they're accountable too and I understand that, so let's not play around. Say, Ms. B., I need this kind of a table made up, here's what I'm after... Instead you're always guessing what they're after. They know what it is but they don't want to tell you. (Interview, November 20, 2001)

The 'accusation' could almost be viewed in terms of Ms. B. believing that Mr. A is thinking, "I know the magic words and you don't; you'll have to learn them too if you want to play."—Ms. B.'s phrase from the interview, *I had to use the jargon and phrasing of their textbooks*, is a telling remark. Ms. B. is by no means anti-intellectual. She is always looking for new ideas and practices:

I have to thank the AISI boys for doling out enough funds to send us to Phoenix. That was an experience. I got to listen to the gurus themselves, and I learned a great deal which I've been implementing in my classroom ever since, and experimenting with, and have certainly become the backbone of this project. The methodologies came from there. (Interview, November 20, 2001)

However, she is not interested in the 'theories' of education *per se* as much as in the practice, as in her comment about what constitutes professional development:
Quite frankly, I'd like to leave it to people doing theses to tell me how, because I really don't care, but I know that it happens. (laughs) (Interview, November 20, 2001)

Nowhere is the attitude of Black Rock High School staff towards educational jargon more clearly illustrated than in a prank organized by one of the ad hoc group members during the data gathering stage of this research, recorded in detail in my journal entry of October 21, 2001. One of the AISI coordinators (not Mr. A.) presented a program at a professional development institute day. Ms. K, who joins the ad hoc group as time permits, and a few other staff members, created a “master list” of jargon terms that she expected to hear during this presentation:

**Master List**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>assessment</th>
<th>equity</th>
<th>Pedagogy</th>
<th>portfolio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>backwards planning</td>
<td>facilitate</td>
<td>performance based</td>
<td>proactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behavioural</td>
<td>cross-curricular</td>
<td>Protocol</td>
<td>rubric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brain based</td>
<td>focus group</td>
<td>Progressive</td>
<td>risk assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>checklist</td>
<td>learning styles</td>
<td>Modelling</td>
<td>support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collaborative</td>
<td>literacy</td>
<td>oppositional defiant</td>
<td>synergy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collegial</td>
<td>manipulatives</td>
<td>learning experience</td>
<td>synthesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>co-operative</td>
<td>mastery</td>
<td>Optimum</td>
<td>spark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>culture</td>
<td>mentor</td>
<td>safe &amp; caring</td>
<td>target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>curriculum mapping</td>
<td>metaphorical</td>
<td>site based</td>
<td>wellness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diversity</td>
<td>holistic</td>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>zero tolerance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dynamic</td>
<td>integration</td>
<td>pilot project</td>
<td>workshop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

She then printed randomly-generated “Lingo Bingo” cards with six columns of three words (from the above list) each, to all staff to use during the meeting, along with the following ‘rules:’
-Fill the card, leave the meeting!
-Get caught by [the AISI co-ordinator], you’re buying at the bar!
-Fill a line, [the principal] will reward you with something! Nothing for a column.
-[the AISI co-ordinator] must say the word—not a staff member. No cheating.
-[Ms. K.] has the master list and will keep track.
-In case of dispute her word is final. (The authority of the English is legendary!)

The last phrase on the ‘rule card’ is a reference to another running joke among staff: Ms. K. is from England and still sports a pronounced accent, leading to many playful mock-arguments at staff gatherings about the relative worth of each country’s “civilization”. However, the ‘game’ was ruined by the fact that the AISI co-ordinator somehow found out about the sheets before the meeting started. In terms of the phrase often attributed to Queen Victoria, “he was not amused”. He rather pointedly asked that we “do [him] the honour and the respect of putting the sheets away” before the meeting began. The staff member sitting beside me whispered sarcastically, “this is going to be fun.” It wasn’t. The staff was uncharacteristically subdued, and sat quietly through a jargon-filled PowerPoint presentation on Effective Behaviour Support without the normal good-natured banter, but also without any real engagement. During the presentation, he attacked the staff for not participating fully in the data collection on student behaviours that preceded this presentation. He, in turn, was roundly criticised by members of staff (I admit, especially me) for poor use of statistics, producing inferences about student behaviour without any real basis. In conversing with other staff members after the meeting, I found the consensus to be that we had all wasted our time.
This is the same AISI co-ordinator who had a running ‘feud’ with the jurisdiction’s Professional Development Committee (the researcher is a member of the Executive of that Committee) over the structure and nature of the jurisdiction-wide Professional Development day in October, 2001. The Committee was given the responsibility by the jurisdiction of organising the activities of the day, and decided to leave it up to each school staff to determine those activities. The Committee decided to limit their involvement to gathering the details from each staff as to what their activities would be on that day, and sharing this information throughout the division, making it clear that any teacher could join the activities of any other school, if that school’s activity interested them more than their own school’s activity. It was a consensus among staffs that this would satisfy our professional development needs more than a single, formally-organised event. The AISI co-ordinator felt that they should be in charge of the day, and make a presentation to the whole jurisdiction. One example of his unhappiness was a terse note he sent to the Executive of the Professional Development Committee:

Is the [Committee] prepared to set the expectations for the outcomes of that day?

Is the Committee prepared to develop a means of reporting site accountability for their Professional Development on that day?

How could we examine the effectiveness of the day with regards to lasting improvements for teachers and students? (handwritten communication, October 2001)
The Executive of the Committee felt that teachers could be trusted to use the day wisely and effectively; this AISI co-ordinator evidently felt they could not unless formalised structures that agreed with his terminology were used.

**Negative Procedures Of Power—**

**The Exigencies Of The Profession**

Any teacher who is serious about his or her job can attest to its demands, physically and mentally. Consider for a moment one list of “characteristics of good teaching”, a list that is most certainly not exhaustive or universal, but at least is indicative of the scope and breadth of the demands on a teacher: [The teacher]

- Has positive relationships with students
- Deals with students’ emotions
- Maintains discipline and control
- Creates a favourable environment for learning
- Recognizes and provides for individual differences
- Enjoys working with students
- Obtains students’ involvement in learning
- Is creative and innovative
- Emphasizes teaching of reading skills
- Gives students a good self-image
- Engages in professional growth activities
- Knows subject matter in depth
- Is flexible
• Is consistent
• Displays fairness (Acheson and Gall, 1980, p. 26)

To these demands have to be added those of professional development. Mr. A. insists that

...professional development cannot be priority two, or nine, it has to be up there with your instructional responsibilities, or just a cut below them, that's the first thing. So I see teachers...having to say, we've got to commit the time. It might mean time out of our classroom. That's important, (and) it has to be given. So, we've learned too much in educational research that there's much more that we should be doing—an obligation just as much as a doctor or lawyer to keep up. (Interview, September 12, 2001)

A theme that became manifest during the data collection phase of this study is that these demands on a teacher are in themselves procedures of power. When asked, “What would you say is the hardest thing to overcome, or the biggest obstacle to making this [project] come to fruition?” Ms. B. answered

It's hard to say the biggest. Probably it's time. Teachers don't have a lot of time. They are already devoting enormous amounts of time and energy to their many tasks and their many passions, so involving them in mine is somewhat of an imposition, even though they are enthused and interested. But time is one. Another is the changing pressures, the staff changes, teaching assignment changes. Getting any number of people
together for any kind of long term project like this is difficult. (Interview, October 10, 2001)

The procedures of power that thus make the kind of innovation attempted by this project difficult are different from the others in that they are not interpersonal as much as they are endemic and systemic. Nonetheless, they are powerful forces. Witness this discussion about finding time to get together for project planning:

Ms. W.: But if we wanted a day to do that...(i.e. release time)
Mr. Y.: Yes, you see, that’s what I was thinking. For us to meet after school once a week is fine, but if you wanted to get into some really heavy-duty, everyone-get-together kind of work, and come up with some formal structure, that takes time, and that might be something that a sub day...
Ms. B.: Can we really in a school this size have three of us out, or four of us?
Ms. R.: Well, no, that’s true.
Ms. B.: Well, I don’t know. It’s a collaborative thing.
Ms. K.: But if it was a day thing and one took the morning and someone else the afternoon...
Ms. B.: We could try it.
Ms. K: Because I can’t see me needing a sub, but if you’re planning a science experiment or something...
Ms. B.: Our trip to Phoenix, those were hellish days here. The principal was telling me...nobody begrudges it, but...It’s hard. For a small school,
you miss, you know (a discussion of the problem of having sub teachers follows)

Ms. B.: Well, I’ll look at that and see if we can apply for some sub money.

Other than that, I can’t see...

Ms. H.: Even if it’s just one day, even a Friday...

Ms. B.: We have to be careful about that. It’s a bit of a strain.

(Minutes of meeting of ad hoc committee, September 19, 2001)

Just before the Christmas break, Ms. B. was concerned because the ‘semi-regular’ meetings had not taken place for a number of weeks. She observed that

We’re way behind right now. But, frankly, I think it’s going to come together because I have enormous faith. (laughs) I see it in my head and I know we’re got good people. Unfortunately, because of changing classes and switching assignments, we’re down to a skeleton group. Maybe that’s not a bad thing. I think of myself and you and [Ms. R.], if we can set up the Language Arts, the Science, and the Social Studies, I think those are the key areas, and everything else can branch off it. I need time to sit with it again. I haven’t because I’m doing too many things. I haven’t been doing too much lately [on the project]; I’ve been procrastinating. (laughs) I’m doing as little as possible to get to the Christmas Holiday. But once we can sit down, I think we’ve got roughly what has to happen here, and unfortunately it’s going to end up getting done my way, which is all at the last minute in a stroke of brilliance. (laughs) You know, realistically, what’s
going to happen is that we're piloting it next semester. So we get together and put it together as best we can, try it, and during that trial, we can flesh it out. I'm feeling really badly right now because I've kept pushing it on the back burner... (Interview, December 12, 2001)

Ms. B. felt badly that she hadn't been able to devote the kind of time that she wanted to the project, and even during an interview it was clear that she had another 'pull' on her time:

Yes, I've got to get to [names a teacher union meeting]. September, October, November, I had three nights a week in meetings. I hate meetings. (laughs) (Interview, December 12, 2001)

She even felt that other members might be upset with her, as leader of the *ad hoc* group, for having ‘neglected’ the project:

Yeah, we have to put it together. And it *will* work. Are you ticked off with me?

**Interviewer:** No! (laughs)

**Ms. B.:** Aren't you? You should be! You're very nice! (speaks to the tape recorder) See what I mean? (laughs) Yeah. I've just gotten caught with so much (to do) lately with contract negotiations. [Ms. B. is chair of the jurisdiction negotiating committee] And I *have* neglected it. Once I get back into it I know the enthusiasm will grow again. (Interview, December 12, 2001)

Mr. A. is very clear on what teachers *should* be doing in terms of professional development, whether they want to or not, and deplores the fact that
...it has always been almost an extracurricular thing—if I have time to do it, I'll do it, so long as it doesn't take me away from my classroom, I'll do it, if the principal tells me I should do it, I'll do it. I mean, there are people in our district who have never been to a conference in their specialty. There are people in our district who haven't taken a course in thirty years or been to a conference in twenty years. What I find is that people... we find a lot of resistance coming from people who say that, no, no, you can't... I'm not going to do real professional development—bring a packet in any time on this, or work at this... (Interview, September 12, 2001)

He believes that the resistance to professional development is

...the habit, that we're habituated into putting professional development in that category, first as a treatment, as something that's done to me in short easy bursts. I think it's as important for teachers to learn things as it is their students, to spend the time, homework, implement, collaborate. There's also the other element of considering teaching as... or only considering innovations in teaching as the technical—what can I do in my classroom tomorrow, not as the reflective, long term improvement of practice that really it is. Especially, there's a few things that you can go to a one-hour session and learn, like how to use a piece of software, but you've got to apply it, to understand that deep material. (Interview, September 12, 2001)

He has the 'solution' to the problem, were he given the power to implement it:
I would—and the implications would be clear—I would make every teacher see their professional growth plan as being the key part of their practice. In formal ways, in order to develop professional growth. I guess, taking charge of one’s own..., becoming independent, self-motivated. That would be… I think what we’ve lost, many of us, many teachers have lost the sense that the most strength they have as a teacher is as being a learner, with all that entails. We give lip-service to that, but a lot of us just don’t… Just to wave that magic wand and say, ‘doinnng,’ you’re not finished yet, just because you have a degree (laughs). (Interview, September 12, 2001)

Contrast that vision of professional development with that of Ms. B., who sees the need for

curriculum people who are open-minded, who don’t dictate from the top-down, who actually listen to you and facilitate, to whom no idea is a bad idea, people who don’t stand in your way but help you implement things. Quite frankly, I’ve never seen it, even when we had government employees who were curriculum….worked at the Curriculum Branch. Nobody ever came to you and said, how do you teach this? Do you have a great idea? Could we put it out there? (Interview, November 20, 2001)

One of the main problems, according to Ms. B., is that teachers aren’t recognized for what they know. Rather,

New methodology comes in, and you’re immediately told that everything you’ve been doing is all wrong. It’s all wrong! Don’t even think for a second that part of it was good (laughs). You know, you go through a long
career, and that happens to you every ten years...you begin to doubt
yourself. (Interview, November 20, 2001)

She doesn’t see leadership for change happening
in the system. None at all. It’s top-down. Somebody comes and says,
Middle School is the answer, so you change that way. When change is
recommended from within it’s really hard to implement. Which is where it
has to come from. In this project alone, timetabling changes would
facilitate it hugely. Fortunately I have a principal who would support that
and be willing to do it. That’s the only reason it could work at all. There’s a
couple of other things going on in this school [i.e. things that need major
timetable and structural changes] and we’re lucky enough to have a
principal who will do it. (Interview, November 20, 2001)

The amount of work for some teachers is positively staggering, and seems worse
for newcomers to the profession. Ms. R. admits that:

I am overwhelmed with all the different courses, and I thought that would
be a good thing to go back and forth and bounce some ideas... the
amount of ideas that [Ms. B.] has and you have, and [Ms. K]...they’re
wonderful, and there’s no way one person can come up with what to do. It
would be really neat to get it done, but like you said, we’re trying to do this,
and also trying to do our day-to-day things. And to get together, it’s almost
a whole other part-time job, to get everything together, so that next year
we can implement it. And that’s not even to say it would work. Well, that’s
neither here nor there, but it’s a lot of extra work to go into one subject.
Because that would only cover my Social, and then I've got all the other subjects I have to deal with. So I find that it would almost be a part-time job to get it together.

She adds

Sometimes I get really scared—well maybe that's not the right word—really apprehensive that I don't know my subject as well as I'd like to. I have Computer modules that are incomplete and just thrown together because one kid wants to do that area. And I think, if I only had Computers, they'd be done.

She continues:

With Social—I didn't have any Social background. So I was learning new things. Kids would ask me questions and I didn't know the answers! (laughs) I'd just say, well, I think you're going to take that in Science...I think [Mr. Y.] is going to take that up, so we don't have to talk about it...good! (laughs) I just don't know this stuff.

When I commented that she had a variety of subjects she said

Ms. R.: Yeah, I do. And the resources, especially for my Cosmetology classes, is what I don't have. I'm trying to figure out what modules I can do with the equipment that we can get.

Interviewer: Because there's no place to do it? No sinks? No chairs?

Ms. R.: Yeah. I'm looking at what I'm going to do next semester. (laughs)

(Interview, December 11, 2001)
In order to further appreciate the daily, lived experience of the members of the *ad hoc* group, their responsibilities have been summarized in the following tables. All full-time teachers teach 21 of the 24 weekly 67-minute periods; Ms. L., who is half-time, teaches 12 of the 24 periods. This time, of course, does not include the time required for lesson preparation, keeping up with new curricula and materials, marking assignments and tests, and recording and reporting student progress.

Ms. B.'s responsibilities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2001-2002 Teaching Assignment</th>
<th>1. Grade 7 Language Arts</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Grade 8 Language Arts (2 classes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Grade 10-11 Drama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Grade 11-12 Drama</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Grade 7 Study Skills</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co-Curricular Responsibilities</th>
<th>1. Student Government (shared with Mr. Y.)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Daily supervision</td>
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<tr>
<th>Extra-Curricular Responsibilities</th>
<th>1. Major Drama Production</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. School-Community Remembrance Day Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Supervision of extra-curricular events (games, dances, etc.)</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Professional Responsibilities</th>
<th>1. Economic Policy Committee Chair</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Negotiating Committee</td>
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Ms. R's responsibilities:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>2001-2002 Teaching Assignment</th>
<th>1. Grade 7 Information Processing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Grade 8 Social Studies (2 classes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Grade 10 Career Preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Grade 11-12 Information Processing (2 classes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Grade 10-11 CTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Grade 8 CTS (2 classes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Curricular Responsibilities</td>
<td>1. Daily Supervision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extra-Curricular Responsibilities</th>
<th>1. Supervision of extra-curricular events (games, dances, etc.)</th>
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</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Professional Responsibilities</th>
<th>1. Course development from CTS modules</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Assistance with Yearbook and Graduation</td>
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</table>

Note: CTS is Career and Technology Studies, and covers a wide range of courses organized in module form.
**Mr. Y's responsibilities:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>2001-2002 Teaching Assignment</strong></th>
<th>1. Grade 8 Science (2 classes)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Grade 9 Science</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Senior High Construction Technology (2 classes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Grade 11 Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Grade 9 Electrotechnology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Grade 11 General Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Co-Curricular Responsibilities</strong></td>
<td>1. Student Government (shared with Ms. B.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Control and distribution of all non-school monies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Organizing, running, and daily supervising of Snack Shack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Technical portions of major drama production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extra-Curricular Responsibilities</strong></td>
<td>1. Supervision of extra-curricular activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Organizing school dances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Professional Responsibilities</strong></td>
<td>1. Executive of Professional Development Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Member of Junior High Science curriculum implementation committee—Alberta Teachers’ Association</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ms. L's responsibilities (half-time):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2001-2002 Teaching Assignment</th>
<th>1. Grade 7 Health and Personal Life Skills</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Grade 9 Health and Personal Life Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Grade 9 French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Grade 7 Drama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Grade 7 Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Grade 8 French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Curricular Responsibilities</td>
<td>1. Daily Supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. P.A.R.T.Y. Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Take-A-Student-To-Work Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra-Curricular Responsibilities</td>
<td>1. Yearbook (shared with Ms. K.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Biennial fundraising auction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Professional Responsibilities</td>
<td>1. Responsibility for Theme V (Human Sexuality) component of Health and Personal Life Skills Curriculum (highly sensitive area with much parental involvement)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Like most teachers, Black Rock staff have extremely busy lives. Finding the time to work on a project like the one being studied here is difficult. As Ms. B. notes, "...you're beating your head against a brick wall in trying to pull people together." (Interview, October 10, 2001). I have four journal entries (October 24, November 7, November 21, November 28) which say essentially the same thing: We had planned a meeting of the ad hoc group, but something else came up for one or more of us and the meeting was postponed. In her characteristically frank way, Ms. B. knows what she needs in order to effect the changes she envisions:
A less stressful workload. It's awfully hard to make those changes when you're up to your ass in alligators. And of course in recent years the job itself has become much more stressful. It's really difficult to do the fun things, do the change, do the extras, because you're worn out at the end of the day. You're worn out at the end of the week, and it's hard to find the kind of energy that's required even though those experiences, those projects, are energizing in themselves. We talk about time...sub time alone won't do it. You need time in your mind to be able to attack it. You know, an afternoon off, as most teachers know, is more work than showing up, sometimes. Give me more satisfaction in my job generally, manageable class sizes. Handing the problems of special needs students. Cutting a lot of the bureaucracy. That for one thing, and it's not only stress on an individual teacher, it's on a staff. As soon as you all start to feel better, you can get together and you can make changes. You can have exciting ideas and you can actually go ahead and implement them. It energizes one another to do those things. And I've been lucky enough to work on a staff where that happens. I see it wearing thin because we're short-staffed. (Interview, November 20, 2001)

