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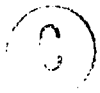
IMPLEMENTING TEACHER EVALUATION POLICY: A CASE STUDY OF TWO PRINCIPALS

by



DOUGLAS GEORGE KNIGHT

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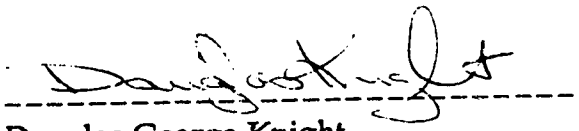

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THE UNDERSIGNED CERTIFY THAT THEY HAVE READ, AND RECOMMEND TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH FOR ACCEPTANCE, A THESIS ENTITLED *IMPLEMENTING TEACHER EVALUATION POLICY: A CASE STUDY OF TWO PRINCIPALS* SUBMITTED BY DOUGLAS GEORGE KNIGHT IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION.

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Dr. M. Horowitz

Dr. R. O'Reilly

Date: March 27, 1991

Dedicated

to

my wife, Leslie

and

my two children,

Zak and Karla

ABSTRACT

The implementation process of a new teacher evaluation policy was investigated by conducting case studies of two elementary school principals in a large urban school district. The purpose of the study was to explore the experiences of a principal as he/she implemented a teacher evaluation policy in order to gain a richer understanding of how principals implement policy. More specifically, the principal's understanding of his/her work context and of the policy, and the beliefs, values, and needs of the principal were investigated.

Previous research on policy implementation provided several perspectives of a conceptual framework, each one contributing explanatory dimensions but by themselves, each one was found to be incomplete. The analytic framework for the study was initially an eclectic mix of perspectives. While informed by these perspectives, the investigator also searched for other images that could contribute descriptively and analytically to an explanation of how principals implement policy.

It was concluded that policy implementation could be better understood within the larger framework of the work of the individual as a member of the organization. An holistic approach was the most explanatory, and each case was idiosyncratic. Each principal had his own understanding of the context that he worked in, his own interpretation of the policy, and his own set of beliefs, values, and needs. The implementation process was characterized differently by each principal in the way they: changed their beliefs about evaluation and their practices; dealt with conflict; paid lip-service to specific elements of the policy; interpreted the policy intent and basic policy assumptions; were influenced by the cultural norms of the school and of teaching; acted to fulfill their own needs for structure, recognition, support, information, etc.; used their authority and led their staff; dealt with the day-to-day pressures of managing a school within the context of decentralized decision-making. Implementation of a teacher evaluation policy was observed to be very complex.

It was also proposed that implementation was a process of learning, both at the individual and organizational level; that implementation of radical policies requires an overcoming of the inertia of deep-rooted values and beliefs; and that the nature of the organization is integral to the implementation process. Recommendations regarding further study and the practice of implementation are offered as concluding comments.

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Background to the Study

Introduction

Teacher evaluation policies, as well as many other policies, are being implemented in school districts around the country, yet little attention is being paid to the implementation process and its relationship with administrative practice (Boyd, 1988). Research on teacher evaluation and policy implementation (Wise et al., 1984; Berman and McLaughlin, 1978) has suggested that the success of these policies may be as (or possibly more) dependent on the implementation process than on the nature of the policy itself. McLaughlin (1987:176), writing about the current state of policy implementation, suggests:

> Taking the implementing system as the analytical frame is essential in order to sort out the effects of policy qua policy from policy as transformed through various individual interpretations and choices. . . .To assess the activities and outcomes of a special program in isolation from its institutional context ignores the fundamental character of the implementation process.

To learn how principals implement policy, one must understand the principal, the context in which he or she works and the organizational and administrative processes that are operating. Implementation research is beginning to recognize the complexity of the process and the need to reconceptualize our thinking (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984; McLaughlin, 1987; Boyd, 1988).

Background

School principals are implementing policies on teacher evaluation in a widespread educational movement to improve accountability, and to, hopefully, improve the quality of instruction and teaching. What do these policies mean to them, how does it affect their roles and relationships in their work life, what is the context in which they work, how do they implement the policy? Although the implementation process of a district

policy has many actors, the focus of this study is the school principal; the purpose of the study is to contribute to the literature a further understanding of the policy implementation process.

Much of the literature on school improvement and educational change treats the principal as a change agent, a facilitator of planned innovations (Havelock, 1973; Sergiovanni, 1987). Studies have been conducted to examine the styles of principals as change agents (Hall et al., 1982) and to develop programs that will improve the skills of principals as facilitators of change in teachers' behaviors (Hord and Thurber, 1982). Principals, however, may also be the subjects of change efforts, as in the case of the implementation of teacher evaluation policies. Principals are now being required, more so than ever before, by both central office administrators and teachers to supervise and evaluate teachers competently. The role of principal as manager appears to be no longer enough (Snyder and Johnson, 1985). Principals are required to be instructional leaders, able to assess the quality of teaching and teachers, and able to assist teachers to improve. They must inspect the work of teachers, and yet they may desire to engage teachers in a dialogical relation that is based on the power of persuasion, not positional authority (Gitlin and Smyth, 1989). They must "strike a balance between control and autonomy" (Darling-Hammond, Wise, and Pease, 1983).

Implementation, by one account, is a process of putting a policy into practice. Berman and McLaughlin (1976) concluded from their studies of the implementation of educational innovations that successful implementation involves mutual adaptation - the design and goals of the innovation are adapted to comply with local circumstances or needs, and the recipients adapt to the demands of this mutating innovation. (An innovation may be defined as any process or product that is new to a potential user -- Hall,1979:203.) Fullan and Pomfret (1977:336) suggested that there are at least five dimensions of implementation in practice: "changes in materials, structure, role/behavior, knowledge and understanding, and value internalization." In a similar vein Fullan (1981:214) stated that implementation is "social learning, consisting of a process of resocialization as individuals attempt to come to grips with the value and meaning of possible new goals, materials, teaching behavior, and conceptions of education." Implementation may also be thought of as political activity,

involving struggles for power, manipulation, control, incentives and disincentives. The process of implementation has many facets, many perspectives.

Implementation involves change and change, according to one perspective, may be regarded as a learning process -- "the unfolding of experience and a gradual development of skill and sophistication in use of an innovation" (Hall,1979:204). At the individual level, change "is a process whereby individuals alter their ways of thinking and doing" (Fullan,1985:396). Darling-Hammond et al. (1983:314) state that "effectively changing the behavior of another person requires enlisting the cooperation and motivation of that person, in addition to providing guidance on the steps needed for improvement." Fullan (1982:80) suggested that "to bring about more effective change, we need to be able to explain not only what causes it but how to influence those causes". Pressman and Wildavsky (1984:234) argue:

> If change -- altered relationships among participants leading to different outcomes -- is the idea behind implementation, the continuous adjustment of objectives is called for just as much as modification of instruments for attaining them. Implementation ceases being static; it becomes dynamic by virtue of incorporating learning of what to prefer as well as how to achieve it.

To know that teacher evaluation policies should be "seen to have utility" (Wise et al., 1984) to have a greater chance to be effective does not tell us how to bring about this condition. "We need to know how change occurs, the forces which trigger it, and the circumstances which allow it to be implemented" (Henderson and Perry,1981:2).

An intervention is "an action or event that influences use of an innovation, or has potential for influencing use" (Hord and Thurber, 1982:13). The implementation of a teacher evaluation policy is often accompanied by interventions that are enacted to facilitate a principals' use of the policy. How do interventions affect principals? How is power and coercion used? How does the culture of the school and the district affect a principal's behaviour? How does a principal become committed to a policy?

Researchers at the Texas Research and Development Center for Teacher Education (Hall,1979) have found that individuals differ in their concerns (motivations, perceptions, attitudes, and feelings) about an innovation. These concerns may be linked with specific interventions that assist individuals in their use of the innovation. Investigations by Hall and others (Hall, Wallace, and Dossett,1973) regarding the concerns of individuals led to the development of the concept of Stages of Concern. This concept proposes that there are seven developmental stages that individuals may progress through from early stages of awareness (self-oriented concerns) to stages of management (task-oriented concerns) through later stages of refocusing (impact-oriented concerns). The Stages of Concern concept prompted research on interventions that would facilitate the progress of users from one stage to another. How can this concept help principals to understand themselves as they implement a policy?

Research has also shown that context makes a significant difference in the process of change (Berman,1981; Huberman and Miles,1984a). Berman and McLaughlin (1976:361) found that "project outcomes depended more on the characteristics of the project's setting than on any other factor." Their study concluded that organizational climate and individual commitment were two of the most significant factors related to successful implementation.

Fullan (1982) also considered context characteristics, along with characteristics of the change itself, as factors that affect the process of changing. Fullan's (1982:96) list included: (1) characteristics of the change - - need, clarity, complexity, quality of materials; (2) school system characteristics – history of change, adoption process, administrative support, staff development approach, time-line and information, school board/community support; (3) school traits - - principal involvement, teacher/teacher relations, teacher characteristics; and (4) extra-local characteristics - - role of government agencies and external assistance.

Huberman and Miles (1984a:167) contend it is logical to expect that the context itself (structure, procedures, and climate) may change as a result of the implementation of an innovation. Their research on a sample of twelve school district sites led them to examine eleven pre-existing contextual features: environmental pressure, demographic changes, needy student population, innovative history, superintendent orientation, board attitude,

fund-seeking history, salience of program funds, motivation for adoption, central office advocates, and climate of school. They found that the effects of these contextual factors on organizational change varied and involved a complex mix interrelating several context features with implementation process features (Huberman and Miles,1984a:179).

In the implementation process the influence of specific contextual factors appears to be contingent on the existence or condition of other factors. Levin (1981:66) analyzed a number of cases in which implementation had been effective and concluded that some of the contributing conditions were idiosyncratic. Berman (1981:279) states that outcomes of the change process are time- and context-dependent and thus only limited generalizations may be possible. He contends there is a need to develop a taxonomy of contextual conditions, followed by research that deliberately selects samples within specified conditions. Hall and Loucks (1982:149) have suggested that what is needed is a model that "links the concern diagnosis with the form and function of interventions, and integrates these with the most influential context variables." It appears that an investigation of the intricasies of context in the change process might further our understanding of this concept.