The negative procedures of power—the situations described above that impede the work of the ad hoc group—are balanced by a number of procedures of power that enhance or support it. The following section describes these positive procedures of power.
Positive Procedures of Power—  
Destining the Shape of a Vision—“Singlemindedness”

Robert Fritz (as cited in Senge, 1990) uses the metaphor of a set of rubber bands to describe how contradictory underlying beliefs work as a system counter to our achieving our goals. Our vision is a rubber band pulling us forward, while the belief in our powerlessness is a rubber band pulling us backward. As we approach our vision, the backward pull of the underlying beliefs grows stronger. Fritz shows how outwardly successful people use their willpower to surmount all obstacles in the way of achieving their vision, but at great personal cost. Worse than this, willpower might achieve the vision without dealing with the unempowering background beliefs in our powerlessness. When I read Senge’s description of the metaphor (pp. 156-159), my first reaction was that it applied perfectly to the two “vision-pulls” going on in the project: the pull by Ms. B. in one direction, and the pull by the AISI co-ordinators in the other. I wrote in my journal that

There is a tug-of-war going on here. Talk about an exercise in power. [Mr. A.] is determined to make the project his kind of thing, and [Ms. B.] is just as determined to prevent him from changing it. I don’t think [Mr. A.] has any idea who he’s tangling with! (Journal entry, October 21, 2001)

On later reflection, I realized that although the metaphor of the opposing rubber bands on the ‘visionary’ was indeed apt, the one pulling away from the vision is not ‘the unempowering background beliefs in [Ms. B.’s powerlessness’, but rather the power of an opposing vision. For Ms. B. is anything but powerless in
this regard; the power that she has available is substantial. One aspect of this power could be termed “singlemindedness.” Ms P. laughs when asked about the power she wields in the school, and denigrates it, but it is real, both in terms of the students and her colleagues. An illustration of her attitude to her power: a junior high student, frustrated by not being allowed to misbehave in Ms. B.’s Language Arts class, laboriously carved the word ‘bitch’ in her classroom window glass over one weekend. He even took the care to carve it backwards so it would read right from the inside! A few days later, Ms. B. traded in her coffee cup, which she carries everywhere with her in the school, on a new model, which has written on the side, “That’s Ms. Bitch to you!”

I recorded in my journal (December 7, 2001) another ‘snapshot’ of Ms. B.’s sense of singlemindedness, which was her comment about a student teacher, after he had finished his round and returned to the university. We were discussing the difficulties he would likely face in further field experience rounds because of his inordinate ‘cockiness’ and unwillingness to accept criticism. She said, “He tried to tell me I was wrong because I said Celt [with a k-sound at the beginning] and I should say Celt [with an s-sound]. I am one and I damn well know how it’s pronounced!” (Ms. B. is of Welsh extraction and speaks the language.) Dictionaries give both variants, and it is hardly a core educational issue, but it is a good indication of what the principal calls the staff’s “sense of our own self” (Interview, December 5, 2001). The AISI Co-ordinator, Mr. A., said the same thing, but from an entirely different perspective: “They look after themselves and for themselves, they work well that way, and don’t necessarily
work well with outside influence” (Interview, September 12, 2001). In that instance, he was complaining about the staff’s singlemindedness: *they work well that way* might sound like a compliment, but I recorded in my journal (September 12, 2001) after the interview that, “[name of the AISI co-ordinator] sure sounds ticked off that we won’t do what he wants.”

**Positive Procedures of Power—**

**Purposeful Co-operation**

A procedure of power that is evident at Black Rock High School—and it strikes me that it has been manifest for all of the ten years I’ve been on staff there—is what could be called “purposeful co-operation.” The principal, a relative newcomer to the school puts it this way:

I see two attitudes here, and they’re not opposed, they’re actually complementary. All of the staff here tends to be individuals, and individualistic, I find. Everybody on the staff here will tend to have a sense of our own self, in our own self-space, and tend to deal as individuals with our own problems. But any time somebody wants help, assistance, all of the staff is there to support him. The unique thing about this staff that I appreciate is that even if we have differences we support each other, the minute somebody wants support. So, all individuals and individualistic, but quite supportive any time someone is searching for support. That individualism then becomes positive in terms of the collaboration and support. (Interview, December 5, 2001)
The Principal's feelings are echoed by Ms. B., who, when asked about the way staff felt about each other and worked together said:

I guess just the basics, and you know this as well as I do. There are no turf wars here, no guarding of the coffee cup and the favourite chair, and that sort of thing. Nobody owns their own classroom; it's the school's classroom. Just that attitude alone. And in order to create that attitude you have to have a non-threatening atmosphere, completely non-threatening where it's okay to have problems, it's okay to think differently. And humour is such a big part of it. Everybody's very comfortable and very trusting. You know nobody's going to scream at you. And you can disagree and still respect one another. Nobody's trying to dominate or pressure. People are respected for their uniqueness. And that's not only in staff but in kids, and I think that because the teachers are that way, it's part of the school atmosphere. I think that we have students attend this school who would not survive in a bigger school. Here, they're appreciated, and they're appreciated for being different. We elevate it. Because we see it in one another we see it in students. I don't have many strengths as a teacher, but this is one I do have. I have an ability to always see the good in people. Even if I think somebody is an [expletive]. (laughs) Eventually, you see that little grain, you know, and you pull it out, and eventually they become what I think the teachers are, and that is comfortable in their own skin. The curriculum guides are full of how to share ideas, but here we do it.
Ms. B. will admit (under duress and with much deprecation) to being a leader, but insists that it is only possible because of

A nurturing staff. It's like fertile ground. Because we have a lot of leaders on our staff, who'll come up with wild ideas and we all follow them. I think the fact that I've been able to work here a long time. And I feel encouraged in new ideas because I do drama productions, and I'll say, let's part the Red Sea, and everybody just sort of goes, okay. I'm not surrounded by negativity. I'm not surrounded by put-downs, turf-protection. I'm surrounded by people who are willing to do anything, and, for example, last year I was doing a fair bit in the re-organization of student council, and my principal gave me a period a week this semester to try to do something, to try to build with it. That kind of encouragement is rare. We believe this school is rare in doing that, and I think that's why we are so dynamic, is because these people just pull together. You can't grow an orchid in a ....tip. (laughs) (Interview, November 20, 2001)

As the staff member who usually is the one who has to figure out what to do with all the Red Sea water between scenes, I can attest to the co-operative spirit among staff. The drama production that gave Ms. B. the idea for the integrated curriculum project in the first place is a good example. She researched and wrote the play over a period of a year, and when she brought the manuscript to the staff there was an immediate 'signing-on': one teacher handled the makeup, another the costumes, another the front-of-house duties, another supervised the music, another was assistant director. I was in charge of audio-visual effects,
sound, lighting, and pyrotechnics. (We had a real mine explosion, on cue, nightly.) The rest of the staff who didn't take on those specific responsibilities helped build the sets, paint them, and provide supervision. When we took the play "on the road," first to the local University Theatre, and then to the major civic theatre in the district, there were more than enough volunteers on staff to handle all the necessary tasks. Nobody had to be wheedled into helping—it was something you just did.

Ms. B.'s understanding of the place of leadership in this particular procedure of power is as follows:

It's a mystery to me why I can say, let's do this, and away I go, and people follow. Kids, other people. I don't mean follow unquestioningly by any stretch of the imagination but they jump on board and do the most amazing things and I'm not sure what it is. I know I'm... I think I have a certain amount of vision. I think I see what could be rather than what is. I think I appreciate people. I like people. I like to have a good time when I'm doing something. That makes it, most of the time, fun to jump on board and follow. Not always. That's about it...I'm not well-organized, by any stretch of the imagination. I have had to learn to delegate, and I'm not very good at it. Fortunately, the kind of people who follow are the kind who just see what needs to be done, and do it. Although I'm not organized and don't always see the next step, I feel an obligation to the people who follow. I don't like the word 'follow' because they don't really follow, it's more of a team. They join you. But they do look to you for the answers. I
sometimes kill myself trying to find out what’s happening for the next day (laughs) so at least I have an answer or two. Yeah, I think I have fun when I’m doing something. I like everyone around me to have fun with it. I think I have the vision, and I think I’m also damn stubborn. I think people kind of know, they’re not too sure where it’s going sometimes, but I think they know I won't give up, it’ll get done. It’ll turn out and it’ll be good. That's all I can think of and it's always a mystery. It’s quite a mystery! (laughs)

(Interview, November 20, 2001)

Perhaps it isn’t really such a mystery. When asked where there was power in the school, the Principal answered that

Power, in this school, is in the place where respect is allocated. People who have earned, by virtue of whatever, respect from others wield power. Some of that’s official, but much is unofficial, and the power comes, I think, from people who, by virtue of in some cases personality, in some cases by their actions, some it’s just their words and personality, but once the staff as a whole, that amorphous whatever the staff as a whole is—wish I knew what it was—once that staff as a whole accords respect to a person on staff, then that person becomes fairly powerful. That person becomes the priest or priestess of the school culture regardless of the authority structure. (Interview, December 5, 2001)

Ms. B. has earned that respect from her commitment to her students, to her profession, and her ability to do the most amazing things with kids in drama.
productions, therefore she has power in a milieu where such things are valued and actively supported.

Another aspect of the purposeful co-operation is the attitude of administration to new ideas and ventures from staff. The Principal sees their role as Supportive. To me I see, particularly in our times, it's a supportive, facilitative role, rather than a driving role. I operate strictly under the premise that educators are highly-trained, qualified individual professionals and know what they are doing. I just believe that. Rightly or wrongly, I just believe that. And that the role of administration is to facilitate and support their professional programs. So, in terms of a project like what you are looking at, I see the role of administration as saying, What is it you want to do? Can we do this? Answering what I call the technical-delegate questions. The nuts and bolts. Will it work? Can we help you with it? If it won’t work what changes can we make? And sometimes we have, not by virtue of any training or expertise, but just by virtue of our position, knowledge of things that are going on in the district that may or may not make it possible for our professionals to do what they want to do. I see our role here as assisting, and if things look feasible and worthwhile and possible, saying, here’s how we can help. If there are problems, either pointing them out or helping to iron them out. (Interview, December 5, 2001)

The Vice-Principal agrees:
I think [the staff] have a fairly free rein. The opportunity's there. I think the opportunity's there to work harder in some areas. I view us as professionals and it might be on a personal level, it might be on a professional level, or anywhere in between... I think, as professionals, I would hope they could go ahead. (Interview, December 5, 2001)

This is not just politically-correct talk, either. In actual day-to-day working, their theory and practice completely correspond.

It is interesting that one staff member, and member of the ad hoc group, Ms. R., expressed some reservations about the amount of co-operation in the school. Even though she attests that the staff is wonderful at this school. In the last couple of years I've had a lot of really good support from the staff at this school. I can't say enough good things about them. I mean, if I need help in any way, I just have to ask, and they've come up with ideas to do this or that... (Interview, December 11, 2001)

she also was concerned that...I've run into a couple of roadblocks when it comes to coming up with an idea to go do something. They never said, this has been done before and it doesn't work. It could be because I'm not experienced—this is only my third year altogether. So it just might not work. But it's not just in this school, because this is the third school I've been in so far. There always seems to be a little bit of a roadblock. (Interview, December 11, 2001)
I tried to elicit from Ms. R. the source of the ‘roadblock’, but she was unwilling to talk outside of generalities about “stepping on someone’s toes.” Over the next few days after this interview I tried to steer a number of informal conversations with other staff members onto this topic to try to see why there was opposition to Ms. R.’s plan. I got the distinct impression that other staff thought she was indeed stepping on toes, trying to interfere with the way Student Services and the Consulting Teacher were organizing their assistance time. After transcribing this interview and thinking about those conversations, I wrote in my journal that

I guess it all comes down to the respect that [the Principal] was talking about. [Ms. R.] is well-liked, and we have a lot of compassion for her because of her parents dying, but maybe she hasn’t earned the respect that would let her propose a system like she wants. And too many other people would be affected by what she wants. Maybe we don’t want to see her fall flat by trying to set up something like that. (Journal entry, December 16, 2001)

I have to admit, that a few weeks later, after the Christmas break, when I transcribed this journal entry, it bothered me, and still does. My attempt at rationalizing the reason is fairly lame. I imagine that, like just about any human interaction, purposeful co-operation has a limit, and Ms. R. is not quite yet a full member of the D.A. Society.
Positive Procedures of Power—

Interpersonal Care

In a conversation with the Vice-Principal about the pressures on the staff from the 'outside world', he used a term that would be instantly recognized by almost any North American, “It's the Alamo; we're tight!” (Journal entry, November 30, 2001). That mental image of a crumbling, besieged building held by a motley crew of idealists with scarce resources, surrounded by seemingly insurmountable forces, seems particularly à propos of Black Rock High School. However, more important than the 'Alamo' image is the assertion that “we're tight.” Ms. B. call it a “positive staff environment”, where Black Rock staff have “enthusiasm and willingness”, and gives these examples:

We’re friends. We socialize. We have the Bar Of The Month Club. I would recommend this to any staff. Every month a different establishment is chosen, and every Friday you can go there and find somebody.

Sometimes there’s two people, sometimes there’s twenty. And it’s really odd, when you think about it, that after five days of working together, we could still go and tolerate one another for two or three hours, and still feel perfectly comfortable. I don’t think anybody on this staff dreads a staff party, the way I know… My husband works for a small company—there’s probably forty or fifty employees—everybody dreads the Christmas staff party. Oh, here we so, so-and-so’s going to be brown-nosing to the boss, complain, complain…you know? I’ve never heard anything like that here. It’s, let’s go, you know? You’re happy to be with these people. You don’t
live out of each other's pockets, everybody's got lives, but we share the births of our children and our grandchildren... Yeah! It's a home, it's a place to come to. You know, nobody likes to go to work, you dream of winning the lottery and retiring, but if you have to go to work every morning, this is a good place to do it. You look forward to it. (Interview, December 12, 2001)

During the time I have been at Black Rock High School, my mother, father, and mother-in-law passed away, and my daughter went through a heart-breaking divorce. A consolation in all of these hard times was the caring and concern demonstrated by my colleagues, a caring that went far beyond the simple words of sympathy that normal social discourse would demand. That caring has always been present for any staff whenever the inevitable tragedies of life occur—the kind word, the gesture, the quiet listening, whatever was required. Nowhere was that feature more strongly demonstrated than when a young, very popular Vice-Principal was killed in the middle of the summer in a car crash. All staff were there at the school the next day, planning a reception in the school gymnasium for after the funeral. Every classroom in the school, and each room in the office has a framed photograph of him. The annual invitational basketball tournament was re-named in his honour (he had been the girls' basketball coach for years). His school jacket is framed on the gym wall. In recognition of our caring, and in his memory, his family donated a new electronic scoreboard to the gym.
A specific instance of Interpersonal Care as a procedure of power is the way in which Ms. B. views the members of staff who are not exactly opposed to the *ad hoc* committee’s proposal, but not ‘on-board’ either. She has no intention of trying to force them into something they are not comfortable with. As she says, “I feel if I was to impose my will on them, my vision, that it would be detrimental—I’d never win them over,” because “this would be just too huge of a leap for them right now.” (Interview, October 10, 2001) Her particular procedure of power is subtle—wait until they see that the idea is a good, workable one and get them involved slowly:

- Start in little ways where it won’t disturb their basic classroom structure.
- And try and tantalize them that way insofar as I can. There’s no point in going in whole hog, and saying, “No, this is how you should be doing this.” It won’t work. Fortunately, in our school, there are few enough of them that it’s manageable. We can deal with it. I’m hoping that the enthusiasm of the group and the enthusiasm of the kids when things get rolling will make them want to take part in some way. Maybe then they’ll be more receptive to hearing how they could contribute. (Interview, October 10, 2001)

Knowing Ms. B. as well as I do, and in particular her aversion to having anything ‘foisted on her’, I believe she is extending the same consideration to others.

Ms. R. expressed a concern that she would like to work with the students in extra-curricular activities, but hasn’t been given the chance:

- I did put down that I’d like to work with the yearbook, and that type of thing, and that I’d work with the grad., but I’ve never been called [on].
She adds:

[Ms. K] has been doing it; she just says, I've got everyone going... So I say, okay, maybe next year. (Interview, December 11, 2001)

I thought about her comment quite a bit, and was puzzled about why on a staff like ours where everyone works together so well, an offer of help like this would go unheeded. However, when I transcribed the interview, I noticed something that I had forgotten was said:

Ms. R.: I'd like to be involved more with the kids because I think that if you're involved with the kids in extra-curricular, they see you in a different light, and sometimes that changes their behaviour in the classroom. I'm not sure...(pause)

Interviewer: I've found it does.

Ms. R.: And that would be a good thing.

Ms. R. is concerned about her classroom management skills, and not without reason. She has, on a number of occasions this year, remarked about feeling 'swamped' by the whole experience of teaching, and to be fair, she is still very new at it and therefore inexperienced. In the same journal entry (December 16, 2001) that I commented on Ms. R. stepping on toes, I also wrote

Maybe it's not that [Ms. K., Ms. L, and Ms. D.] don't want her help. Maybe it's that they see her struggling so much with everything that they don't want to burden her any more than she already is.

Even in terms of the project, there is concern with Ms. R.'s lack of experience:
**Ms. B.:** To be frank, I think we have a very novice [names a subject] teacher, and we're struggling with how on earth we're going to get that component to work. And I may have to end up having to build it. It's not a bad thing, but I'm looking at it as an arduous task right now.

**Interviewer:** More than it would be if everyone were putting in...?

**Ms. B.:** If I had an experienced [names a subject] teacher doing it. Yeah, we have to put it together.

There is no blaming here, though. Rather, we have to put it together.

Just as there are procedures of power that oppose the work of the group, and those that support it, there are those procedures of power which I have termed 'ambivalent,' not because they have no effect, but because their effect does both. That is, sometimes these procedures of power are negative, and sometimes they are positive. The next section describes two ambivalent procedures of power that emerged from the data.