Understanding the context of a change process may help us to explain how change occurs. The research of Miles and Huberman (1984a) has shown that context is an 'impinging' factor, but there are also a great many factors that interrelate at various phases of the implementation process. In many ways we are at the beginning in our understanding of the process of change and the implementation of policies.

Much of the research on change has focused on planned organizational change and the implementation of policies (Firestone and Corbett, 1988). Many studies sought to determine what factors affected the implementation process (for example, Sabatier and Mazmanian,1981; Levin,1981; LeTourneau,1981; Simms,1978; Berman and McLaughlin,1976). These studies often treated change as a static event, but "change is a process, not an event" (Hall and Loucks,1978:37) and, according to Fullan (1985:392), "research needs to go beyond theories of change (what factors explain change) to theories of 'changing' (how change occurs, and how to use this new knowledge)".

In review, research on change has treated the school principal as the change agent, the facilitator of change for teachers (Fullan,1982; Hall et al.,1984). Rarely has the principal been studied as the adopter of a policy. Current interest in the principal as the pivotal character for improving schools is leading to an increase in professional development activities for administrators (Blumberg and Greenfield,1980:263) yet little substantive research has been conducted on ways that the learning environment for administrators might be improved (Daresh and LaPlant,1985:39) or what conditions influence administrators to change. Teacher evaluation is receiving a lot of attention in the educational community and elsewhere (Darling-Hammond, Wise, and Pease,1983:285). Models for teacher evaluation are being constantly developed and refined. Workshops on "How to evaluate teachers" are proliferating. In all of this rush to evaluate teachers the principal has been treated as an object, not as a responsible partner in the process of schooling. We appear more concerned with how do we get principals to do it, and do it right, than with learning how the evaluation of teachers affects principals and their lives in schools.

The implementation of a policy on teacher evaluation requires principals to develop skills that they may not possess, or improve those that they do, to become better informed regarding matters related to evaluation, and acquire a new perspective towards their roles (Alfonso, Firth, and Neville,1984; McGreal,1983; McLaughlin, 1984; Glickman,1981; Gitlin and Smyth, 1989). They must integrate all these changes into their existing understanding of how their world operates. They must 'alter their present reality' (Fullan,1982:91) to accommodate the demands of the new policy. Individuals vary not only in their values, knowledge, and skills, but also in their capacity to transform meanings and develop new understandings. From a principals' perspective what does this mean? How does present reality become transformed?

The work of Huberman and Miles (1984a and b) supports the contention that implementation is a complex phenomenon, not easily reduced to a few factors that 'explain' how successful implementation takes place. While our understanding of this process is improving, we have yet to establish substantive theories (Boyd, 1988; Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984). We appear to be at that stage in research on change and implementation where we need to articulate our perspectives, examine our

motives, question our assumptions and beliefs about the nature of governance in education, and to develop a richer understanding of the process.

Statement of the Study Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of principals as they implement a teacher evaluation policy. Specifically, the following questions were used to guide the study:

1. What was the principal's understanding of the context that he was working in ?

2. What meaning did the principal give to the policy?

3. What experiences and beliefs appeared to influence the principal as he implemented a teacher evaluation policy within a school?

4. What are the characteristics of the principal that affected the implementation of the teacher evaluation policy?

5. How do principals implement policy?

Significance of the Study

As previously stated, current research on policy implementation has yet to produce substantive theories of the implementation process, and to provide practical guidance for those involved (McLaughlin, 1987; Boyd, 1988). More specifically, those involved with the implementation of policies on teacher evaluation appear to be in need of a better understanding of salient conditions that affect principals and the process itself (McLaughlin and Pfeifer, 1988a). There is a need to question the practice of implementation not only for its efficacy but for its implications for the worklife and the culture of schools:

> [B]eyond its implications for the improved design of social policy, one of the great contributions of policy analysis is its

> reconception of the practice of management within the context of a much sharper perception of the realities of social-service organizations and of the implementation process. (Boyd, 1988:516)

The purpose of this study was to describe how principals implement policy, to analyse why they behave the way they do, and to subject the findings to a critical interpretation and exploration. Pressman and Wildavsky (1984:253) suggested:

> that evaluation and implementation may be desirable but are definitely different in various types of organizations-the exasperation surrounding the subject (why can't evaluators and implementers do the right thing or, sometimes, do anything at all?) should give way to sustained social analysis. For then, at long last, implementation and evaluation would become social studies, which means that we would seek to root explanations in social (or, as we say, organizational) life rather than, as is now done, leaving them suspended in mid-air, as if they were unconnected to human preferences. There is quite a difference between saying "evaluate!" "implement!" as if these were angelic activities, virtuous but disembodied, and deciding how much authority, competition, domination, or equality there ought to be in our public lives.

Implementation of policies is a complex activity (Fullan, 1982), connected to many facets of individual and organizational life. Bringing about change, whether in an evolutionary or revolutionary fashion, is only one part of this process. The nature of the organization and individuals within it, the values, norms, and structure that are espoused and practiced, are also interwoven with the process (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984). This study is an attempt to illuminate the practice of implementation from different perspectives, to subject it to careful scrutiny and to contribute to the reconceptualization of implementation.

Teacher evaluation is only one example of a policy that principals may have confronting them and that may require a change in their roles and behavior (Hickcox, et al., 1988). Many principals are finding teacher evaluation a particularly difficult issue to deal with (McLaughlin and Pfeifer, 1988b). The responsibility to supervise and evaluate teachers is not new for most principals, but it has been a responsibility that has received

very little attention from most. Evaluation may be one of the most difficult tasks for principals to perform, not only because of the emotional turmoil that surfaces and the skills that are required, but because it challenges the principal to acknowledge, sometimes only tacitly, the type of relationships that he or she maintains with staff. With every evaluation the principal reaffirms the values that he/she holds: in what image is the teacher held, what beliefs does one have regarding the nature of teaching, what type of authority should one embody in this professional relationship. This study may be of benefit for those who practice evaluation by providing some insight into such matters.

Delimitations

1. This study is delimited to exploring the experiences of two principals in the process of implementing a specific teacher evaluation policy within their respective schools.

2. The study is delimited to a large urban school district.

3. It is delimited to describing the experiences of the principals and the context of this process for each principal during a six month period from January to June, 1985, a phase of the implementation process.

4. The study was delimited to a case study methodology as there was a need to explore the context of the process of implementation-- to ask how principals implement policy and why they do what they do, to collect as much information as possible to try to make sense of what was happening.

Limitations

1. A limitation of the study was the period of time during which data were collected. It is assumed that implementation of the policy took place prior to and after the study was completed, as well as during the period of the study.

2. The study was limited by the methodology used. Other modes of inquiry, such as ethnographies, life histories, action research, interpretive interactionism, critical theory analysis, policy analysis, et cetera (Morgan, 1983) would produce additional insights on the subject under study.

3. The study was limited by the willingness of the respondents to share their experiences, their beliefs and perceptions with the investigator, and their ability to recall events.

4. The study was limited by the skill and knowledge of the investigator to conduct interviews that were open-ended.

Assumptions

1. It was assumed that sufficient data could be collected, and that the particular period of time in which the study was conducted would reveal significant experiences of the principals.

2. It was assumed that the 'quiet' intrusion of the investigator into the lives of the principals might alter the process under study. To account for this it was appropriate to describe the interactions of the investigator with the respondents in as much detail as possible.

3. It was assumed that the research orientation of the study was appropriate for the study purposes.

4. It was assumed that the study would not produce findings that would be generalizable in a statistical sense, but that the reader would be able to generalize 'analytically', that is, to theorize from the 'thick' descriptions provided, to bring his/her own tacit knowledge to bear critically on the observations so that 'intellectual' generalizations and transfers might be possible.

5. The interpretive paradigm for the study was a phenomenological-naturalistic one. It was assumed that there are multiple, constructed realities; that there is an infinite number of perspectives that can be taken to understand a phenomenon, and while each one contributes to a broader view it is impossible to ever see the whole; that the investigator and those 'investigated' interact to influence one another; that everything is interconnected in such a way that the parts become mutually causal. The methodology for the study is qualitative.

Organization of the Thesis

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature on implementation. The focus of this review is to develop a conceptual and analytical framework for exploring the process of implementation. A variety of conceptual perspectives is described; each one presents a view of the process from a distinct framework, yet individually and collectively they can only represent a portion of reality. It is assumed that there are multiple constructed realities, each one correct, but not complete.

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology that was used to guide the inquiry. A brief description of the underlying philosophical assumptions (those of the naturalistic paradigm) of the study methodology is provided, followed by the data collection techniques, the method of data analysis, and the techniques employed to assure trustworthiness.

Chapter 4 provides a description of the setting of the study and the background to the development of the policy that was being implemented. The setting includes the district and the two schools that were involved.

The data gathered in this study of the two principals, Dan and Ben (not their real names) were organized under three major themes: their perceptions of the context, their understanding of the meaning of the policy, and the characteristics of the principals. The data are reported within these three themes. Each principal's story is told in turn within each of the themes to reveal both the similarities and differences between the two.

In Chapter 5 the context is explored from the perspective of each of the principals. They describe their perceptions of the district management organization -- the climate, the culture, and the structure.

Chapter 6 describes the meaning that Dan and Ben attached to the policy -- their interpretations of the policy terms, their understanding of the policy intent, their beliefs and attitudes about teaching and evaluation, the concerns they had about the policy, their sense of the policy's efficacy, their commitment, and the changes in their perceptions and beliefs over time as they worked with the policy.