**Ambivalent Procedures of Power—**

**Numbers of People Involved**

One of the themes evident throughout the interviews with colleagues and with myself, through my journal entries, has been the size of the school and the size of the staff. For example, I recorded this in my journal at the beginning of the present school year:

The opening staff meeting this morning had one thing we kept coming back to, over and over-- the size of the school. We keep assuring ourselves that we have something truly wonderful to offer our students.
because we are small. We know everyone; everyone knows us. And I agree, it's great. However, we spent countless hours today debating how we were going to offer a complete program to the high school kids, how were we going to split the junior highs (those grade eights HAVE to be in two classes or I'll go nuts!), how if we lose any more kids we'll lose another staff member. Round and round it goes. (Journal entry, August 31, 2001)

I see school size as a procedure of power because of the tremendous effect that it has on everything that happens at Black Rock High, including the curriculum project studied by this research. This procedure of power is different from many of the others because it is not initiated by any member of the ad hoc group, or any person directly influencing its activities, like the AISI co-ordinators, the school administration, etc. However, as Senge (1990) notes, “structures of which we are unaware hold us prisoner” (p. 94). I am confident that we as a staff have always been aware that the small size of the school is important, but that awareness has been amorphous and in the background. This study shows that as an influencing factor it cannot be dismissed; it determines to a great extent who we are and what we do.

I have termed this aspect an ambivalent procedure of power because it has both positive and negative effects that roughly counterbalance each other. The positive power that derives from a small staff was mentioned by virtually everyone. The Principal noted that he thought the collegial nature of the Black Rock High staff was due in large part to its small size:
I've taught in some very large schools and I've taught in some very small schools. I find that the smaller the size, the more the staff tends to become a collaborative or a collegial whole. In large schools the authority structure tends to be more formal, and in a large school that power-award-respect continuum may not be working, but the authority structure works just by virtue of the size. I think there you have the same isolated individuals but they don't have that collegial community. In a smaller school, and I don't know where the cut-off point is between big and small, but you tend to find a sense of community. And then, the formal hierarchical structure takes on less significance and less meaning. In a large school it becomes highly significant because your community is so large that you don't have the opportunity to build those respect-networks. (Interview, December 5, 2001)

The Consulting Teacher adds that "...maybe because it's such a small school that people feel a membership, a belonging, by contributing." One result of the size is

...open acceptance of anybody and everybody as a part of the staff. It probably goes over into the students, but right now I'm thinking, there has never been a situation where the staff has been "clique-y," where there is a group that eat lunch together, or a group that do things together. It's always been very open and inclusive, possibly because it's small—you can't segregate too much or you'd be....

Interviewer: By yourself?
Ms. W.: (laughs) Independent. Well, I’m not just sure what it is. There is a cohesiveness, an acceptance, a collegiality that is all-inclusive. (Interview, December 13, 2001)

The problems that derive from small size affect everyone. Ms. R. notes that I think with a small school, teachers are going to have a mish-mash of different subjects. In bigger schools, well, when I was in Calgary, all I had was Computers. I could really dive into that subject and really know that subject. (Interview, December 11, 2001)

Ms. B. is happy working on a collaborative staff, but she sees the ability to collaborate “wearing thin, because we’re short-staffed.” (Interview, November 20, 2001)

Ambivalent Procedures of Power—
Job Action

A theme that runs through many of the procedures of power reported in this research is the frustration that comes from the situation that not only Black Rock teachers, but all public school teachers in Alberta find themselves in—being asked to do more with less. There has been, since the beginning of this school year, a sense that a ‘line in the sand’ had to be drawn, and that the money available for teacher salaries, class size reduction, and teacher recruitment had to be dramatically increased. There was a tacit understanding from the government that, because the province’s nurses were given a massive salary increase (which, everyone agreed, was richly deserved), that teachers and the education system would be treated in the same way. This was not to be the case,
however. The government's Department of Learning, which oversees all educational matters including all funding (school boards cannot collect taxes in any way) announced that the funding allocation for the 2001-2002 school year would include a 4% increase for teachers' salaries, and the following year it would be 2%. There was very little other money to address what teachers believed were critical concerns, such as overcrowded classrooms and lack of other resources. The end result was that the day the ad hoc group's curriculum innovation was slated to go into effect, February 4, 2002, a large percentage of teachers in the province, including Black Rock teachers, went on strike. Within two weeks, that percentage was the majority—21 thousand teachers, affecting 350,000 students. It might be argued that a nearly province-wide job action is beyond the scope of this research. However, the work of Foucault (1978, 1980) reminds us that large social institutions such as governments or the church have pervasive power over the actions of individuals in ways they could never even imagine. It is manifest here, as well.

For one thing, the critical planning time for the group was the few months prior to the February 4 deadline. On February 4, the second semester timetable would begin, and we had assurances from the Principal that he would timetable the semester to fit our plans, as much as it was possible to do so. However, we would have had to have all of our plans clearly in place, ready to go at least a few weeks prior to that time, so that he could work it out effectively. We did not have those plans ready. Ms. B., in her capacity as negotiator on behalf of the teachers, spent so much time on that priority that the work did not get finished. Meetings
were often abandoned because Ms. B. was at a bargaining session, or preparing for one, or on her way up to union headquarters in Edmonton. Ms. B. often complained about the time spent on this, but we all acknowledged that it was necessary, and that our group’s work was ‘small potatoes’ by comparison.

Along with this interference, there was a general feeling of malaise among staff brought on by our disappointment and disillusion over what we felt was a broken promise—more than once I heard a colleague refer to the situation as a “slap in the face.” I wrote in my journal right after we got back from Christmas break that

...nobody feels like doing anything extra. There’s no enthusiasm for the project at all. We’re all making grim jokes about what we’ll do next semester—if there is a next semester. I’ve never seen it this bad. (Journal entry, January 9, 2002)

There is another ‘procedures of power’ aspect to this situation as well. The Alberta Teachers’ Association, which by law represents all public educators (and that includes the separate Catholic systems), has substantial power in educational matters. Its vets all curricular changes, provides the personnel to grade Provincial Achievement Tests and Provincial Diploma Exams, and has co-control with the Department of Learning over the teacher certification process, to name some examples. Faron Ellis, a respected political scientist at Lethbridge Community College, says that “It has been an ongoing power struggle. It was just a matter of time before they came to loggerheads where there was going to be a fight of the proportion we’re seeing now.” Ellis maintains that the province wants
to break the control that the Alberta Teachers' Association has over curriculum and educational standards. ("Strike about control of system: observers", 2002)

An interesting interaction happened as a sidebar to this power struggle between the government and the teachers. Just before teachers took the final step of actually striking, the Minister of Learning wrote a letter to the Alberta Teachers’ Association, in which he indicated that, “In the hopes of averting a strike, I indicated that the government could look at assuming the teachers’ portion of the unfunded pension liability....” (Dr. L. Oberg, personal communication, January 30, 2002) If such an offer had been real, it would have been worth about 54 million dollars in the current school year, or about 3 percent of every teacher’s salary, and would have been something that the Association has been fighting for over many years. Long Range Policy 6.B.6 of the Alberta Teachers’ Association’s Annual Representative Assembly in the years 1997, 2000, and 2001 states “BE IT RESOLVED, that The Alberta Teachers’ Association urge the Government of Alberta to allocate funds in order to eliminate the entire unfunded liability of the Alberta Teachers’ Retirement Fund.” (http://www.teachers.ab.ca/policy/policy.cfm?p_ID=61) An ATA News article ("Time for teachers to take action on pension," 2001) explains that

We are in the eighth year of a 68-year plan (ending in 2060) to discharge the unfunded liability. The unfunded liability at the time the Memorandum of Understanding was signed was approximately $3.2 billion and will continue to grow (currently $4.6 billion) to more than $17 billion by 2040.
The unfunded liability was created essentially by the following two situations:

1. low contributions by teachers, as mentioned by Dr. Hyman in his column, and

2. the failure of our provincial government to put any matching contributions into the plan for over 30 years. In the meantime, full pensions were being paid out of the existing plan supported only by teachers' contributions. By 1991, the plan was in a deficit situation.

A fully funded pension plan would require total contributions similar, I assume, to the Local Authorities Pension Plan, where contributions (employee and employer) are less than 10 percent of salary, rather than the nearly 22 percent currently being paid into ATRF by teachers and government. This would reduce our contributions by approximately 50 percent. For some teachers that translates into as much as $250/month.


In other words, this would have been a deal worth a great deal of money to teachers and might well have made many re-consider their positions regarding a strike. However, this 'offer' was reported in the media only; when the Alberta Teachers' Association tried to 'pin down' individual Members of the Legislative Assembly (who would have to have agreed to such an offer if it included 'new money'), a different story emerged. It seems that the money would just have been transferred from other already existing educational funds. Alberta Teachers'
Association President Larry Booi, addressing teachers at a rally in front of the Legislature on February 7, 2002, said "Here was the big pension offer, $54 million that would have settled it. It turns out, where did the $54 million come from? From the classrooms." Dr. Oberg had also stated that the 'offer' was contingent on there being no strike action; as soon as the first local went on strike on February 4, 2002, the deal disappeared. As the canon of Foucault's work indicates very clearly, the procedures of power are at work: the struggle is not about education, or fairness, or money, but about who is in control.

The job action had another unintended power effect as well: it stopped short the verification phase of this research. During the three weeks were on strike, none of the participants in this study were interested in reading drafts or suggesting codings. We were then legislated back to work by the government declaring the strike a "public emergency". This declaration was struck down by the courts—procedures of power on a much higher level than the ones investigated by this research. However, teachers decided to continue job action by a different route, by withdrawing from all activities that did not directly relate to teaching classes. This effectively stopped work on the restructuring project, and prevented any further participation in the verification of the findings. Fortunately, I had had a number of conversations with members of the ad hoc group before the strike, and they had concurred with the findings presented here.

This chapter has presented the coded findings and themes that have emerged from the data, organized as procedures of power. These individual
findings will now be considered both in terms of themselves, that is, holistically, and also in terms of the literature.
Chapter Five
Discussion
Power and Leadership

The main question—how power affects the participants in a school restructuring effort—and the sub-questions about power that instigated this research will now be considered in light of the findings described in the previous chapter.

Some answers to the first sub-question, which asks where procedures of power originate, are found in the data. The data showed two main loci of power impacting the Black Rock restructuring effort, both of which could be called an “us-versus-them” situation. The first locus of power was the opposition of the external vision of the restructuring to the internal vision of it. The second locus of power was the external situation—all the pressures and circumstances that define public school teaching today—against the internal situation of one group of teachers trying to make one meaningful change in their workplace.

The first of these two loci of power involved two different versions of the same vision—the vision of teachers empowered in their own professional development. Both visions were promulgated by powerful people—Mr. A. and Ms. B.—although the power that each had came from a different source. Mr. A. had two kinds of power; French and Raven (1968) would refer to these as Reward Power and Expert Power. His Reward Power stemmed from the fact that he could and did control a large quantity of money, a scarce resource in public education. This money was potentially desirable to the members of the ad hoc...
group because it allowed them access to materials, time, and conferences. His Expert Power stemmed from the fact that he was legitimately knowledgeable about techniques of professional development, and in particular the areas of curriculum being addressed by the *ad hoc* group. He had read and understood the experts in this field, and he knew and used the terminology. It is interesting that Mr. A. embodied a combination of all three of Chin and Benne's (1976) historical strategies for effecting change. The empirical-rational strategies were used on the basis of the fact that he *knew* what the right way to approach the problem was, the normative-re-educative strategies assumed we would re-orient ourselves to his patterns of attitudes, values, and skills, and the power-coercive strategies were used when the first two proved unsuccessful.

Ms. B.'s power stemmed from two sources as well; what French and Raven (1968) would call Expert Power and Referent Power. Ms. B.'s Expert Power stemmed not from any technical or theoretical base, but from her reputation derived from many years of successful classroom practice, and her willingness and ability to tackle a difficult curricular challenge, with all the work that it entailed. Her Referent Power stemmed from the high esteem in which she was held by other members of Black Rock staff, both for her personal attributes of caring, friendship, determination, and past successes, and for her professional skills. It could be said that each of these two opponents came to the battlefield adequately armed.

The question can be asked, then, why was Ms. B.'s Expert Power so readily accepted, while Mr. A.'s Expert Power was rejected. The answer lies, I
believe, in French and Raven's (1968) statement that others comply, or accept, the power because they believe in the power holder's knowledge and competence. Ms. B. has a history of collegiality with the other participants, leading us to believe in the validity of her Expert Power; Mr. A. has no such history. Also, it is not a case of two people using Expert Power and seeing the same situation completely differently. It is not the same situation. From the perspective of the *ad hoc* committee, Ms. B.'s Expert Power is useful part of a practical process of discovery, of building a curriculum from the ground up through trial and error, whereas Mr. A.'s Expert Power is perceived as rigidly theoretical and outside of our needs.

Each also used a variety of the nine Influence Tactics outlined by Nahavandi (2000). Mr. A. used Rational Persuasion in that he presented to the group a variety of background materials supporting his idea of what we should do, he attended some of our meetings and tried to interject his thoughts and ideas, and he 'lobbied' members of the group from time to time. His efforts were successful only to the extent that we listened politely (with the possible exception of the meeting of October 17, 2001, where he was continually rebuffed, perhaps because we felt he was 'pushing too hard'). He also used Ingratiation, especially at the January 31, 2001 meeting where he offered to make our project the "anchor piece" of the AISI projects, and make us "resident experts." This was also evident at the meeting on the evening of February 14, 2001 where he and his colleague asked why the other groups in the Division weren't being as "co-operative" and "professional" as we were. Another tactic was Exchange, where
we were provided with perquisites such as a week-long trip to Phoenix during the winter, and offered a variety of others. However, his most prevalent tactic was Pressure, which was exerted through his control of the application and approval process. It was this tactic that probably negated all the others, especially as far as Ms. B. was concerned. Nahavandi indicates that this tactic has low effectiveness and low commitment, and that certainly was the case in this research. Interestingly, the two tactics that Nahavandi indicates have the highest effectiveness and commitment, Inspirational Appeal and Consultation, were totally absent from the interchange between Mr. A. and the group. Wheatley's (1999) phrase rings true here: “No one can hope to lead any organization by standing outside or ignoring the web of relationships through which all work is accomplished” (p. 165).

Ms. B. used Rational Persuasion to a certain extent, clearly outlining for the rest of the group the parameters of her vision. She didn’t ‘use’ Personal Appeal, in the sense that she did not set out to deliberately capitalize on her popularity with other staff (even though she recognized its existence), but that was a major factor in why the rest of the group was more than willing to follow her. Probably the most prevalent tactic was Consultation. Although the idea was Ms. B.’s, and she did most of the groundwork to organize the details, she made sure that everyone had opportunity for whatever input they wanted, constantly getting feedback to see if everyone was happy with the idea, adapting and modifying as other members offered suggestions. Despite the weight of the work being Ms. B.’s, everyone felt an ownership. In a group that didn’t work together
as well as ours, there likely would have had to be a more transparent consultative process; for us, it was understood.

The second locus of power, the external reality of public school teaching versus the internal situation of one group of teachers trying to make one meaningful change in their workplace, was partly revealed in the nature of Black Rock staff. One of the most prevalent themes that was repeated over and over in the data was the strong sense of “us-ness,” the sense of friendship, collaboration, and collegiality, combined with a pervasive, collective, sense of humour that could only be described as “off-the-wall.” Early in the data collection stage of this research I wrote in my journal that Black Rock High School was “as close to MASH as you could get.” (Journal entry, September 5, 2001) The film and the subsequent television series of that name depicted a group of off-beat characters who indulged in all kinds of pranks in order to stay relatively sane in a crazy world that was violent and dangerous. At least part of Black Rock staff’s closeness, and its propensity for pranks is a way of protecting ourselves from a common enemy, that amorphous entity outside our world trying to prevent us from doing the jobs we want to do, the way we want to do them. It is evident to me that the two procedures of power identified in the research as 'purposeful co-operation' and 'interpersonal care' are compensations (perhaps even over-compensations) for the frustrations felt by staff stemming from overwork, lack of adequate resources, lack of support or expertise to deal with the students with serious problems, and lack of respect.
Another of the sub-questions asked at the outset of this research was how power and procedures of power supported and/or thwarted the group’s efforts. In the situation that I have just described, the *ad hoc* group gained a great deal of support from these two procedures of power--‘purposeful co-operation’ and ‘interpersonal care’. In fact, I doubt that the effort would have got as far as it did without them. Every attempt was made by the AISI co-ordinators to thwart, or at least substantially change, the group’s project, but this did not succeed, and this lack of success is notable. It also answers another of the sub-questions asked at the beginning of this research: Can force or procedures of power be consciously or unconsciously resisted? It fits right in with the widely-held view in the literature that top-down, coercive, mandated change or imposition of a vision is usually doomed to failure. (Fullan, 1992; Fullan, 1993; Wilkins, 1989; Marris, 1974; Goens, 2000). The fact that the *ad hoc* group had not achieved its goal by the stated time was not the result of vision highjacking, as that attempt was successfully resisted, nor lack of resources, as that problem was felt by the group to be unsolvable and therefore something to work around, nor the power of jargon (symbolic of the ‘outside expert’), as that was basically sneered at. The project was delayed by a wildcard, a strike. I use ‘delayed’ rather than ‘prevented’ or ‘stopped’ because there is no reason why the project cannot resume after the job action is over—the groundwork has been done, and the members are still enthused. It likely will have to wait until the beginning of the next school year, since when the strike is over there will be other critical tasks that will take precedence. Wheatley (1999) has a phrase that suits the situation perfectly: "We
have found something important to work on, and, because we want to make a
difference, we figure out how to do the work, together.” (p. 149).

This research also asked what the relationship was between leadership,
power, and procedures of power. The study revealed three totally different
embodiments of leadership: the styles employed by the Principal, by Ms. B., and
by Mr. A. The Principal’s style is, to use his own words, “supportive” and a
“facilitative role, rather than a driving role.” He “…operate(s) strictly under the
premise that educators are highly-trained, qualified individual professionals and
know what they are doing,” so “the role of administration is to facilitate and
support their professional programs.” He asks, “What is it you want to do? Can
we do this? Answering what I call the technical-delegate questions. The nuts and
bolts. Will it work? Can we help you with it? If it won’t work what changes can we
make?” Further, “If there are problems, either pointing them out or helping to iron
them out.” (Interview, December 5, 2001). The Principal has learned the pitfalls
of a managerial approach, and really does operate as he says he believes: he is
not the “boss,” but has tried very hard in the two years he has been at Black
Rock High School to join in collegially, with some success. Wheatley (1999) says
that “In this chaotic world we need leaders. But we don’t need bosses” (p.131).
The Principal has the second part of Wheatley’s observation down pat, but it is
still unclear whether he is a leader. To a great extent he espouses and enacts
the eight guidelines for principals developed by Fullan’s (1992) Learning
Consortium:

1. Understand the culture of the school before trying to change it.
2. Value your teachers: promote their professional growth.