The purpose of Chapter 7 is to provide a description of some of the characteristics of Dan and Ben in relation to how they were implementing the policy. This chapter in particular attempts to highlight the differences and similarities of the two in a way that helps to explain why the policy looks like it does in each school.

In Chapter 8 the conclusions are discussed and analysed within the three themes and against the implementation perspectives outlined in Chapter 2. What is intended by this discussion is to begin the development of a reconceptualization of the process. Propositions about the practice of implementation are presented.

Chapter 9 concludes the study with a brief review of the image that was constructed of implementation through the exploration of Dan's and Ben's experiences. The purpose of this chapter is to further develop an organizational perspective about policy implementation from the propositions, and to provide a few reflections on the study from a personal perspective.

Chapter 2

A Review of Related Literature

The purpose of this review of the literature is primarily to develop a conceptual and analytical framework for the study. Policy implementation has received increased attention in the literature in recent years, from policy analysts, program evaluators, and those interested in the process of change. As Fullan (1981:195) has stated: "This research is increasingly sophisticated and cumulative in identifying with greater clarity the complexity and elusive nature of implementation."

Many writers have agreed that the process of implementation is complex and thus has not lent itself easily to theory development or conceptual clarity. Research on planned change and implementation has been described as largely atheoretical (Berman,1978:158; Gross,1979:30), and guided more by issues than disciplinary concerns (Williams,1982:13). Firestone and Corbett (1988:338) state: "there is greater respect for the complexities of the process, more realism in expectations, and enhanced understanding of strategies that work in different situations." They suggest that there is a need to understand the cultural elements of schools in order to bring about planned change efforts. Elmore (1982:106) has argued that a general theory of implementation is neither useful nor epistemologically valid. He suggested that models or theories of particular parts of the process may provide delivery-level implementors with practical advice that will improve the enterprise. Berman (1980:207) concluded that "researchers need a contingency analysis of implementation," whereby implementers learn to match effective strategies to the appropriate situation. Empirical findings have often been contradictory, or inconclusive, leading Berman (1981) to suggest that a new paradigm for thinking about implementation must be created. There remains a need to reconceptualize the process.

> Policy implementation is hypothesis-testing: it is exploration. Any political body that argues otherwise mistakenly regards itself as omniscient and omnipotent. . . . There is no amount of statutory specificity and top-down control that will prevent an

> implementation process from becoming a test of its own efficacy. Where coercion may subdue political obstructions to the implementation process, rarely can it compensate for a misshapen plan of action, for a misdiagnosis of the problem to be treated, or for a lack of foresight. . . . A case can be made for the reconceptualization of implementation as an exploratory rather than an unquestioning, instrumental, and even subservient type of behaviour. (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984:254-56)

Many perspectives of implementation have evolved, each one contributing to a broader understanding of the concept. Fullan (1981:197) has argued that implementation research has reflected three perspectives -- the programmed, adaptive, and evolutionary orientations -- and that "the meaning of implementation can only be captured through an understanding of all three perspectives." House (1981) speaks of three perspectives: technological, political and cultural. Van Meter (1982) presented a system of classification that incorporated ten perspectives on planned change. Deal (1984) argued that we must go beyond the two traditional, rational perspectives of change (individual and structural theories) and examine political and symbolic theories.

The conceptual and analytical framework for this study is pluralistic, that is, many perspectives are utilized. What follows is a review of the meanings that have been given to implementation, various perspectives and models of the implementation process, and an examination of the factors and dynamics in the process of implementation that previous research has found significant.

The Meaning of Implementation

In the context of the literature on planned change, *implementation* is the middle phase between *initiation* -- mobilization, adoption decisions, selection, development of policy, and *institutionalization* -- building in the innovation, routinization, incorporation (Fullan,1985:404-405; Berman,1978:177). Although such linearity helps to simplify and attempts to clarify the concept of planned change, the reality speaks to a complex, interactive process that rarely has a tidy beginning and a definitive end.

Berman (1981:264) proposed that these "sub-processes" are loosely, not linearly, coupled, they may overlap, and they do not necessarily follow a rational approach.

Berman (1981:266-67) described educational change, from a systems perspective, as "a change in state of the system -- that is a change in routine behaviours. The process of change consists of the events and activities as the system moves from one state to another." Implementation, as a subprocess of change, " comprises the activities of users attempting to use an innovative idea" (Berman,1981:266). Accepting Weick's notion of schools as loosely coupled organizations, Berman (1981:267) also contends that implementation can occur in different parts of the system at different times.

Pressman and Wildavsky (1973:XV) defined implementation in this way: "Implementation may be viewed as a process of interaction between the setting of goals and actions geared to achieving them." Then they hastened to add, almost apologizing for such indiscretion:

> We oversimplify. Our working definition of implementation will do as a sketch of the earliest stages of the program, but the passage of time wreaks havoc with efforts to maintain tidy distinctions. As circumstances change, goals alter and initial conditions are subject to slippage. In the midst of action the distinction between the initial conditions and the subsequent chain of causality begins to erode. Once a program is underway implementors become responsible both for the initial conditions and for the objectives toward which they are supposed to lead.

Williams (1980:1) offered a similar stance when defining implementation: "Implementation may be described most briefly as the stage between a decision and operations. It is the hard step after the decision, involving efforts to put in place -- to make operational -- what has been decided." He continues that implementation should not be considered a separate step, it should be considered as a factor that influences the choice between alternative policies. Williams' definition implicitly recognizes that implementation is a process that attempts to institutionalize a policy

directive, and that this process should receive consideration when policies are developed.

In contrast, Van Meter and Van Horn (1975:447) defined implementation as explicitly this: "Policy implementation encompasses those actions by public and private individuals (or groups) that are directed at the achievement of objectives set forth in prior policy decisions." They emphasized that the implementation phase does not begin until goals and objectives have been determined by the policy makers and a commitment made. What they did not recognize with this definition is that many policies do not have clear-cut objectives or goals, and that in fact the implementation process may involve adaptations of the original policy directive (McLaughlin,1976; Berman and McLaughlin,1976).

Sabatier and Mazmanian (1981:5) modified their definition of implementation, which is the carrying out of a basic policy decision, by stating that: "*Ideally* that decision identifies the problem(s) to be addressed, stipulates the objective(s) to be pursued, and, in a variety of ways, 'structures' the implementation process." (Italics added.) Many policy problems are ill-structured (Dunn,1981:105), and policy directives can be vaguely enough worded to intentionally allow for adaptation in the field. Implementation, then, may be a process requiring high fidelity with the policy directive (programmed implementation), or it may be a process of "mutual adaptation" (Berman and McLaughlin,1976) in which both the policy and the participants adjust in the course of the process.

Fullan (1982:54) has recognized this complexity in his definition of implementation:

> Implementation consists of the process of putting into practice an idea, program or set of activities new to the people attempting or expected to change. The change may be externally imposed or voluntarily sought; explicitly defined in detail in advance or developed and adapted incrementally through use; designed to be used uniformly or deliberately planned so that users can make modifications according to their perceptions of the needs of the situation.

So far our understanding of the meaning of implementation has had little to do with how the process takes place, what dynamics are involved, what explains why participants behave as they do, why policies/innovations fail or succeed. The growing body of literature on implementation offers a variety of perspectives, each one implicitly or explicitly making assumptions about organizational or individual behavior, each one focusing on particular aspects or strategies of the process, emphasizing different units (individual, group, organization, or society) as the basis of change. Several of these perspectives will be explored to illuminate conceptual frameworks.

Perspectives on the Implementation Process

The perspective that one employs, either deliberately or unconsciously, to describe or analyse the process of implementation directs one's attention to certain features and not others. We simplify to better understand, but in doing this we lose some of the intricacies and realities.

The concept of implementation has been approached from many perspectives, or 'frames of reference'. Each perspective has the potential to contribute in some way to a more complete, realistic understanding of the process.

Many of these perspectives will be reviewed to develop a framework for analysis. While attempts have been made to construct a classification scheme of the approaches to planned change (Van Meter, 1982) no such model will be offered here. Implementation perspectives differ with respect to any one or more of the following criteria: (1) the unit (individual, group, organization, or society) that is considered the focus of change, (2) the organizational theory (e.g., rational, natural, and open) that provides an overriding framework, (3) how congruent the practice is expected to be to the policy directive (programmed, adaptive, evolutionary), and (4) the factors that shape the process (conflict and bargaining, political, contextual, cultural, symbolic, developmental, educational).

Implementation as Resocialization (normative-re-educative, the development of individual meaning, the learning perspective). Berman (1981:271) has written that there are three models of implementation that represent current research perspectives: the managerial model, the learning model, and the bargaining model. The managerial and bargaining model will be discussed later. The learning model, according to Berman (1981:271), "views implementation as a process whereby individuals. . .attempt to learn new behavior and the organization. . . tries to learn how to change its coordination, control, and information systems."

The assumptions underlying this perspective are based on a belief that individuals are guided in their behavior by sociocultural norms. Commitment to these norms involves the value and attitude systems of the individual. To effect change one must develop commitment to the new normative orientation by altering values and attitudes, including those of the cultural group with which there exists significant interrelationships. The rationality of individuals is not denied; however, the power and influence of habits, individual and group value systems, established roles and relationships, and a normative culture that helps to define meaning for individuals are also recognized by this perspective as elements of the process of change (Chin and Benne,1976). Implementation involves the clarification and reconstruction of values, without, as Chin and Benne (1976) warn, manipulation and indoctrination.

Fullan's perspective on implementation is based on the premise that "individual meaning is the central issue" in understanding and dealing with change (Fullan,1982:295). According to Fullan (1982:91) "effective implementation is a process of clarification", whereby individual implementers work out their own meaning of the proposed innovation. He also referred to this as a process of *resocialization* in which individuals interact in a variety of situations (e.g. training sessions, support activities, reflective analysis) that facilitate an improved understanding of the changes being required.