3. Extend what you value.

4. Express what you value.

5. Promote collaboration, not cooptation.

6. Make menus, not mandates.

7. Use bureaucratic means to facilitate, not to constrain.

8. Connect with the wider environment.

So, what is missing? A principal who makes every attempt to embody these guidelines sounds ideal. I asked a number of people where they thought power resided in Black Rock High School. Ms. R.'s reply is instructive:

**Interviewer:** Where do you see power residing in this school, as a relative newcomer?

**Ms. R.:** (laughs) Without naming names? (pause) Not with the admin. There are some who have been here for a long time.

**Interviewer:** So, do you see groups of people, or individuals...?

**Ms. R.:** No, just individuals. They hold a lot [of power]. (Interview, December 11, 2001)

*Not with the admin(istration) is a theme that was repeated often in interviews.*

The Principal himself said that power derived from respect, and anyone accorded respect “becomes the priest or priestess of the school culture regardless of the authority structure” (Interview, December 5, 2001). The vague sense of “leaderlessness” is reported by Ms. W. in the school’s response to the problem with the grade eight students:
There may need to be a stronger clarification of roles. To start with I don’t think people were clear as to what any one person should do, and it was, “here’s a problem,” but there wasn’t any clear knowledge as to who had the responsibility and the expertise to come up with solutions or potential solutions. That seemed to drag on for quite a while. Maybe it was just a process of clearly identifying our problem, or maybe it was a sense of nobody really knowing whose problem it was or who needed to take a forward position on that. Because it concerned special needs students, as things kind of multiplied, the problems were identified more strongly, the problems seemed to drag on, maybe because it needed that length of time to identify what the problem really was. But, I got a sense that people were feeling that because the students were special needs students, that put it into my ballpark. I wasn’t clear as to whether it would be my role to take over the whole problem, or to come up with ways to assist other people in dealing with the problem. (Interview, December 13, 2001)

Persell and Cookson’s study (as cited in Hall and Hord, 1987) lists one of the nine recurring behaviours of effective principals is “being a forceful and dynamic leader” (p. 43). Hall and Hord also cite Lieberman and Miller’s synthesis of school improvement studies: “the principal is the critical person in making change happen” (p. 45). To be fair to the Principal, this is his first year in that role, and he is still finding his way. There is, however, a sense of a leadership vacuum at the top, a sense of powerlessness where there could be effective power for change.
Ms. B.'s role cannot be seen, as Hall and Hord (1987) would put it, as a second change facilitator, or 'consigliere.' This is because the change agency was not initiated by the Principal, or other 'legitimate power' leader, but by Ms. B. herself. However, as Fullan (1993) notes, "Only when individuals take action to alter their own environments is there any chance for deep change" (p.130). Her style of leadership is to some extent the result of this independent position, but also the result of her personality, skill set, and history. Hall and Hord (1987) would see Ms. B. as an "initiator". They define this style as having a number of facets. First, the initiator has a clear vision, beliefs, and goals. Ms. B. knows what she wants to have happen, and why it would be good. Second, initiators seek input from colleagues. Ms. B. has encouraged collegial input to shape the details of the vision. Third, initiators "push". It is clear that Ms. B.'s energy is the driving force behind the *ad hoc* group's activities. Fourth, initiators are willing to push the envelope of present policies and structures, and are creative in acquiring resources. Ms. B. was able to elicit a promise of timetable changes (no small feat in a school as small as Black Rock High, where timetabling is a nightmare at best) even before any tangible plan was made, and was able to obtain AISI funding despite serious differences in philosophy with the guardians of those resources. Last, "initiators tend to be adamant, but not unkind". Ms. B. is clear what she wants to have happen, but is equally clear that it cannot be a burden to either the *ad hoc* group, or the rest of the staff (p. 230).

Ms. B.'s power to lead is based to some extent on charisma, that somewhat shadowy quality that Yukl (1989) says "...result(s) from follower
perceptions of leader qualities and behaviour" (p. 205). Her leadership style fits in well with Conger and Kanugo's (1988) understanding of charismatic leadership. They identify three stages in charismatic leadership. In the first stage, assessment, charismatic leaders “...actively search out existing or potential shortcomings in the status quo" (p. 83). Ms. B. began her quest for change not as an instruction from the outside, but from an inner desire to make a difference in the lives of her students, and in the community as a whole. In the second stage, articulating the vision, charismatic leaders effectively present the negatives inherent in the status quo and the positives of the “...attractive and attainable alternative” (p. 86). Ms. B. did not have to convince her colleagues of the problems with the status quo; we were living them. She did, however, present her idea in glowing terms. The meeting of September 19, 2001 clearly shows that. As well, “Charismatic leaders' use of rhetoric, high energy, persistence, unconventional and risky behaviour, heroic deeds, and personal sacrifices all serve to articulate their high motivation and enthusiasm, which then become contagious among their followers" (p. 87). These terms all describe Ms. B., as long as one remembers the scale (see 'Considerations of Scale', below). In the third stage, achieving the vision, the charismatic leader, “By personal example and risk, countercultural, empowering, and impression management practices, ...conveys goals, demonstrates means to achieve, builds follower trust, [and] motivates followers” (p. 81). Again, keeping scale in mind—Conger and Kanugo are talking about the great and powerful in business and industry—Ms. B. is being described.
Mr. A.'s style of leadership is interesting in that he knows what he is supposed to do: he says his role is collegial and facilitating. He is to “try to assist people in discovering what they want to do with professional development, and then try to work with them to make that a reality, to realize their goals. Almost a mentoring situation” (Interview, September 12, 2001). This is the classic stance of theorists and practitioners such as Fullan (1991, 1992, 1993), Wheatley (1999), and Wilkins (1989). It has the dual requirements of evolutionary planning or visioning, and power for change. So, why is his style unsuccessful? As the saying goes, his style is more ‘talk’ than ‘walk.’ His real style, or “theories-in-use” as Senge (1990) would call them is managerial, directive, even manipulative. One of the questions the research posed at the outset was what the relationships were between power and knowledge. One such relationship is evident here. Mr. A. clearly has valuable, accurate knowledge about curriculum and pedagogy. He also has considerable knowledge about procedures and bureaucracy. That knowledge, however, does not give Mr. A. any real power, because that knowledge was neither required nor desired by the ad hoc group. He was unsuccessful in his attempt to influence the ad hoc committee’s direction, and he was generally unsuccessful in his stewardship of the AISI money. So, while the knowledge itself did not give him power in the sense of bringing about a desired result, the procedures of power he engaged in caused a great deal of disharmony, even acrimony. This needs to be contrasted with Ms. B.’s knowledge and its resultant power: her knowledge was of pedagogical practice (as opposed to theory) on one hand, and the culture of the group, on the other.
Having both gave her extraordinary power for leadership in the sense meant by Barker (1992): “A leader is a person you would follow to a place you wouldn’t go by yourself” (p.163).

**Culture**

It is entirely appropriate that Ms. B.’s attempt at reform began with a consideration of what was lacking in the culture of the school and of the community, and saw her proposed change as a way of building a more positive culture. Deal and Peterson’s insightful study of *Shaping School Culture* (1999) concludes that

*Our efforts at educational improvement often do not work to guarantee good schools for everyone. Reforms that focus only on changing structures or school governance will never succeed in building positive organic forms that will serve all our students. Reforms that bring new technologies or higher standards won’t succeed without being embedded in supportive, spirit-filled cultures. Schools won’t become what students deserve until cultural patterns and ways are shaped to support learning. Leadership from throughout the school will be needed to build and maintain such positive, purposeful places to learn and grow.* (p. 137)

This research demonstrated that another important aspect of the culture of Black Rock High School is the way its staff interacts with each other—a culture of cooperation and caring, a culture of humour, and a culture of defensiveness against outside forces. Only time will tell if these aspects of culture, and the evolving
nature of leadership in the school, will have enough power to counteract the
negative cultural aspects that prompted Ms. B. in the first place.

Lessons About Language

"We [teachers] are the only group that bring people in to insult us."

Dr. John Patterson, Professor Emeritus, University of
Alberta, Keynote Address to the South Western
Alberta Teachers’ Convention, Lethbridge, Alberta,
February 21, 2002

One of the surprising findings in this research was the depth of
antagonism by Black Rock staff towards jargon, or “educationese,” and those
who, as Dr. Patterson says, make their living insulting others with it. Every
specialized group has its own language, whether it be doctors or car mechanics.
As Lutz (1989) points out,

Within a group, jargon functions as a kind of verbal shorthand that allows
members of the group to communicate with each other clearly, efficiently,
and quickly. Indeed, it is a mark of membership in the group to be able to
use and understand the group’s jargon. (p. 3)

Black Rock teachers are proud, well-educated professionals, so why not
embrace the jargon? Lutz (1989) gives us a hint:

[jargon] can be—and often is—pretentious, obscure, and esoteric
terminology used to give an air of profundity, authority, and prestige to
speakers and their subject matter. Jargon as doublespeak often makes
the simple appear complex, the ordinary profound, the obvious insightful.
In this sense it is used not to express but impress. (p. 4)
Lutz goes on to give examples of egregious misuse of jargon, where simple concepts are turned into gobbledygook. At one extreme it is a simple re-naming:

Those aren't desks in the elementary classroom, they're “pupil stations.” Teachers, who are “classroom managers” applying an “action plan” to a “knowledge base,” are concerned with the “basic fundamentals,” which are “inexorably linked” to the “education user’s” “time-on-task.” (p. 14)

At the other extreme, it is truly bizarre:

In other words, feediness is the shared information between toputness, where toputness is at a time just prior to the inputness. (p. 15)

Lutz concludes that, “At times, doublespeak seems to be the primary product of educators” (p. 15). He adds that

Doublespeak permeates all areas of society, so there is no reason why education shouldn’t be infected as well. However, education doublespeak is particularly depressing because, more than anyone, teachers should be leading the fight against doublespeak by teaching their students how to spot it, how to defend themselves against it, and how to eliminate it in their own writing and speaking. Unfortunately, too many in education have found that using doublespeak can advance their careers and their pay, so they have decided to give in to it. (p. 63)

There can be no doubt that some of Black Rock staff’s antagonism towards jargon stems from this educationally-sound desire for clarity of language. However, there is a much deeper reason, and it is part of the main theme emerging from this research—the sense of “us-against-them” that has been
manifest in so many other ways. When I asked Ms. B. (at a social get-together at strike headquarters) why she disliked jargon so much she replied, “They’re always talking down to us. And nothing we say holds any weight.” Then she added, “The problem is, good teachers aren’t running the show. When I look at [names the Superintendent], what time did he spend in the classroom? Six, seven years? That’s the problem with our profession. We educate ourselves right out of the classroom.” Ms. W. (who was also at the get-together and participated in the conversation) agreed, and added “They can label them [i.e. special needs students] ‘till the pigs can fly’. But we still have to deal with them.” When I jokingly pointed out that I, as a potential Doctor of Education, would be ‘in the other camp,’ so to speak, Ms. B. said, “Oh, no. You’ve got thirty-some years in the classroom” (personal communication, February 20, 2002). At Black Rock High then, the objection is not so much with jargon as with its use: the presumption of the jargon users is that they know more than we do—they are the ones we bring in to insult us—yet we are the ones ‘in the trenches,’ doing the work.

**Considerations of Scale**

What seems clear from this research is that the teachers of Black Rock High School engaged in this planned change are behaving in ways described and predicted by much of the normative leadership literature. What is perhaps different here is the scale. That is, much of the literature deals with large-scale interventions or change attempts. Here the change is a small one, designed to be implemented only by the originators of that change, at least at the outset. What is
true in the macrocosm is shown in this research to be also true in the microcosm, or, perhaps, to coin a phrase, the nanocosm.

In addition, the scale of the procedures of power is substantially different in this research from that of the research that prompted it—Foucault and Blades. Foucault spent his professional career investigating the ‘big’ questions of human power interactions, showing how there has been throughout history a tendency towards certain kinds of control structures working effectively in the background, destining every aspect of peoples’ lives. Blades showed how a variety of non-concerted reactionary forces and special interest groups prevented a philosophical change in a high school curriculum. This research moves the focus in many times closer, but finds the same kinds of procedures of power at work at this scale.

Research Directions

This research has showed that an external ‘enemy’ in the form of outside pressures helped build a solid sense of community among the Black Rock staff. Further research that investigated the processes of this community-strengthening effect would be useful. To what extent is the nature of the group defined by this common enemy? It would also be useful to investigate situations where this outside enemy disappeared or lost its force—would this change the nature of the group formerly ‘under siege’, so to speak? What dimensions would change, and to what extent would they change?

The French have a saying: “Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose,” literally, “the more it changes, the more it is the same thing.” Despite all the
changes that have happened to education and in education, one can argue that change for the better has been minimal.

This research has pointed out how procedures of power affected an attempt at change in one specific instance. The more we learn about what affects change at the microcosmic or nanocosmic level, the more we can help that change to happen effectively, or encourage that change to happen at all. This research needs to be replicated as often as possible, in as many different situations as possible, in order to discover common and disparate elements affecting change. Research is needed that has as its focus the real worlds of real teachers in real schools, where those teachers, singly or in groups, struggle to make meaningful changes for the better. Specific questions about culture and leadership in schools need to be investigated, in regard to this change agency. We need to investigate how to avoid the alienation and deracination caused by our tendency to use (or, perhaps, mis-use) jargon. Successes and failures alike are of interest, as are all the different manifestations of procedures of power. As an accretion of such research happens, perhaps a theory of change that takes into account this nanocosmic scale will emerge.
References Cited


September 2000.


Informed Consent

September ___, 2001

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a research study entitled *Procedures of Power and School Restructuring*. In this study I will be attempting to understand and describe the way power works among the participants in our school's attempt at creating a new interdisciplinary unit for grade eight students. Data will be gathered from the beginning of the present school year until the end of the first semester, January 30, 2002. This data will be interpreted as part of a Dissertation to be written in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at the University of Montana.

Listed below are details of your role and rights, and how the data generated by this research will be treated in order to ensure privacy and confidentiality, and minimize risks to you.

1. I wish to interview you with regard to your feelings, impressions, and ideas regarding the way power works at [Black Rock High School], particularly (but not limited to) regarding the grade eight project. You have the right to inform the researcher that you do not wish to pursue any particular line of questions or type of inquiry.

2. I also wish to collect detailed notes including (but not limited to) full transcriptions of meetings of the committee attempting this curricular change.
Written records consisting of field notes, meeting notes, and transcriptions of interviews, are open to review by you as the subject concerned, at any time.

3. You will be asked to participate, if you so desire, in the interpreting of the data, and you have the right to veto any particular interpretation, or require an alternative interpretation to be included.

4. No data will be released, shared, published, or made available in any way other than the dissertation for the University of Montana for which it is being collected, without your express consent. All data will be kept secured by the researcher.

5. Your anonymity will be strictly preserved in the published dissertation resulting from this research. Neither your name, nor the name of the school or district will be used.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have regarding this research. You may also direct any questions to the Dissertation Chair, Dr. John Lundt, at the University of Montana (406-243-5204). If you are satisfied with the terms and conditions of the above guarantees and procedures, please sign the consent form attached, and return it to the researcher.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to participate in what I hope will be an interesting and useful learning experience.

Sincerely,

Wayne Youngward
Informed Consent Agreement

I, ________________________________, agree _____
(please print name) do not agree _____
to participate in the above indicated research study under the conditions outlined in this letter.
I understand that I may withdraw from this project, without prejudice, by simply informing the researcher of my decision.
   Signed ________________________________ dated _____________
Appendix 'B'

Transcripts Of Interviews

Interview with Mr. A., September 12, 2001

Interviewer: One of the things I'm interested in is the relationship between people and how they work together and that sort of thing. Could you give me in your own words what you see as your role in the AISI project?

Mr. A: My role is called a Learning Team Facilitator and I think that's a good description because our status is as a classroom teacher. We have no supervisory responsibilities. We've been very carefully told—our role has been described very clearly that we have no supervisory capacity. We're opted out from the classroom, so it's purely a facilitation. Now what that means is that we try to assist people in discovering what they want to do with professional development, and then try to work with them to make that a reality, to realize their goals. Almost a mentoring situation.

Interviewer: What would you say is the most important aspect of your interaction with the group here at [Black Rock High]? What would you say is the most important thing that you've been able to do?

Mr. A.: I guess the most important thing that I've been able to do is to some extent ground the high expectations and the high goals and the almost encompassing kinds of things—something that people say as a step in the direction that they wanted to go, but an achievable step. Initially, when we talked about the [Black Rock] project, it was basically to renovate the school, and through our discussions we determined that exploring some basic collaborative
strategies and developing a collaborative unit might be the first step in understanding the larger concept. So, I think, grounding it in something doable was one of the accomplishments, but again as a facilitator—to carry on the dialogue, to find out if this might be something...(long pause)

Interviewer: Like a focusing?

Mr. A.: Yes, like a focusing.

Interviewer: In the interaction that you’ve had with the group here, have you encountered any frustration for yourself.

Mr. A.: Yes, I think the primary frustration is that I would have liked to have been more involved in the ongoing shaping and development of the project. But, early in the project members said, basically, leave us alone, we've got the direction where to go. We'll call you if we need you. So, I've purposely kept an arm's length, so my frustration is not knowing how things are progressing.

Interviewer: If something could happen that would alleviate this frustration, what might it be? What might we do differently?

Mr. A.: I'd have to maybe contextualize. I was part of the staff before I came into this situation. I think there is a dynamic that comes into play here that may or may not be productive. Actually I think I've found it unproductive. Because I was an administrator here, I didn't want to make it seem—feel—that I'm still an administrator here, because I'm not. Also the staff, the group, says, your role is different now, you're not a colleague, not a collaborator. I'm not sure—it's kind of complex. With other schools I'm working with that dynamic is not there as much. I can move in and become a partner in their project more easily. With this staff I
haven't been able to make that step. Now the question is, what could happen to change that?

Interviewer: Or, is there anything that could change that?

Mr. A.: Yeah. Well, I'm not sure. It's frustrating for me but I'm not sure that's a problem. It's not a problem with the project, it's a problem with me—that's my frustration, and it's not necessarily... If I thought it was... And I'll find out in the next few days if that has been a factor in the success of the project. {Note: the group is planning to meet with Mr. A to "pick up" the project after the summer break} As long as the people working on this are happy with that sort of involvement I really have nothing to complain about. I don't necessarily want to change that. I think it's important that people shape their own professional development and as a facilitator, I'm there to facilitate, not to intrude, and the rules of the game are set out by the group, and the group says, "we've got things in hand, we have the vision, your help has been helpful, but we'll function fairly independently from here". So I don't know... in answer to the question, I don't think that's something that necessarily has to be remediated.

Interviewer: I heard you say a few things about working with other groups. Can you say any more about the characterization of what's different about working with this group than working with another group?

Mr. A.: Initially, because I think the project came from a vision that has been evolving over a number of years—that vision wasn't necessarily a professional development vision, so to get it involved with a professional development focus was maybe a little bit more difficult to move that direction, than in other places. I
think primarily the people involved in this one, what they’re most concerned about is doing something for the community and something for the kids. What they get out of it is not necessarily professional development. I think it’s become more of one. That initial track that the project was on is a difficult one to change. I think people are committed to that concept, not necessarily a professional development concept. That might be one of the differences. The other difference—and I think it’s a significant one—is the relationship as a colleague, and that shift in roles. In the dynamic that comes with a new administrator, and new administrators being in the school, that took my place, that’s a dynamic that changes things. Then there’s the nature of [Black Rock], of [Black Rock] staff, they’re a unique nature. They look after themselves and for themselves, they work well that way, and don’t necessarily work well with outside influence.

Interviewer: Could you outline what you feel is the role of professional development in the lives of the front-line trench teachers?

Mr. A.: I’ve obviously thought a lot about that. The first thing, I think, is something I’ve learned over the last year. In looking at the kinds of things that are happening in education, professional development cannot be priority two, or nine, it has to be up there with your instructional responsibilities, or just a cut below them, that’s the first thing. So I see teachers having to spend, having to say, we’ve got to commit the time, it might mean time out of our classroom, that’s important, it has to be given. So, we’ve learned too much in educational research that there’s much more that we should be doing—an obligation just as much as a doctor or lawyer to keep up.
Interviewer: What I hear you saying is that traditionally teachers are not supporting or not putting enough time, or believing in the necessity of professional development?

Mr. A.: Right, nor has administration or principals or so on. I think that it has always been almost an extracurricular thing—if I have time to do it, I'll do it, so long as it doesn't take me away from my classroom, I'll do it, if the principal tells me I should do it, I'll do it. I mean, there are people in our district who have never been to a conference in their specialty. There are people in our district who haven't taken a course in thirty years or been to a conference in twenty years. What I find is that people... we find a lot of resistance coming from people who say that, no, no, you can't... I'm not going to do real professional development—bring a packet in any time on this, or work at this...

Interviewer: Have you formed an opinion as to where that resistance is coming from, or what its background is?

Mr. A.: I think it's the habit, that we're habituated into putting professional development in that category, first as a treatment, as something that's done to me in short easy bursts. I think it's as important for teachers to learn things as it is their students, to spend the time, homework, implement, collaborate. There's also the other element of considering teaching as... or only considering innovations in teaching as the technical—what can I do in my classroom tomorrow, not as the reflective, long term improvement of practice that really it is. Especially, there's a few things that you can go to a one-hour session and learn,
like how to use a piece of software, but you've got to apply it, to understand that
deep material.

Interviewer: If somebody gave you the proverbial magic wand where you could
make a change occur—cause it to happen—what would be that change?

Mr. A.: In professional development?

Interviewer: Yes.

Mr. A.: I would—and the implications would be clear—I would make every
teacher see their professional growth plan as being the key part of their practice.
In formal ways, in order to develop professional growth. I guess, taking charge of
one's own..., becoming independent, self-motivated. That would be... I think
what we've lost, many of us, many teachers have lost the sense that the most
strength they have as a teacher is as being a learner, with all that entails. We
give lip-service to that, but a lot of us just don't... Just to wave that magic wand
and say, 'doinnnng,' you're not finished yet, just because you have a degree
(laughs).

Interviewer: Okay. There's a lot of things from this interview that have really
interested me, so with your permission, I'd like to have a chance to reflect about
this, and come back and look at some of those issues in greater detail.

Mr. A.: Sure.

{pause for personal discussion, where Mr. A probed interviewer for information
about the feelings of the group about himself}

Interviewer: Okay we're back to the interview.
Mr. A.: Just one more thing on further reflection about frustrations. I guess part of my frustration that is closely involved with being at arm's length is whether the group is moving to accomplish what they've set out for themselves. Part of that frustration is that I'd like them to succeed, and I'd like them to know that they're succeeding because I know that you cannot sustain any change unless you get some feedback that you're actually accomplishing something. If they've spent a lot of time and energy but have never actually moved in the direction they've wanted, it could fizzle. And, I'd like to see them succeed, so, I'd like to know where they're at, and to do that I need more contact. So that's something I'm either going to have to work on or... {long pause}

Interviewer: Okay, great, thanks very much for your time.

Interview with Ms. B., October 10, 2001

Interviewer: Can you give me some idea of how you came up with the project that you're interested in doing?

Ms. B.: It actually led from an experience I had three years ago where I wrote a play, and directed and produced it with the staff and the community, based upon a mining disaster that had occurred in this community in 1935. In doing so, I discovered such enormous interest in students and community, such a pulling together, such enthusiasm for the project, for their history—not just for this community's history but for the history of many students and their families that had been involved in the coal-mining industry, which at of course one time was similar to living in Alberta and being involved in the energy industry today. The
positive impact was just beyond my comprehension, the way it gave dignity and pride to the community where students suddenly were talking to their parents about family history, and so on. It was such a positive experience it led me, through discussions with colleagues to explore the idea of exploiting more the history of our region and the family history of our students through students doing what I had done. That is to research and try and create some kind of performance based upon that research. The positive aspect of the performance was it brought everything to such a real ending where you had to examine the real motivations of people in history, not just dates and events. So, I came up with the notion of a cross-curricular, integrated program where students would explore global issues beginning with local issues—issues of local history, family genealogy, etcetera. That was the seed of it. I felt I was going to go ahead and do it anyway in some form or another, and then found out that there was in fact some funding available from the AISI Project. So I applied for that and it actually became part of my professional development program. And it’s rolling slowly due to time constraints and pressures upon myself and my colleagues, but it’s going to get there and it will be positive.

**Interviewer:** You mentioned time constraints and pressures. What would you say is the hardest thing to overcome, or the biggest obstacle to making this come to fruition?

**Ms. B.**: It’s hard to say the biggest. Probably it’s time. Teachers don’t have a lot of time. They are already devoting enormous amounts of time and energy to their many tasks and their many passions, so involving them in mine is somewhat of
an imposition, even though they are enthused and interested. But time is one. Another is the changing pressures, the staff changes, teaching assignment changes. Getting any number of people together for any kind of long term project like this is difficult.

**Interviewer**: Do you find that there is something that really helps in getting the actual nitty-gritty of it done?

**Ms. B.**: I think the most helpful aspect is a positive staff environment, and administrative support. If you have support and encouragement from the top down you can overcome those challenges. If you don't feel you're beating your head against a brick wall in trying to pull people together.

**Interviewer**: Can you think of any specific instances where that has happened?

**Ms. B.**: Not so much within our staff or our school administration, who have been key. But certainly when it came to applying for the funding—I've often wondered if that was a smart idea or what. I applied for the funding through the AISI Project, and quite frankly there I encountered a certain amount of discouragement. I had to create a proposal, and the proposal was created very honestly. It stated what we wanted it to do, and it was very detailed, but I hit a bureaucracy in which it seemed that—let me back up here. I felt that if teachers collaborated doing something that would improve learning in the school, then professional development would naturally take place in doing so. In fact I ran up against a wall in the proposal for the funding where that didn't seem to be enough. There had to be collection of baseline data of teaching practice... I ended up re-writing the proposal seven times, and each time I got more and
more discouraged. Quite frankly I think that had we not gone the route of applying for funding we might have our unit completed by now. It became unpleasant to go back to it because of constantly fighting a kind of bureaucracy, semantic battles, the wordings in the proposal. I just wanted to do something positive and it seemed like what was happening on paper that would be tucked away in a file somewhere was more important to these people that what was actually going to occur. It was an academic exercise to them and I did not feel particularly encouraged to go ahead. On the other side, the funding did enable us to attend a conference where I did learn how to create an integrated curriculum. That was certainly positive. The rest of it's been a lot of hoop-jumping where I had to stay one step ahead, to get the job done without allowing myself to get caught up in that game. So it's been myself and the team members facing off with others who all of a sudden have a vested interest and probably should never have done so.

Interviewer: What do you find helpful from the other team members?

Ms. B.: Oh, just enthusiasm and willingness. And it's so hard, everybody's going in different directions, but they are extremely enthusiastic, wonderful ideas, they're positive about the whole thing. They just generate enthusiasm. Nobody throws a blanket on top of it. They're just ready to go. And they're not willing to sit passively by and have it done. They want to be in on the creation.

Interviewer: Is there anything that you’ve been disappointed in from the team members? Something that you wish would have happened and it didn’t?
Ms. B.: I wouldn't say this was disappointing but it's a little difficult when you have some team members who are really just learning to teach and sometimes it's a giant leap for them to understand this kind of curriculum. They aren't yet at the point where they can see how to build lessons and activities. Because the project we're dealing with is unstructured. In fact I can say that one of the strengths of the group is that they're willing to be flexible. But it's hard for some to see how that can be done, which is actually a good thing, though, because the rest of us can assist them, and they'll make that progress. There are people on the staff who should be part of the team who are not part of the team.

Interviewer: Why do you think that is?

Ms. B.: It's simply because I know they will buck it. They will have a negative attitude towards it. They will find excuses not to do it. So at this point in time I'm holding back on including those people. I intend to, eventually, in small ways. I feel if I was to impose my will on them, my vision, that it would be detrimental—I'd never win them over.

Interviewer: Any thoughts as to why they would be negative, or opposed to it?

Ms. B.: I think they're just those kinds of people. I think they're scared of change. They teach in a very traditional manner, and I'm not saying there's anything wrong with traditional teaching but they have never taken risks and tried to make their classroom more interactive, more participatory, and this would just too huge of a leap for them right now.

Interviewer: So when you say you might get them involved you mean in small ways?
Ms. B.: Small ways. Start in little ways where it won’t disturb their basic classroom structure. And try and tantalize them that way insofar as I can. There’s no point in going in whole hog, and saying, “No, this is how you should be doing this.” It won’t work. Fortunately, in our school, there are few enough of them that it’s manageable. We can deal with it. I’m hoping that the enthusiasm of the group and the enthusiasm of the kids when things get rolling will make them want to take part in some way. Maybe then they’ll be more receptive to hearing how they could contribute.

Interviewer: That’s great. Thanks for your time.

Interview with Ms. B., November 20, 2001

Interviewer: What do you feel about your relationship to the authority structure that the AISI co-ordinators have set up in terms of our project?

Ms. B.: The relationship…. (long pause)

Interviewer: How do you see what they’re doing in relationship to what we’re doing?

Ms. B.: I’ve been able to hang in with the project but only with a great deal of, quite frankly, manipulation. Game-playing, hoop-jumping. It has hurt the relationship greatly because I feel they’re abusing their power. I believe they’re guilty of displaying intellectual superiority, of nit-picking, of having a total disrespect for my time. For failing to see at times the ultimate purpose. They have not facilitated what we were trying to do. They have in fact discouraged the whole process by turning it into, quite frankly, a bureaucratic nightmare. I am
willing to understand, particularly if you’re going to receive funding you need to be accountable. But I think it could have been handled in different ways. They put a huge emphasis on the professional development component and it seems as though for that I had to have the answers they wanted. My idea of how it dealt with professional development just wasn’t good enough. I had to use the jargon and the phrasing of their textbooks. I was being asked to pigeonhole it. It seems to me that my project intrinsically—and I’m sure many of the other projects did too—involves professional development. Those fellows were paid a lot of money to spend a lot of time sitting at a keyboard and could have easily have written up how it would aid professional development rather than expecting me to. They’re familiar with the jargon, they could have done it, it was self-evident. Like I say, we have managed to hang with it, but just what I hear via the grapevine, three out of every four projects have failed because the people simply gave up. They wouldn’t play that system. They didn’t have the time to play that system and they bailed out early. It was very frustrating, and I look back sometimes and quite frankly I think I could have done the project without it, when you consider the amount of hassle I had to go through. And in fact it got to the point where I would be talking to the AISI co-ordinators and asking, well, what exactly is it you want, tell me what you need to see on paper. Well, they’re not quite prepared to do that, they want to have a big semantic discussion. No just tell me what you want to see, so I can write it down and give you the bloody thing so that you’re covered. Because they’re accountable too and I understand that, so let’s not play around. Say, Ms. B., I need this kind of a table made up, here’s what I’m after...
Instead you’re always guessing what they’re after. They know what it is but they
don’t want to tell you. If that’s not professional development… It seems to me
that people who are coming up with ideas to revolutionize and change things are
not the ones you should be worried about. We’re not the ones who need to be
conscious of professional development, we’re doing it, obviously. We have not
yet become discouraged and jaded by our professions. This kind of system could
easily do it to you.

Interviewer: What would be your definition of professional development?

Ms. B.: That’s interesting. This is off the top of my head. It won’t be very well
thought out, I know. But, um… It seems to me any time teachers collaborate and
develop new ways of teaching, they’re obviously learning and developing
professionally. They will not be the same teacher at the end of that experience as
you were when you began. You’ll have absorbed all kinds of thing from one
another. You’ll be rejuvenated and refreshed and ready to move on. Because
you’re doing something new you have to find new ways of approaching it. You
will be a better and a different teacher afterwards than you were when you
started. Quite frankly, I’d like to leave it to people doing theses to tell me how,
because I really don’t care, but I know that it happens. (laughs)

Interviewer: What would help you most if you wanted to do anything, whether it’s
this project or any other thing that you were interested in in professional
development…Any change at all that you were interested in making. What would
be of most benefit to you? What could somebody else or something else do to
help you?
Ms. B.: As teachers, the biggest reward for us is just being allowed to do it. Being allowed to do it, being encouraged to do it. Somebody just saying, that's a great idea sometimes is all you need. A less stressful workload. It's awfully hard to make those changes when you're up to your ass in alligators. And of course in recent years the job itself has become much more stressful. It's really difficult to do the fun things, do the change, do the extras, because you're worn out at the end of the day. You're worn out at the end of the week, and it's hard to find the kind of energy that's required even though those experiences, those projects, are energizing in themselves. We talk about time...sub time alone won't do it. You need time in your mind to be able to attack it. You know, an afternoon off, as most teachers know, is more work than showing up, sometimes. Give me more satisfaction in my job generally, manageable class sizes. Handling the problems of special needs students. Cutting a lot of the bureaucracy. That for one thing, and it's not only stress on an individual teacher, it's on a staff. As soon as you all start to feel better, you can get together and you can make changes. You can have exciting ideas and you can actually go ahead and implement them. It energizes one another to do those things. And I've been lucky enough to work on a staff where that happens. I see it wearing thin because we're short-staffed. 

Interviewer: You've mentioned the time constraints, the various things in the job that make it really stressful and hard work. Is there anything else that would prevent the kind of professional development that you'd like to see happening, besides the things you've mentioned?
Ms. B.: Well, also lack of funding. I have to thank the AISI boys for doling out enough funds to send us to Phoenix. That was an experience. I got to listen to the gurus themselves, and I learned a great deal which I've been implementing in my classroom ever since, and experimenting with, and have certainly become the backbone of this project. The methodologies came from there. So, funding for people to go to those kinds of things is important. I thank them for realizing that and for having the courage to allow people to go to fairly expensive ventures. There has to be money. There has to be a certain amount of money to purchase resources, to go out and find what's out there. We need...I suppose we could call the AISI fellows what we used to call curriculum people. We need curriculum people who are open-minded, who don't dictate from the top-down, who actually listen to you and facilitate, to whom no idea is a bad idea, people who don't stand in your way but help you implement things. Quite frankly, I've never seen it, even when we had government employees who were curriculum.....worked at the Curriculum Branch. Nobody ever came to you and said, how do you teach this? Do you have a great idea? Could we put it out there?

Interviewer: Sharing?

Ms. B.: There has to be more of a sharing at the grassroots. Teachers need to be recognized for what they know, and they're not, often enough. New methodology comes in, and you're immediately told that everything you've been doing is all wrong. It's all wrong! Don't even think for a second that part of it was good (laughs). You know, you go through a long career, and that happens to you every ten years...you begin to doubt yourself.
Interviewer: Where is there leadership in change that you see? Or perhaps a better question would be, do you see any leadership for change...and when I say change I obviously mean change for the better.

Ms. B.: No. (pause) No.

Interviewer: You don't see it in the system?

Ms. B.: It's not in the system. None at all. It's top-down. Somebody comes and says, Middle School is the answer, so you change that way. When change is recommended from within it's really hard to implement. Which is where it has to come from. In this project alone, timetabling changes would facilitate it hugely. Fortunately I have a principal who would support that and be willing to do it. That's the only reason it could work at all. There's a couple of other things going on in this school and we're lucky enough to have a principal who will do it. You go any higher than that, and... I know there's examples...

Interviewer: Would you consider yourself a leader for change in what you're doing?

Ms. B.: Yeah, I think I am. I think I am and I've managed to come through twenty-five years of teaching with an open mind. I think what I do is good but I think there's a lot out there that's better. And, I'm an idea person.

Interviewer: What makes it possible for you to be a leader in that regard?

Ms. B.: A nurturing staff. It's like fertile ground. Because we have a lot of leaders on our staff, who'll come up with wild ideas and we all follow them. I think the fact that I've been able to work here a long time. And I feel encouraged in new ideas because I do drama productions, and I'll say, let's part the Red Sea, and
everybody just sort of goes, okay. I'm not surrounded by negativity. I'm not
surrounded by put-downs, turf-protection. I'm surrounded by people who are
willing to do anything, and, for example, last year I was doing a fair bit in the re-
organization of student council, and my principal gave me a period a week this
semester to try to do something, to try to build with it. That kind of
encouragement is rare. We believe this school is rare in doing that, and I think
that's why we are so dynamic, is because these people just pull together. You
can't grow an orchid in a ....tip. (laughs)

**Interviewer:** If you had to describe the things about yourself that allow you to be
a leader, what would you say? I know that's...

**Ms. B.:** That's a really hard question!

**Interviewer:** Yes it is. It's always hard talking about one's own personal...

**Ms. B.:** Because it's always been a mystery to me.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Ms. B.:** It's a mystery to me why I can say, let's do this, and away I go, and
people follow. Kids, other people. I don't mean follow unquestioningly by any
stretch of the imagination but they jump on board and do the most amazing
things and I'm not sure what it is. I know I'm... I think I have a certain amount of
vision. I think I see what could be rather than what is. I think I appreciate people.
I like people. I like to have a good time when I'm doing something. That makes it,
most of the time, fun to jump on board and follow. Not always. That's about
it...I'm not well-organized, by any stretch of the imagination. I have had to learn
to delegate, and I'm not very good at it. Fortunately, the kind of people who follow
are the kind who just see what needs to be done, and do it. Although I’m not organized and don’t always see the next step, I feel an obligation to the people who follow. I don’t like the word ‘follow’ because they don’t really follow, it’s more of a team. They join you. But they do look to you for the answers. I sometimes kill myself trying to find out what’s happening for the next day (laughs) so at least I have an answer or two. Yeah, I think I have fun when I’m doing something. I like everyone around me to have fun with it. I think I have the vision, and I think I’m also damn stubborn. I think people kind of know, they’re not too sure where it’s going sometimes, but I think they know I won’t give up, it’ll get done. It’ll turn out and it’ll be good. That’s all I can think of and it’s always a mystery. It’s quite a mystery! (laughs)

Interviewer: Interesting stuff! Thanks very much.