Educational change in schools usually consists of several dimensions: new goals or objectives, materials, teaching behaviors or role change, and

philosophical conceptions of education (Fullan,1981:196). Recent research supports the contention that "changes in attitudes, beliefs, and understandings tend to *follow* rather than precede changes in behavior" (Fullan,1985:393). In the initial stages of any significant change, the acquisition of new behaviors also involves anxiety and uncertainty, which in turn requires appropriate technical assistance and psychological support (Fullan,1985:396). Given that the innovation (in its original state or after modifications made in the field) is perceived to deliver what it purports to (e.g., a reading program that results in improved reading skills in students), Fullan (1985:396) suggested that the "fundamental breakthrough" occurs when individuals can cognitively understand the underlying rationale of the innovation and accept that the "new way works better". Our understanding of this process, of "the psychological dynamics and interactions occurring between individuals in schools as they experience change" (Fullan,1985:396), is still inadequate to consistently bring about successful implementation. Improving our understanding of the complex implementation process should increase our ability to plan for and cope with change (Fullan,1981:196).

An analysis of the implementation process through the lens of the resocialization or learning perspective would focus on the meaning of the policy to individuals as they attempt to incorporate the change, how extensive the change is perceived to be by the individual, how commitment to the change is, or is not developed, what role the normative culture plays in the process, what types of experiences help, or hinder, the individual to understand, accept and integrate the new policy into their repertoire of behaviors, and how the role and relationships of the individual are affected by, and themselves affect the integration of the policy.

Implementation as Conflict and Bargaining (a political perspective). While Fullan (1982:296) wrote of change and implementation in the context of learning and socialization, Bardach (1977) has approached this phenomenon from a political perspective. He defined the implementation process "as a

process of strategic interactions among numerous special interests all pursuing their own goals, which might or might not be compatible with the goals of the policy mandate" (Bardach,1977:9). The interactions that Fullan described become to Bardach 'politically' motivated. The political perspective assumes that individuals are driven by a variety of incentives and have at their disposal a variety of sanctions that they manipulate to satisfy their needs. Those with the greatest amount of power in a given situation will control what takes place. Implementation in this perspective is a matter of control, of persuasion and bargaining, of "assembling numerous and diverse program elements" that are in the hands of many different, partially independent parties (Bardach,1977:37). The implementation process is "the playing out of a number of loosely interrelated games whereby these elements are withheld from or delivered to the program assembly process on particular terms" (Bardach,1977:57-58).

Similarly, Van Meter (1982) described the focus of the 'conflict and institutional politics' perspective as that of "garnering support for an intended or preferred course of action, and applying the use of political force to bring about desired change." Berman (1981:271) described the bargaining model as viewing implementation as "a conflictual process in which the bargaining among various stakeholders defines what is done and how."

Van Meter and Van Horn (1975:454-457) included the concept of compliance in their discussion of a theoretical foundation for implementation: "Studies of the process by which compliance is obtained or avoided give us insight into the problem of the implementation of complex policies in a fragmented political system." They cite Etzioni's thesis that different kinds of compliance systems (coercive, normative, and remunerative power) are required by different types of organizations (or situations within organizations) dependent on the relationship betwe[illegible] superiors and subordinates. The power of subordinates is also recognized, particularly in situations where their behavior is infrequently monitored. This 'loosely coupled' relationship between superiors and subordinates allows subordinates to ignore or comply with directives as they see fit. The incentives to comply must exceed those not to comply. Individuals also

vary in their attitudes towards authority, thus the type of incentives (or disincentives) will likely vary from individual to individual.

Deal (1984:126) has also advanced the perspective of political theories of change, charging that an appreciation of the struggles, conflicts, tensions, and exchanges of power that occur in schools may help to explain some of the variance in the change process.

> People enjoy their stature and power in organizations. Even those who have neither relish the time that they will. People also have self-interests they wish to protect. When their interests are threatened, they form coalitions with others. Struggles among coalitions decide whose interests will prevail in an arena of combative conflict. In the struggle the champions of the status quo usually emerge victorious while the agents of change lick their wounds and wonder why they lost. (Deal,1984:127)

Elmore (1978:218), in describing a model of implementation from a conflict and bargaining perspective, suggested that implementation "consists of a complex series of bargained decisions reflecting the preferences and resources of participants." One of the factors that determines the distribution of power, or the relative bargaining strength of individuals, is the amount of specialized knowledge that they possess. An individual, able to suggest solutions to problems that arise in the course of implementation, is at an advantage when bargaining for specific preferences. Conversely, individuals who are able to construct impenetrable barriers have the advantage in terms of protecting the status quo, should that be their desire.

The conflict and bargaining, or political perspective of implementation, appears to offer a viable alternative to more rational perspectives. It does not assume that all actors aspire to achieve the same goals, or that to succeed all actors must reach consensus with one another and agree to participate in the planned change. Enforced compliance may be necessary and appropriate at particular stages of the process and with particular individuals. Elmore (1978:226) has argued that the bargaining and conflict perspective provides a powerful descriptive device that helps to explain what may appear as irrational behaviour.