Interview with Principal of Black Rock High School, December 5, 2001

Interviewer: As a relative newcomer to [Black Rock High], you’ve had a chance over the last year and a bit to take a look at the way staff works together. I’m interested on your take on staff relationships, the way that you see staff working together.

Principal: In what way?

Interviewer: In any way, collegially, on a personal level, in terms of how problems are dealt with...

Principal: Our staff in particular here, not staffs in general?

Interviewer: Yes
Principal: This staff is somewhat unique. It tends to deal with problems... I see two attitudes here, and they’re not opposed, they’re actually complementary. All of the staff here tends to be individuals, and individualistic, I find. Everybody on the staff here will tend to have a sense of our own self, in our own self-space, and tend to deal as individuals with our own problems. But any time somebody wants help, assistance, all of the staff is there to support him. The unique thing about this staff that I appreciate is that even if we have differences we support each other, the minute somebody wants support. So, all individuals and individualistic, but quite supportive any time someone is searching for support. That individualism then becomes positive in terms of the collaboration and support.

Interviewer: I’ve got a question you might find odd. Where is there power in the school?

Principal: Power, in this school, is in the place where respect is allocated. People who have earned, by virtue of whatever, respect from others wield power. Some of that’s official, but much is unofficial, and the power comes, I think, from people who, by virtue of in some cases personality, in some cases by their actions, some it’s just their words and personality, but once the staff as a whole, that amorphous whatever the staff as a whole is—wish I knew what it was—once that staff as a whole accords respect to a person on staff, then that person becomes fairly powerful. That person becomes the priest or priestess of the school culture regardless of the authority structure.

Interviewer: Do you find that different here than in other schools you’ve been in?
Principal: Yes I do, and it may be a factor of school size. I've taught in some very large schools and I've taught in some very small schools. I find that the smaller the size, the more the staff tends to become a collaborative or a collegial whole. In large schools the authority structure tends to be more formal, and in a large school that power-award-respect continuum may not be working, but the authority structure works just by virtue of the size. I think there you have the same isolated individuals but they don't have that collegial community. In a smaller school, and I don't know where the cut-off point is between big and small, but you tend to find a sense of community. And then, the formal hierarchical structure takes on less significance and less meaning. In a large school it becomes highly significant because your community is so large that you don't have the opportunity to build those respect-networks.

Interviewer: The ad hoc project that a number of us are working on, looking at grade eight curriculum, what would be your role in a project like that?

Principal: Supportive. To me I see, particularly in our times, it's a supportive, facilitative role, rather than a driving role. I operate strictly under the premise that educators are highly-trained, qualified individual professionals and know what they are doing. I just believe that. Rightly or wrongly, I just believe that. And that the role of administration is to facilitate and support their professional programs. So, in terms of a project like what you are looking at, I see the role of administration as saying, What is it you want to do? Can we do this? Answering what I call the technical-delegate questions. The nuts and bolts. Will it work? Can we help you with it? If it won't work what changes can we make? And sometimes
we have, not by virtue of any training or expertise, but just by virtue of our position, knowledge of things that are going on in the district that may or may not make it possible for our professionals to do what they want to do. I see our role here as assisting, and if things look feasible and worthwhile and possible, saying, here's how we can help. If there are problems, either pointing them out or helping to iron them out.

Interviewer: Thanks very much for your time!

Interview with Vice-Principal, Dec. 5, 2001

Interviewer: As a staff member who has been here for many years, you have a good sense of the interrelationships among staff and in the school in general. What is your perspective on the unique nature of the staff relationships here?

Vice-Principal: I get the sense that this staff is a close one. I think it's based maybe on this environment we're in, or maybe on some of the prior administrators, or maybe we're just an interesting group of people who get along fairly well.

Interviewer: Okay. Now you say, the environment. Could you be a little more specific?

Vice-Principal: I get the sense, when I first came here on staff, this staff, based on some of the socio-economic problems that we have, and the number of high-needs students, it's maybe a very challenging environment to teach in, and as a result the staff here has kind of created a strong support network for each other.
Interviewer: Right. Okay. This may not be a question that you’ve had the opportunity to think much about, but where do you see power residing in the school?

Vice-Principal: Power in the school? Well, to take a look at this staff in comparison to others, I think that the power is not as top-heavy as some other schools that I’ve dealt with. It’s quite a collaborative effort in many cases from a decision-making standpoint. It might be based on some of the administrators’ styles that I’ve been involved with here, and I think the power has changed throughout the years. It’s become a more collaborate, team effort than other places.

Interviewer: If someone wanted to get something done in the school, what would be the kinds of procedures they’d follow?

Vice-Principal: If they wanted to get something done they could go to an administrator, or to other staff members and bring it up. There isn’t very much opposing making changes. I suppose there is a protocol but I think in many cases it’s fairly well receptive.

Interviewer: Now you are aware of the ad hoc committee that’s looking into the possibility of coming up with a different kind of curriculum for grade eight. What do you see as your role in it? Where would you see yourself participating in this?

Vice-Principal: I think that came out of a need that was seen by some staff members, and some administration I suppose, and a proposal was made to deal with that need. Whether or not that was a proposal that happens or other proposals are brought into it, my role… After talking to [the principal] about it, it’s
going to be a question of a majority. I may have some input, but I don’t see myself as making any kind of decision.

**Interviewer:** You’ve taught in other schools as well as here, and you’ve been here quite a few years. When people have professional development concerns or proposals or plans, do you get a sense that these are things that get a chance to go ahead, are they stymied in some way, or are they fairly free?

**Vice-Principal:** I think they have a fairly free rein. The opportunity’s there. I think the opportunity’s there to work harder in some areas. I view us as professionals and it might be on a personal level, it might be on a professional level, or anywhere in between... I think, as professionals, I would hope they could go ahead.

[conversation changes to a discussion of a professional development workshop presented the previous week by one of the AISI co-ordinators]

**Interview with Ms. R., December 11, 2001**

**Interviewer:** Just to start off, can you give me your impressions about the way things are among staff at the school—in any way that comes to your mind.

**Ms. R.:** The staff is wonderful at this school. In the last couple of years I’ve had a lot of really good support from the staff at this school. I can’t say enough good things about them. I mean, if I need help in any way, I just have to ask, and they’ve come up with ideas to do this or that...

**Interviewer:** Okay. Do you have any take on the way things get done here? If you wanted something to be done, what would be happening?
Ms. R.: What do you mean, if...?

Interviewer: If you wanted to do something of any kind with curriculum, with students, with anything, how do you see things happening? From your experience.

Ms. R.: From my experience I’ve run into a couple of roadblocks when it comes to coming up with an idea to go do something. They never said, this has been done before and it doesn’t work. It could be because I’m not experienced—this is only my third year altogether. So it just might not work. But it’s not just in this school, because this is the third school I’ve been in so far. There always seems to be a little bit of a roadblock.

Interviewer: Any idea where this comes from? Any thoughts on how that happens?

Ms. R.: I think, stepping on someone’s toes. There is a particular instance that’s just come up, and I’m not sure how to even get around it—or even if I want to get around it, or just let it go. But I was going to take [the grade eight Social Studies classes] over to the Elementary school, and then I got to thinking, this is grade eight, what if some of the kids don’t behave? What am I going to do with these kids? Because I can’t just up and bring them back. I have an aide with me but then she’ll have to bring them back, and so I’m thinking, what am I going to do with them? So I thought, maybe if I take the grade eight all together, and we could hold the ones that I’m worried about back, and [names the visiting behaviour specialist] could run their little behaviour program with them, and I could take all the rest of them over. Because there’s 28 of them, and I’d bet you
that 20 would be the best they could be. And then, I just got shut down, they said, no. That can't happen. I can't expect her to come every Thursday. But she does it at other schools. I know that, I've talked to her. And at [names a school] she goes every Tuesday and runs her behaviour program. Why can't we do that here? I was told if I leave [the disruptive kids] here at the school, there's no one to take care of them. But someone else said, no, no, just leave them here and we'll take care of them, so I'm not sure what would happen if I couldn't take all of them. Then I got thinking, to hell with it. I don't want to worry about it. I'll take them anyway, and see how it goes. But I just thought that this would be a way for these 8 kids to sit down and have some of these behaviour type lessons. I just thought it was working right into what one person wanted to do, and then I turned around and it got shut down, and I don't even know why. I'd like to do it with the kids and I think the majority of them would get a really good thing out of it. I don't know if there was something that happened...

**Interviewer:** Some information that you're not sure of?

**Ms. R:** Yeah. (pause)

**Interviewer:** Where do you see power residing in this school, as a relative newcomer?

**Ms. R:** (laughs) Without naming names? (pause) Not with the admin. There are some who have been here for a long time.

**Interviewer:** So, do you see groups of people, or individuals...?

**Ms. R.:** No, just individuals. They hold a lot [of power].
Interviewer: Where does this come from? Just the fact that they've been here a long time?

Ms. R.: And their experience. I don’t know. That’s what I’m trying to figure out.

Interviewer: Because so many of the staff are long-timers here, it’s interesting to hear a new-comer’s take on things. The project that you’ve been involved with us on—what’s your impression of that so far?

Ms. R.: I think it’s a really neat project. I think it would be a really good idea to do that. Maybe I see it differently than the way you guys see it—it would be a project where I would mark the Social content, and [Ms. B.] would mark it for grammar, or whatever she marks in Language Arts, and you do the Science, so we would have three different marks in three different subjects, and it would be more team teaching, well not team teaching but getting together and planning things.

Interviewer: More collaboration?

Ms. M.: Yeah. Because, well...I am overwhelmed with all the different courses, and I though that would be a good thing to go back and forth and bounce some ideas... the amount of ideas that [Ms. B.] has and you have, and [Ms. K]...they’re wonderful, and there’s no way one person can come up with what to do. It would be really neat to get it done, but like you said, we’re trying to do this, and also trying to do our day-to-day things. And to get together, it’s almost a whole other part-time job, to get everything together, so that next year we can implement it. And that’s not even to say it would work. Well, that’s neither here nor there, but it’s a lot of extra work to go into one subject. Because that would only cover my
Social, and then I've got all the other subjects I have to deal with. So I find that it would almost be a part-time job to get it together.

Interviewer: You seem to have a real variety—you could almost call it a dog's breakfast—of subjects, don't you?

Ms. R.: Yeah, I do. And the resources, especially for my Cosmetology classes, is what I don't have. I'm trying to figure out what modules I can do with the equipment that we can get.

Interviewer: Because there's no place to do it no sinks? No chairs?

Ms. R.: Yeah. I'm looking at what I'm going to do next semester. (laughs)

Interviewer: You're involved in a number of co-curricular and extra-curricular things as well. Do you find that taking a lot of your time?

Ms. R.: Not a whole lot. I did put down that I'd like to work with the yearbook, and that type of thing, and that I'd work with the grad., but I've never been called [on]. But it could be because of what's been happening...but that's just a one-time thing, and that'll be over...

Interviewer: Yeah.

Ms. R.: I'd like to be involved more with the kids because I think that if you're involved with the kids in extra-curricular, they see you in a different light, and sometimes that changes their behaviour in the classroom. I'm not sure...

Interviewer: I've found it does.

Ms. R.: And that would be a good thing.

Interviewer: Yeah. Have you been involved with the yearbook at all?
Ms. R.: No, [Ms. K] has been doing it; she just says, I've got everyone going...
So I say, okay, maybe next year.

Interviewer: Of course, you're here until what time tonight? [Ms. R. had agreed to supervise two basketball games after school that day]

Ms. R.: (laughs) yeah. That's true!

[a short discussion follows on what supervisors' roles and responsibilities are]

Interviewer: Do you have any other thoughts on the school and the way things work around here?

Ms. R.: Well, I think with a small school, teachers are going to have a mish-mash of different subjects. In bigger schools, well, when I was in Calgary, all I had was Computers. I could really dive into that subject and really know that subject.
Sometimes I get really scared—well maybe that's not the right word—really apprehensive that I don't know my subject as well as I'd like to. I have Computer modules that are incomplete and just thrown together because one kid wants to do that area. And I think, if I only had Computers, they'd be done. But that's just because of the small school we have all the different subjects to deal with.
Everybody's probably in the same position when they first start. And, too, as [names another relatively new teacher in the division, from another school] was saying, every year she got a new subject. So she always had something new to dive into and learn, before you can teach it to the kids. With Social—I didn't have any Social background. So I was learning new things. Kids would ask me questions and I didn’t know the answers! (laughs) I’d just say, well, I think you're going to take that in Science...I think [Mr. Y.] is going to take that up, so we don't
have to talk about it... good! (laughs) I just don't know this stuff. But I think it's just because it's a smaller school and you have to do that.

Interviewer: You don't have much choice, do you?

Ms. R.: No.

Interviewer: Thanks very much for your time.

Interview with Ms. B., December 12, 2001

Interviewer: The last time we were talking, you mentioned some interesting things about the way you saw this staff working together that was different from the way other staffs work. We were also talking about territoriality. Have you thought any further about that?

Ms. B.: I guess just the basics, and you know this as well as I do. There are no turf wars here, no guarding of the coffee cup and the favourite chair, and that sort of thing. Nobody owns their own classroom; it's the school's classroom. Just that attitude alone. And in order to create that attitude you have to have a non-threatening atmosphere, completely non-threatening where it's okay to have problems, it's okay to think differently. And humour is such a big part of it. Everybody's very comfortable and very trusting. You know nobody's going to scream at you. And you can disagree and still respect one another. Nobody's trying to dominate or pressure. People are respected for their uniqueness. And that's not only in staff but in kids, and I think that because the teachers are that way, it's part of the school atmosphere. I think that we have students attend this school who would not survive in a bigger school. Here, they're appreciated, and
they’re appreciated for being different. We elevate it. Because we see it in one another we see it in students. I don’t have many strengths as a teacher, but this is one I do have. I have an ability to always see the good in people. Even if I think somebody is an [expletive]. (laughs) Eventually, you see that little grain, you know, and you pull it out, and eventually they become what I think the teachers are, and that is comfortable in their own skin. The curriculum guides are full of how to share ideas, but here we do it.

Interviewer: Is the staff caring for one another on the personal level, rather than the more professional level?

Ms. B.: Absolutely. We’re friends. We socialize. We have the Bar Of the Month Club. I would recommend this to any staff. Every month a different establishment is chosen, and every Friday you can go there and find somebody. Sometimes there’s two people, sometimes there’s twenty. And it’s really odd, when you think about it, that after five days of working together, so could still go and tolerate one another for two or three hours, and still feel perfectly comfortable. I don’t think anybody on this staff dreads a staff party, the way I know… My husband works for a small company—there’s probably forty or fifty employees—everybody dreads the Christmas staff party. Oh, here we so, so-and-so’s going to be brown-nosing to the boss, complain, complain…you know? I’ve never heard anything like that here. It’s, let’s go, you know? You’re happy to be with these people. You don’t live out of each other’s pockets, everybody’s got lives, but we share the births of our children and our grandchildren… Yeah! It’s a home, it’s a place to come to. You know, nobody likes to go to work, you dream of winning the lottery.
and retiring, but if you have to go to work every morning, this is a good place to
do it. You look forward to it.

Interviewer: How do you see the project right now? Where do you see we’re at?

Ms. B.: We’re way behind right now. But, frankly, I think it’s going to come
together because I have enormous faith. (laughs) I see it in my head and I know
we’re got good people. Unfortunately, because of changing classes and
switching assignments, we’re down to a skeleton group. Maybe that’s not a bad
thing. I think of myself and you and [Ms. R.], if we can set up the Language Arts,
the Science, and the Social Studies, I think those are the key areas, and
everything else can branch off it. I need time to sit with it again. I haven’t because
I’m doing too many things. I haven’t been doing too much lately [on the project];
I’ve been procrastinating. (laughs) I’m doing as little as possible to get to the
Christmas Holiday. But once we can sit down, I think we’ve got roughly what has
to happen here, and unfortunately it’s going to end up getting done my way,
which is all at the last minute in a stroke of brilliance. (laughs) You know,
realistically, what’s going to happen is that we’re piloting it next semester. So we
get together and put it together as best we can, try it, and during that trial, we can
flesh it out. I’m feeling really badly right now because I’ve kept pushing it on the
back burner, and I’ve gotten a little discouraged, too, about it.

Interviewer: Discouraged from what perspective?

Ms. B.: To be frank, I think we have a very novice [names a subject] teacher, and
we’re struggling with how on earth we’re going to get that component to work.
And I may have to end up having to build it. It's not a bad thing, but I'm looking at it as an arduous task right now.

Interviewer: More than it would be if everyone were putting in...?

Ms. B.: If I had an experienced [names a subject] teacher doing it. Yeah, we have to put it together. And it will work. Are you ticked off with me?

Interviewer: No! (laughs)

Ms. B.: Aren't you? You should be! You're very nice! (speaks to the tape recorder) See what I mean? (laughs) Yeah. I've just gotten caught with so much (to do) lately with contract negotiations. [Ms. B. is chair of the jurisdiction negotiating committee] And I have neglected it. Once I get back into it I know the enthusiasm will grow again.

Interviewer: It's the time of year too.

Ms. B.: It's a really bad time of year, crawling toward the holiday. This is a great place to come to work, but...

Interviewer: Slouching toward Bethlehem?

Ms. B.: Yeah! (laughs) Am I ever looking forward to two weeks off! It'll be great. So, yeah, we've lost a lot of momentum on it. A huge amount. And that's really tough when the leader does that.

Interviewer: So you're thinking of picking it up right after the holiday?

Ms. B.: Actually, my intention is to take it all home this weekend and digest it a bit, so I can get it straight. I dunno. In January, everybody works harder. Come up with a few lesson plans, time [i.e. schedule] them somehow. Away we go. It's going to require huge organization. I know that.
Interviewer: You’ve got another meeting to get to, I know...

Ms. B.: Yes, I’ve got to get to [names a teacher union meeting]. September, October, November, I had three nights a week in meetings. I hate meetings.

(laughs)

Interviewer: Thanks for your time!

Interview with Ms. W, December 13, 2001

Interviewer: Can you share any thoughts with me on how the staff works together and how things get done around here?

Ms. W: There are so many different aspects of that. Major projects like drama, for example, which would be extra-curricular, that teacher herself [Ms. B.] provides very strong leadership. She knows exactly what she needs done, but the staff in general seem to have such a varied amount of talents in so many different areas…and maybe because it’s such a small school that people feel a membership, a belonging, by contributing. So, to start with, it would be both knowledge, and the firm direction of the leadership. And everybody has a sense of belonging, of having a part of the whole by contributing. As far as other things, (pause) …give me an example.

Interviewer: Where do you see the power to get things done residing?

Ms. W: [refers to a tentative plan discussed among staff to solve the problem of a group of about ten grade eight students who are moderate to severe behaviour problems] There may need to be a stronger clarification of roles. To start with I don’t think people were clear as to what any one person should do, and it was, “here’s a problem,” but there wasn’t any clear knowledge as to who had the
responsibility and the expertise to come up with solutions or potential solutions. That seemed to drag on for quite a while. Maybe it was just a process of clearly identifying our problem, or maybe it was a sense of nobody really knowing whose problem it was or who needed to take a forward position on that. Because it concerned special needs students, as things kind of multiplied, the problems were identified more strongly, the problems seemed to drag on, maybe because it needed that length of time to identify what the problem really was. But, I got a sense that people were feeling that because the students were special needs students, that put it into my ballpark. I wasn’t clear as to whether it would be my role to take over the whole problem, or to come up with ways to assist other people in dealing with the problem. Initially I thought, well, okay, it’s being seen as my problem, and so dealt with that, but the more I though about it, the more I realized that it wouldn’t be an adequate solution [i.e. for Ms. W. to deal with it as a special education problem] because it was too open-ended, it wouldn’t be a solution, it would be a band-aid. So then we started coming up with other possible solutions that involved a larger scope of the problem, rather than isolating them [i.e. the students] and the problem still being there. We needed to come up with a solution that addressed a real solution and not just a removal of the...(pause)

**Interviewer:** the irritant?

**Ms. W:** Yeah. As far as leadership, or how things got done, on my part I just got a sense of a growing problem, and it was being voiced, but I wasn’t hearing any possibilities, just, “somebody’s got to take the ball and do something about it.”
There were enough indicators that, because it was special needs students, it fell in my ballpark. I kind of waited it out to see if there were any other forward movements to solutions, and I guess the wait just got feeling too heavy, so you step forward and do what you can.

**Interviewer:** Now, you've been talking about the problem that we face with special needs students in grade eight. What I'd like to ask you about now, you've been peripherally involved in the project that [the *ad hoc* group] are involved with. As a person partly looking in from the outside, can you give me your impression on how things work in that situation?

**Ms. W.:** There is the original spark with the idea and the enthusiasm for the project, which Ms. B. put the fire under some of the other people with the potential of the idea. So, strong leadership, I guess, is where things get started. Also, she's very convincing. She understands a clear vision of her large idea, and is very convincing in conveying that with enthusiasm. She gets other people to also buy in, and understand, and hopefully see the large picture. Also feel some enthusiasm for the potential.

**Interviewer:** Do you see leadership occurring in other places in the school as well? In other circumstances?

**Ms. W.:** In most, I would think. For example [names the physical education teacher], very quiet, organizing and orchestrating so many aspects of the school, whether it's ski trips, or buying the van, et cetera. It's a very different type of leadership than the enthusiastic sparks that we see with Ms. B., but a very strong, quiet, common-sense, knowing aspect in his leadership. I would think that
Ms. K. has a lot of leadership qualities. For instance, she’s not afraid to say how she feels, what she does think about things, which is a definite leadership quality. If someone is not willing to say what their belief is about an issue, then nobody can follow them. And Ms. K. definitely has some skills in that.

**Interviewer:** The special education component of the school is a pretty central one from a lot of different perspectives, in terms of numbers, and the amount of resources that we devote to the kids with special needs. Can you give me some thoughts on the way you see special education happening in the school?

**Ms. W:** I think there’s been some difficulty in [the school division] in general that there is no definite guideline that describes how it should be directed. Each school is entirely different, and I think that depends on the personality of the consulting teacher, how the special needs programming in each school unfolds. My feeling is that each of the classroom teachers has more experience than I have—I feel very ill-equipped, and it is not my place, it is wrong for me to even suggest to the classroom teacher how to teach. Whether it is special needs kids or other students. I know in some of the other situations that there is a fairly strong mandate that some of the consulting teachers feel they have—to direct teachers how to teach special needs kids. I feel very uncomfortable taking on that role, because there is no ‘right way.’ And I don’t feel that there is any teacher in the school who is doing a bad job. So I feel my role is supportive, a consulting role in terms of trying to answer questions, like coming up with a possible solution to the grade eight problem, where I can offer some suggestions or some guidance. If that had gone through, then my role would be to pull together some
curriculum, like the behavioural program would be a part of that. So, not telling the teachers how to teach. It would be providing support and information and resources. So, I think a lot of it is determined by the philosophy of the consulting teachers themselves.

**Interviewer:** Have you ever thought about the nature of the special needs themselves—I don’t mean the kids, but the needs in this school. So much of the school seems to be focussed on special needs, at least to a greater extent than in many other circumstances. Have you thought about why that might be the case?

**Ms. W:** I don’t have an answer for that other than looking back on the numbers in the Elementary school, and possibly a reputation that the Elementary program built to serve the needs of F.A.S. students in particular. For a while there was a lot of talk about their program. I don’t know if it was the result of that, but there has been a large influx of special needs students. Now, whether people felt that this was a good community to come to because they could find services for their special needs students, or just what, but a few years ago there were an enormous number of special needs students in the Elementary School, and I think we’re just now feeling that wave hit our school. I think it will pass through and we’ll normalize so that we’re down a little more equal to the normal numbers in society. But right now, we’ve got a real blip in the numbers.

**Interviewer:** In the years that you’ve been in the school, you’ve seen many changes among staff, as there would be in any group, but the staff in this school
seems to have something going for it that is a little bit different than anywhere else. This is at least what a lot of people have said. Any thoughts on that?

Ms. W: I can identify the same thing, but to put a name on it, I can't. I think part of it is open acceptance of anybody and everybody as a part of the staff. It probably goes over into the students, but right now I'm thinking, there has never been a situation where the staff has been "clique-y," where there is a group that eat lunch together, or a group that do things together. It's always been very open and inclusive, possibly because it's small—you can't segregate too much or you'd be....

Interviewer: By yourself?

Ms. W.: (laughs) Independent. Well, I'm not just sure what it is. There is a cohesiveness, an acceptance, a collegiality that is all-inclusive.

Interviewer: Do you have any thoughts on the potential success of the project on the integrated curriculum for grade eight? Is this something that can happen, might happen, will happen?

Ms. W.: I think it might happen. It can happen. I think right now it's being sidelined by so many other issues that are rising to the top, and needing our attention, so that it's having a little more trouble having the time dedicated to it to make it work. Hopefully, this will pass, and it will again resurface as one of the main issues.

Interviewer: Thank you for your time.

Interview with Ms. L., January 18, 2002

Interviewer: How do you see the staff in the school working together?
Ms. L.: A community. I think there’s a lot of interaction. I worked my first three years teaching on a huge staff, and the word ‘clique’ comes to mind. On the small staff here I don’t think that’s really an issue. If one teacher has something that they need to get help with, or information on, they know they can go to other teachers on the staff. And I don’t think it’s limited just to professional staff—we’re interactive on all levels....

Interviewer: Paraprofessionals and the secretary?

Ms. L.: Yes.

Interviewer: Where do you see power residing in the school? Power in the sense of the way that things get done.

Ms. L.: There are certain individuals that you know if they are asked to do a project, that it will get done. This might be mildly sexist, but my general sense is that if you want something done, you should ask a woman. And I know that [names the school secretary] is fully instrumental in lots of things that get accomplished here. She makes sure that information goes out.

Interviewer: What is someone had an idea that they wanted to see implemented, where would the power arise to have that happen?

Ms. L.: You could interpret power meaning many things, but I think you could say small group collaboration. One person working with one or two other staff members, and saying, I’ve got this idea... I know that there’s this hierarchy that says you’ve got to go to the Principal, depending on the idea, but there’s a lot of freedom given our staff. It’s rather, “go with our blessings,” than, “get through this red tape.”
Interviewer: There’s not a lot of bureaucracy that’s involved?

Ms. L.: Yeah. I think that, again, comes from our size. In a larger school it would be harder to work through some projects. Probably a detriment to the size is that when you get busy with the eight hundred other things that you’ve got to do, the project loses some of its thrust for carrying it on, so it doesn’t continue.

Interviewer: It’s a lot more work for the individual person, then?

Ms. L.: Yeah.

Interviewer: Now, you’ve been involved in the grade eight integrated curriculum project. How do you feel about that project right now?

Ms. L.: I feel mildly like a bit of an outsider because I’ve missed some of the meetings. Even back when it was spearheaded last February with some of the curriculum mapping work, I was on [medical] leave. So I feel a little bit out of the loop. Although, because it’s a small school, I feel I still have input. My input hasn’t been devalued, even though I haven’t been a hundred percent involved.

Interviewer: Is the project something that you feel will happen, could happen, might happen?

Ms. L.: That’s a good question. My reservation for myself is that this upcoming semester I don’t teach any grade eights, so I won’t be involved in teaching...

Interviewer: At this particular time?

Ms. L.: Yeah. And I also know that there’s other things going on, outside factors that are a huge influence, because if we don’t have school in February, it’s going to be hard to implement anything in the project.

Interviewer: Do you have any thoughts on the way people work together here?
Ms. L.: I think priorities is a big thing. Where we see needs. For example with the grade eight class we’ve tried to have a push on, trying to restructure, and it didn’t go through the way we thought it would, but it was seen as a priority so it was pushed forward to try to have something done about it. Also too, if the staff sees it as something beneficial to the students, it will be carried out. Even simple things like the student council activities, like the breakfast [the last day of classes before the Christmas break], things like that the kids are going to be involved in, I think there’s a better chance that it’s going to be followed through on. In terms of timetabling and those sorts of things that make a school work, the balance of power there, although I suppose it’s greatly in the hands of the administration, they still respect the staff enough that they look for input. They take advice when it’s given, and they act on it. That’s something that I don’t think happens in a bigger school. I think size is a huge element in the balance of power. On this staff, I think people automatically assume that they need to take a role. For example in the drama productions at our school, in a staff of twelve, nine people will be actively involved in the presentation. In a staff of thirty-seven, you probably have seven people, which is a far lower percentage, because everybody can assume, “he’ll take care of it.” That’s a mentality that I think you would find in a lot of places. If somebody else’ll do it, okay, it’ll get done. But here, the ‘somebody else’ is you ninety percent of the time, so if you want it done, you have to be involved in getting it done.

Interviewer: Thanks very much for your input!
Appendix ‘C’

Transcripts Of Meetings

Minutes of ad hoc committee—September 19, 2001

Present: Ms. B., Ms. R., Ms. W., Ms. H., Ms. K., Mr. Y.

Ms. B.: This is the sheet I’m kind of working through, and when I say at the top ‘working document’ I really mean it (hands out document). This is stuff I’ve come up with in order to try to save time, but it’s entirely open to the approval of the group and how you see it. What I did, I went and got copies of the Science Program of Studies, and the Social, and I tried to see where the curriculum links were. Okay? This (indicates photocopied pages) is out of this book (indicates – name of book--) which I’ll keep in the staff room or I’ve got it at home. Ms. H., (addresses student teacher) Ms. R., Mr. Y, and I went to Phoenix… Hi, Ms. K. (Ms. K. enters and joins meeting)… and we were looking for ideas of how to implement this thing that’s going on, and we heard this woman speak (indicates author of book) and she seemed to have the best pattern. So on this working document I have worked through the steps she has here for creating an integrated interdisciplinary curriculum and I’ve put the significant parts in here, so if you don’t want to attack that yet, here’s some light reading for you (hands Ms. K. photocopied pages) over the next week. And this might explain why some of these are done the way they are, and please, if I lose some of you, stop me…I did this at two o’clock this morning. Okay. The proposed format. Okay. Now, these are steps she leads you through and ultimately when this gets into a big fat binder these will be the sections, if that makes sense.
Ms. K.: Un huh

Ms. B.: She even has pretty pictures and charts you put it on, but you know...

This kind of junk (indicates pages from book). So you can see what a model one looks like. These Phoenix people know it, anyhow. First one, you're supposed to have a unit theme, and that's basically a topic, so it would be like Africa, or whatever. Now, in looking through those curriculums, I kept coming back to irrigation. It links the best of all the themes I had conceived of us doing, through the grades, for grade eight. Because, we can go to the coal mine, we can go to immigration, we can do buildings and structures. You know, there's lots of them.

Tying in with the science and the social studies, this is beautiful. So, I just came up with this title, Water Management in the [local] Region. So, as you're perusing this over in all your spare time over the next week, if you can think of a better title for the topic—go ahead (laughs). We can think of a fancy title to cover it like Streams in the Desert, but it should just state the basic topic, which is where we start from. All right, we okay on the unit theme? (everyone nods agreement)

Okay. Two. (indicates document) Now this is her big kick, it's the conceptual lens, and the idea is to get to a higher understanding of thought. Now, and she gives suggested words, and they're usually one or two words, very simple, and they are the conceptual lens through which you view the topic. So I came up with those four possibilities from those she suggests at the back of the book although we might be able to come up with something better. The one I thought fit best, and I think you'll see as I go through it, is 'places and environments'. You have to get one that is broad enough for all the subject areas and yet not so broad that it
gets (slight pause) liquified. Okay? (looks around and gets ‘body language’ agreement). All right, so that’s conceptual lens. Basically, that runs the whole thing. You’re continually going back to the interaction of people, places, and environments. If that’s the one you choose. And next Wednesday, you can tell me to shove it, you prefer ‘interaction’, and go with it, or something else. Okay. On to three, topics. Now, this is purely my brainstorming. I haven’t put any thought into the wording of these things, so if they sound...mushy...that’s fine...but just to kind of give you guys an idea of what’s in my head. I went through the subjects and these would be topics that could be studied under this theme from a local perspective. So Social Studies (gestures to Ms. R. and goes through possible Social Studies topics) ‘history of the [local area] Irrigation District’, and you’ll see later that these tie in beautifully with your curriculum, believe it or not. The government and how they control the quality of the water supply. The Depression era—there’s history. River systems of southern Alberta—there’s geography. The Walkerton case, I mean—there’s current events. Selling our water to the States—a current events issue. Water issues in the Third World. You’ve got a Brazil unit. I’m sure water’s an issue in there as well. Settlement of the [local area] region—you’ll see how this might possibly tie into this as well. People, places, and environments. Feedlots in southern Alberta—the whole issue of manure going into the water table. Government subsidies and bailouts of farmers. It’s all current events topics that can be tied to this theme and conceptual lens. Science...(speaks to Mr. Y) Most of these, [Mr. Y.], come directly from your Curriculum (reads list from document) Those are the
three areas in your curriculum. One of those, you may decide, doesn’t fit well, or whatever.

Mr. Y.: Un Huh

Ms. B.: This is entirely for you to look at, to decide how best it fits. And I think also what we’re doing here, we’re not setting aside a month to say we’re doing this. We’re all working on our own timetable. So I don’t see a problem if you do Solutions and Substances in September because that knowledge is part of this unit. It might fit into this unit later when you start working on some of the other things. So in that sense it could be included but you wouldn’t necessarily teach a special lesson in April on it. Do you get my point?

Mr. Y.: Oh yes.

Ms. B.: But it comes into the unit because it’s tied-together knowledge. And then I just came up with science issues that are Social Studies issues also, like water contamination in this area because of the feedlots, or the alkalinity of the soil—am I using the right term?

Mr. Y.: Yes, and that’s one of the areas that’s in our study of plants.

Ms. B.: I was going to say, a lot of what you do is not going to be a whole lot different, but somebody is talking about a whole lot of related issues so that when you teach it in class you start getting those connections going rather than being all alone with your plants dying in the salt. The effects of drought—what a timely topic now.

Mr. Y.: Oh yes.
Ms. B.: Language Arts… I mean, I can do the Dirty Thirties, stuff like that, but I see Language Arts, as we said before, like Information Processing, as being the processing. I mean, if Ms. R. has the kids preparing to interview people then I teach interview skills in Language Arts. If Mr. Y. has them doing a report in Science, I would teach them outlining skills.

Ms. R.: Outlining is good because that’s what I need.

Ms. B.: I can do it. And we’re tying themes and getting rid of all that redundancy. And for Ms. K. in Information Processing, similar stuff…

MS. K.: If you need anything researched…

Ms. B.: Research, yeah.

MS. K.: Or typed…

Ms. B.: Yeah, work through the Internet, there, and lots of stuff. And for their presentations—performance task thing I think they call it here—use PowerPoint or whatever. And I was talking to [names a teacher], he’s got Outdoor Ed. The effects on the animal habitat of St. Mary’s Dam. Stuff like that all ties in. I put Math, and I’ll approach [names math teacher not presently member of group] at, you know, the right time, but I see possibilities there with problems, percentages, volumes, fractions—simply substituting local water issues—how much land is under cultivation, et cetera, and work that in as your problems. There’s a connection. These guys (i.e. grade eights) don’t get Health this year but there are possible topics there. Okay. Unit Four there, right at the bottom. The next step in Erickson’s system is the unit overview, and this is basically just a letter to the students specifically that sells the unit. So—this is wonderful, here’s what we’re
doing. And so I can put that together. It's supposed to be engaging, not overwhelmingly informative. And, I've always felt strongly that right at the outset we've got to get parent support for this. And a lot of our parents will support it very strongly, and then when the kids come home with questions...or even the parents might ask them some questions, and, uh, maybe we'll get some discussion going at home. Anyhow... Now, next step. This is easy for us in Canada compared to those poor Americans. It (ie Erickson's book) gives lots of detail on how to create those enduring understandings, because they don't necessarily have them in their curriculum. Her standards for them are that you simply start with, 'students understand that...blah, blah'. You don't mention the topic but you go beyond into broader thought. (reads from printed list) Use active, present tense verbs. You put a concept in one and it should transfer through time and across cultures. These (indicates proposed list) don't really do but I think they're going to work anyway, because, all I did was, I went into the Program of Studies, and there's your concept. Statement from the Program of Studies from the Social (points them out), for Science... and you look at each of those, you can see how the topics will relate really quite nicely. And, for example, Ms. R., you've got that unit on Brazil, uh... (searches through list again) some of these, anyway...human and physical characteristics of a region, blah, blah. If you can start from southern Alberta, then hopefully Brazil...peasants cutting down the rainforest will make more sense. If we begin to understand why people here are allowing feedlots (laughs) way beyond the capacity of the land, and the kind of tensions between governments and individuals that exist in that—that's Social
Studies. Maybe it’s the same thing in Brazil, these people are stuck in this particular environment, so there are tensions there, and interests, so if you can sort of… (brief pause) Those are enduring understandings, concepts. And I didn’t do Language Arts. I can come up with a hundred of them. That takes us to Step Six. Guiding Questions is what we all learn to do in teaching, where you scaffold a set of questions to reach to the concept. And I just did a little—oh, I didn’t capitalize [local area name]—they are philosophical, debate, discuss questions. Start with something simple and eventually get to the concept. So you go from your concepts here and build questions on how to get to that end result. So, for example—okay, who came to the [local area] area first, well, it was people to trade with the Indians, and they brought them whiskey, then the NWMP came out, and blah, blah… So, when and why did they come, and then of course we got more people, and they discovered coal so we had more people yet, so they farming to grow food, and how did they… But, what’s wrong with this country? It’s semi-arid, right? How did they solve it? The history of the LNID—in [local area] here that’s irrigation. And the final question—we could go one further to a conceptual question here. I didn’t, but… has irrigation harmed or benefitted the [local] area? You’re into a huge question here, affecting this region. And, I’m thinking, going through this, the possibility for speakers. It’s just staggering, I mean we could get (mentions name of biggest feedlot owner in region) in to debate with some (laughs) environmentalist, and have the kids watch it. Wouldn’t that be great? And they’d have to behave. It would be interesting.
Mr. Y.: You could get someone from the Research Station working on soil alkalinity, showing what suggestions they have for those fields that are dead now.

Ms. B.: I'll add that on to the resource list.

Mr. Y.: And beyond the Research Station, there's even the commercial companies that provide those services.

Ms. H.: (mentions name of company)

Mr. Y.: Yes.

Ms. B.: And other issues, if you want to get into debate and discussion, selling water to the United States, agricultural expansion here—I'm thinking of the feedlots, who's controlling the quality of our water supply. That could be one of the projects a kid does. Find out who (laughs) checks the water in Black Rock. What a great project!

Ms. H.: Even just tracing the water from your tap that goes down the drain.

Mr. Y.: Where does it go...

Ms. H.: The sewer... Where it goes when you flush the toilet.

Mr. Y.: Water purification...you know, waste water purification before it's released back into the stream. That's a big issue. Another issue is the effect of dams and holding areas on the whole ecology. There's some good, some bad.

Ms. B.: Outdoor Ed—animal habitats and how they're affected. How did the vegetation in that area change? (W and S nod agreement)

Ms. H.: There's lots of good stuff on that... And the river...

Mr. Y.: You can walk across the Oldman River. There's no water left in it.
Ms. B.: I mean, these are global issues. There's nothing here that exists only in southern Alberta. It's world-wide issues. They just come in different forms in different places. Farmers receiving drought relief. I'd like to get (names local member of Legislative Assembly) in on it. Or a dryland farmer (laughs). It's a big issue.

Mr. Y.: It's a political issue.

Ms. B.: A political issue.

Mr. Y.: And an economic one.

Ms. B.: Do we have the responsibility as taxpayers to subsidize and bail them out every time there's a bad year. A hot issue! Okay. Great. Guest speaker potential. On the next step after you've done the questions are the specific knowledge and skills. You actually work in your curriculum and you pull out your content. They have to know the skills--how they have to do it. Of course it all gets tied in and you look at your little charts here and it makes perfect sense. You tie it in with your concepts. Okay. Uh, have I got to activities yet? Yeah, that might be it.

Mr. Y.: You've got the culminating activity (points to sheet).

Ms. B.: There's a section on activities. Duh, I've lost it.

Ms. H.: Number nine has it.

Ms. B.: Oh that's it. Sorry. It's kind of weird. It comes later. We could switch it around if it makes more sense. It's basically just listing, okay, these are the knowledge and skills—you might want to do activities first. That's how I do it. Oh, what have they learned? (laughs) You usually open a curriculum guide and you
find something! Assessment codes—that’s basically in this, and I know B will die
to see this, okay I’m going to give a quiz, a research report, dah, dah...And we
code them with our own little code so we don’t have to write it out each time.
That’s what that’s about... So, quiz will be Q! So it’s really... Yeah, and [B] will
love that stuff.

Ms. H.: Who’s [B]?

Ms. B.: Oh! (laughs) AISI Team Leader!

Ms. H.: Is that what this group is called, AISI?

Ms. B.: No, well no.

Mr. Y.: It’s an AISI project.

Ms. K.: Alberta Initiative for School Improvement. He was our vice-principal for
two years.

Ms. H.: Oh, [says his name].

Ms. B.: Yeah. And okay. So, subject area assessments, you do your own in your
own classes, your own part of the program, which by the way can be to different
dimensions and depths. It’s what you feel comfortable with putting in. And, uh,
the Performance Task Assessment. That’s this ultimate performance task. This is
going to be the hardest part of the whole thing—is each kid coming up with an
individual project. To research and create a performance of.

Mr. Y.: Does it have to be each kid? Or could it not quite conceivably be interest
groups? Like if you...

Ms. B.: I don’t know about that. That’s what we have to discuss.

Mr. Y.: Yeah
Ms. B.: I'd rather see individual, in a way. I can see, 'cause I know what junior high are like, some of them'll get together but they won't...(pause). Two of them'll give into the idea of the third. They may have their own curiosities, and it'll be our best students who'll do that. Which is unfortunate. (nods from R, K, and S). I would...that's why I'd rather see each do their own. Now, of course, they're all going to get interested in what everyone else is doing as time goes on. I...I get to it later in number ten, but, I think they need to make a proposal (sotto voce: I've learned something from AISII)...make a proposal and propose it to our team whether to accept or not and I guess we have to decide, are we willing to accept performance task proposals where there's two or more people? To me it has to be something comprehensive to do that.

Mr. Y.: Twice as big as...or long or hard as one.

Ms. B.: So I'm more than open to that. 'Cause I hate to say no to two kids who are interested in something.

Mr. Y.: Yeah

Ms. R.: The same thing.

Ms. B.: Together. But I think you have to talk to them clearly like, are you sure that...

Ms. R.: Remember that you like to have individual, but if there's two kids who are really bent on having...

Ms. B.: Doing one thing. Maybe go from there. That might...

Ms. R.: (mentions name of other teacher not in group) mentioned something that there was this Heritage Fair and the winner actually get to go on...
Ms. B.: Yeah, they run Heritage Fair...

Ms. R.: But there can be only one winner, because if they actually did win for the zone of the province...however...they get to go to Nationals.

Ms. B.: That's right. So we have to decide this. We started talking today and we won't kill it today because we do have time. But that is something we'll have to decide, whether we allow that.

Ms. R.: But if we can tie that in to what M wants to do.

Ms. B.: I know, yeah. Not all of our projects will qualify. I don't think. They have to be strictly heritage, as we're allowing them to go beyond. Even...

Ms. R.: Okay.

Ms. B.: But some would. By all means, anyone who has one, they should be encouraged. Yeah, I talked to him about that. That's a great idea. Some of the other ideas I have for some of the other grade levels probably would work in very nicely. But I don't know if a science experiment would qualify if a kid did that.

Mr. Y.: Not as a heritage project.

Ms. B.: But I'd be curious...

Mr. Y.: They might do well at...

Ms. B.: Science Fair!

Mr. Y.: Science Regionals

Ms. B.: Exactly. But that is an issue whether we do that, allow that. (pause) The way I'd picture that...I know I'm skipping already to ten, but... If every kid does one, even the least able (speaks to D), some of the kids on D's IPPs, that's where the aides really come in handy. The aide may have to sit down and, you
know, tell the kid what he’s going to do. He might do a poor job, he may do next to nothing—that’s fine, he’s graded on it. Then the best are chosen for a public fair here at the school where we bring… we invite people in, and balloons, and doughnuts (laughs) and all this stuff goes on and they can see it. But only the best. And those other kids become assistants. They can go in there and hold the beaker. Or run messages. ‘Cause it’ll be a zoo. So they can be very much a part of it. They’ve done their responsibility, they’ve got their class grade. Now the showpieces are going to do their thing and they [i.e. the less academically able students] can be workers. ‘Cause we can’t cut kids out of it. [i.e. all have to participate in some way]

Mr. Y.: No.

Ms. B.: They should be but… and there you will get kids certainly helping their friends, getting involved, which I think is great. Anyhow, number nine is easy. But anyway we have to create the assessment. One assessment. One rubric for that performance task.

Ms. H.: And the performance has to be from any subject?

Ms. B.: Well, yes, and it can go above and beyond—we’ll see—maybe the group will disagree, but I’d like to see it, the kid go, “Gee, I was home talking about this and my Grandma was telling when they liven in the river bottom and they had to haul water…” And that’s our job as teachers then—as soon as you hear that, start talking to the kid and tell him, make a note, maybe a possible project for you would be to profile Grandma’s life, dealing with water. Wouldn’t that be interesting? When she was a little kid she had to get the bucket with the thing.
Well, there you go. All the way up to when she got her first running water, but had to boil it to get it hot. The history of plumbing! Interesting! I'd like to see them, if they're curious about something...something comes from a discussion at home, and that'll give them an idea. And that'll be our job as teachers to hear that. You've got to jump on that and say...make a note of that. We'll give them time to decide what their project is, but hopefully they'll have a few things written down, oh I was interested in this, and it's going to take some conferencing. And I'm willing to (pause)...You guys have to do it for your subject area 'cause I won't know what they're talking about, but I can centralize it in Language Arts. You get me?

Mr. Y.: Yes.

Ms. B.: So we teach them how to be creative thinkers. Like, those questions you ask are what leads to the creation of something. They're not just idle questions. They might lead to something you might want to find out about. I'd like to see as many kids as possible really be interested in their project. (pause) You know. And we can have, just on the sly, a sort of standard one that we could assign to kids who were...who can't or won't...and we have those, obviously. Say, "You, do this report, and get out of my...You know. Do the best you can." But I think a lot of them will be very interested in some of the things. (pause) Okay. A Performance Task ...sorry, Nine is Lesson Plans. Activities are entirely up to you, and how you want to work it. Uh...and basically it's activities that we'll record as the main, uh, book of this. Performance Task—these are just ideas that I had—(checks through proposal form) Individual proposal form, gone through that, any
extension of the theme acceptable. We have to approve it, obviously...
assessment rubric, and we grade it. (simulates checking off list) Tick, tick, tick, tick. (pause) Done. And it's up to each teacher how much you want to count that for in your course. But I think we all count it. It goes towards Language Arts, it goes towards Social, to Science, to Info Pro, and we determine... We of course have to have our input into the rubric. (checks sheet) Ah, now stuff from other grades...I'm going to do something with the sevens this year. It won't be irrigation but it'll be history. I'll do something with my drama class. They can be part of the fair. It can work in. So, if you've got another class you're running, where you see potential, dive in and do it. I want this as school-wide as possible, eventually, so let's start doing it. School archives—I can see some of their printed material being kept in the school library. Guided by teachers, by that I meant that kind of constant advising, conferencing, especially on that project thing. Uh, the class-time issue is what we have to battle. How much class time do you want to give to it. Some of us may give one day a week for three months, some may do a half-period a week, for a month, some may do three weeks solid, and then do something else for two weeks, and then back to it. You have to be as flexible as I am (laughs) and that's the problem! Really, if you don't think you can fill sixty-seven minute classes for a week, make it a periodical, a periodic thing.

Mr. Y.: To a certain extent it'll be decided by when we want these performance...

Ms. B.: We need a date.

Mr. Y.: ...tasks to be completed by, because then...
Ms. B.: Thank you. I’m thinking...in future years maybe we could kick it off earlier, but...I was thinking, May? (pause) You’ve kind of done the basketball panic, weather’s nice, get people out. Let’s just...vegetate on that one, we can... Week before Grad? Something like that?

Mr. Y.: Yeah

Ms. B.: And the best ones go into the student fair...(reads through list)...where was I? Oh, and the TAs will play an important role...We have to have a central portfolio. I hate the word. Can we call it a folder? (everyone laughs)

Mr. Y.: If you wish!

Ms. B.: Each kid needs, especially when it comes to this performance task, a folder that’s centralized, and maybe he needs to carry it to every class.

Ms. W.: They can’t take their pencil with them to every class! (everyone laughs)

Ms. B.: There’s Science stuff they may want to put into it. (answers Ms. W.) Oh I know!

Mr. Y.: It’s all right—I have portfolios with my grade eleven math class, and what’s the first thing they ask me when I handed out the folder? Can we colour them? (everyone laughs)

Ms. B.: Grade eleven!

Ms. R.: Oh my!

Ms. B.: Now I’m thinking, I could work out some kind of form, something to guide them to the decision about the project. You’d begin the portfolio, you could keep checklists in it, you know...

Mr. Y.: Yeah
Ms. B.: Some of, even, your class work, if you want it to go in there...Okay.

Teams meeting, very brief, like this one. I think it has to go on throughout. Most of them won't be long. Wednesdays, after school? That work reasonably well? Um, I can see the next couple being a little more arduous than this one. If we meet every week, I think we can keep them short. And it's fresh in our minds.

(reads from sheet)...Student-initiated, teachers attuned to questions, okay, we need a scoring guide—that's the rubric for the performance task. And, if we can start amassing a list of resources that continues...we will continually add to that list. We can have the guy at the Research Station as his contact number in there, you know, it'll be a useful document. We'd go, how do I get this guy...? But, there are all kinds of things, field trips, pictures, agencies, community people. Community people's an important part of this. A very important part of it.

Ms. R.: (mentions community member) has done a lot of travelling in this area, not Brazil maybe...

Mr. Y.: Yeah, for comparison purposes

Ms. B.: You're absolutely right.

Ms. H.: I went to Indonesia, and I've been coming in (to classes)—put on a little show, do a little dance. (everyone laughs) No really, we all do a little dance together at the end. Maybe some songs... Lots of water issues in that...

Mr. Y.: ...Part of the world.

Ms. B.: In the Third World? Oh yes.

Mr. Y.: It's a major issue.

Ms. H.: Night and day...
Ms. B.: When I was in Montreal I went...they have a science thing in the geodesic dome. Lots of water issues. (pause) We can set a target for the upcoming week. I think you can almost work through this logically.

Mr. Y.: Are we still looking at starting with these classes after the Christmas Break? Semester Break?

Ms. B.: February? Yeah.

Mr. Y.: What our original thought was? Yes.

Ms. B.: Yes. No, we're not off as far as that goes. (pause) We're looking like we've done it (ie. The agenda). And I will, sort of, centrally compile this and try to arrive at a common format so it looks pretty...and go from there.

Mr. Y.: Do we have to do anything else in terms of the AISI funding? Or do we...

Ms. B.: I have a letter in my mailbox—I've been refusing to read it. Um, I'd have to send in some kind of report. I don't think we need it, personally. Do we need money?

Ms. R.: Well, it depends on whether we have a spare...say if a kid has a really neat project, and we’re going to have to buy stuff...

Ms. B.: The AISI money can’t go for that.

Ms. H.: What does it go for, then?

Ms. W.: But if we wanted a day to do that...(i.e. release time)

Mr. Y.: Yes, you see, that's what I was thinking. For us to meet after school once a week is fine, but if you wanted to get into some really heavy-duty, everyone-get-together kind of work, and come up with some formal structure, that takes time, and that might be something that a sub day...
Ms. B.: Can we really in a school this size have three of us out, or four of us?

Ms. R.: Well, no, that's true.

Ms. B.: Well, I don't know. It's a collaborative thing.

Ms. K.: But if it was a day thing and one took the morning and someone else the afternoon...

Ms. B.: We could try it.

Ms. K.: Because I can't see me needing a sub, but if you're planning a science experiment or something...

Ms. B.: Our trip to Phoenix, those were hellish days here. The principal was telling me...nobody begrudges it, but...It's hard. For a small school, you miss, you know (a discussion of the problem of having sub teachers follows)

Ms. B.: Well, I'll look at that and see if we can apply for some sub money. Other than that, I can't see...

Ms. H.: Even if it's just one day, even a Friday...

Ms. B.: We have to be careful about that. It's a bit of a strain. So. I'll have a look at it. We can apply and get the money anyway, and go from there. If we spend it, we spend it, if we don't spend it, we don't. Oh by the way, I have that terrific big one (i.e. book) about the rubrics. I lent it to E; I don't know where it is. Okay. I'll try that and see. For next week then, just look through this material, familiarize ourselves with it. Brainstorm. Make your little copious notes. And then next week we can get to nitty-gritty. Okay, I'll take this, I want to work on that (i.e the checklist). I think the hard part'll be coordinating time. (pause) Like, where we have to link.
Mr. Y.: Yes

Ms. B.: I can be very flexible in Language. Because my curriculum doesn’t tell me I have to teach in units.

Mr. Y.: No, you don’t. I don’t have to teach in units either, but it’s easier!

Ms. B.: You can come to me and say, “next week, A, we’re doing this, and...next week, A, I would like to teach, you know, deal with, some aspect of this thing they’re doing. And away we go. This alright?

Mr. Y.: Yeah I’m okay.

Ms. B.: I’m okay, you’re okay! (laughs)

Meeting breaks up into small talk.

Extracts of Meeting notes October 17, 2001 (disjointed fragments)

Ms. B.: Let’s deal with just the cores right now. What I’d like to see is (Ms. R.) go, “I’d like to do this one, that one, that one...whatever she decides.” And I go, “Okay, that’s what (Ms. R.) wants to do.” Then, you’d look at you want to do and say, logically in Science, that should follow that, or possibly work at the same time, or possibly overlap. Language is easy. I’m going to slot in wherever you tell me the language skills are needed.

....

Ms. B.: What we should probably go for next—we’ll look through here and see what all the feedback is, and then everybody starts deciding on activities and resources.
Ms. B.: We’ve got to make some decisions on the actual project, that we discussed.

Ms. B.: That’s sort of how I see us progressing here. So if today we came out knowing what everyone wants to do, and everyone goes away for the next ten days or whatever and comes back with, “I want to do this,” you don’t have to get down in the nitty-gritty at this point—“I want to do a lecture on..., I want to do an arts activity on that, I want to do a research thing on that, then we’ll come together and we’ll see where we all are heading. Does that sort of work?

Ms. B.: So where should we go from now? Everyone go away and come up with actual activities?

Mr. Y.: I’ve got my Chapter Six in my textbook is all this stuff. That’s what it is.

Ms. B.: Okay, just take your Chapter Six and look at it.

Mr. Y.: I’ve always done it in isolation but it would be so much better to be done in the context of what we’re doing.

Ms. B.: So just photocopy your outline of Chapter Six and just make your notes all over it of ideas of what you might do with it. We want this compiled in a way that we could hand to another school. Should we just do that?
Ms. R.: My next unit is regions, so this is what I'm going to be doing, so something like this is....

Ms. B.: Could you go through this (the list of areas) and pick any of these you like, or adapt them? All I did here, you know, was brainstorming... I think this here is the key, that's got to be done, but that can be largely a language project.... This here involves interviewing, this involves a lot of people talking, so if we definitely want to nail that, that becomes definitely a social studies-language project, researching that history. And basically, there's various ways of doing that. We could provide the resources in class or we could send the kids off...

....

Ms. R.: The last unit in the Social Studies is global issues...

Ms. B.: There you go!

Mr. Y.: How are we going to go about constructing this? What's our plan for what we're going to come up with? Are we going to get a binder, or...

....

Mr. Y.: I'm having a hard time focussing my own thoughts on it because it's still amorphous, because I don't see the form yet.

Ms. B.: What I'm saying is let's get the passion first and the form will follow.

....

Ms. B.: I'd like to compile the binder—with all your approval—simply so it has a common format. Do you know what I mean?

....
Ms. B.: So we come back and you say, “I’d love to do this,” and I don’t know what we’ll do. Maybe it’s time for felt pens.

Mr. Y.: Some sort of brainstorming...

Ms. B.: So we can stand back and say, yeah, we have to cover that before I hit that.

....

Ms. B.: So right now it’s exciting and all over the place, and who cares what it looks like...let’s find out what the potential is first before we commit ourselves...

....

Ms. B.: [we need to develop a] portfolio form...I’ll work on this...