An analysis of the implementation process from this perspective would include an investigation of conflicts and their resolutions, the attitude of individuals towards authority, the perceptions of individuals of organizational sanctions and compliance systems, the monitoring process, how bargaining processes evolve, the distribution and utilization of power, what incentives inspire, and disincentives thwart, the utilization of the policy, and the distribution of resources that facilitate policy implementation.

Implementation as a Rational Process (systems management, the programmed approach). The most traditional perspective of implementation, the rational systems model, is generally considered a better prescription of what 'ought to be' than a description of what is. Yet for analytic purposes this perspective may be useful to compare what does transpire in the implementation process with what was thought should happen, assuming there is a difference. A comparison may highlight discrepancies, drawing attention to the circumstances that precipitated such an occurrence, which in turn may further our understanding of how the process works.

Implicit in the rational perspective is the assumption that individuals will attempt to make rational choices and organizations will operate to maximize their performance as they work towards their goals and objectives. New programs and policies are developed to improve organizational functioning. It is assumed that individuals or groups will adopt a new policy if the proposed change can be rationally justified and the benefits to the individual or group demonstrated.

According to Deal (1984:125), "organizational characteristics -- patterns of the social setting -- become the primary targets of change as a direct strategy for improvement." He referred to a "structural logic of change" that guides such activities as the establishing and clarifying of goals, pinpointing accountability, increasing specialization, promoting collaboration, altering roles and relationships, increasing problem-solving capacity, or providing formal incentives. Failure (or success) of an innovation can be explained

through an analysis of these formal patterns and processes. Elmore (1978:191) suggested that this perspective views implementation as merely a matter of good or bad management.

Implementation as a rational process was described by Elmore (1978:191) in this way:

> Implementation consists of defining a detailed set of objectives that accurately reflect the intent of a given policy, assigning responsibilities and standards of performance to subunits consistent with these objectives, monitoring system performance, and making internal adjustments that enhance the attainment of the organization's goals. The process is dynamic, not static; the environment continually imposes new demands that require internal adjustments. But implementation is always goal-directed and value-maximizing.

Ideally, individuals will choose to implement a new policy once they are shown how it will improve organizational performance, given clear expectations of their anticipated outputs, provided with appropriate incentives (made accountable for these outputs), and then given the appropriate resources to carry out their tasks. The key role in this rational process is that of leadership, which provides clear vision, generates plans, assesses needs, introduces incentives, and develops a cooperative management system that encourages consensus and responds to the needs of each participant (Rosenblum and Louis,1981:22-23).

Berman (1980:205) has referred to this perspective as programmed implementation, which "assumes that implementation problems can be made tolerable, if not eliminated, by careful and explicit preprogramming of implementation procedures." Fullan (1981:198) described earlier versions of this perspective as the fidelity perspective: "The main intent of this approach is to plan for and assess the degree of implementation of an innovation in terms of the extent to which actual use corresponds to intended or planned use."

Implementation problems diagnosed through the programmed approach, according to Berman (1980:208), arise from at least three sources:

> (1) ambiguity in policy goals resulting in or caused by misunderstanding, confusion, or value conflict; (2) participation of too many actors with overlapping authority; and (3) implementers' resistance, ineffectualness, or inefficiency.

The ideal of the programmed approach is to eliminate these problems before they arise by developing a well specified plan. Management would make minor adjustments along the way as needed. What is needed is more careful monitoring of the implementation process so that greater fidelity with the original policy can be facilitated. What is also needed is a better understanding of the realities of the world of the policy implementers so that policies are better able to 'bridge the gap' (Hall and Loucks,1982).

Through the lens of the rational perspective a study of the implementation process would focus on such matters as the clarity of the policy objectives to members of the organization, the dissemination of resources, the technical capacity of the organization to implement the policy, the management plan to allocate tasks and responsibilities, attend to the workloads, and to control and hold accountable the individuals involved, the monitoring of performance and subsequent adjustments, the interventions that provide appropriate assistance at various stages of the process, the training required by those in need of new skills, the anticipation or identification and subsequent removal of barriers. While the rational perspective may not always depict educational organizations as they really exist, it does offer a heuristic device that facilitates analysis.

Implementation as a Bureaucratic Process. Similar to the rational systems management model, but in many important ways distinctly different, is a model referred to by Elmore (1978) as the bureaucratic process model. Implementation, according to this perspective, "consists of identifying where discretion is concentrated and which of an organization's repertoire of routines need changing, devising alternative routines that represent the intent of the policy, and inducing organizational units to replace old routines with new ones" (Elmore,1978:200).

Two critical assumptions underlie the bureaucratic process model: discretionary power resides at various levels of the bureaucracy (top

management does not have complete control over subordinate behavior) and operating routines become firmly entrenched which enables subordinates to resist change (or control by their superordinates). Elmore (1978:201) posited that "the central analytical problem is to discover where discretion resides and how existing routines can be shaped to the purposes of policy." We need to know not only where discretion resides but what are the circumstances that support this type of behavior. To what extent are individuals held accountable for their actions, to what extent are their behaviors monitored and supervised? How powerful are organizational sanctions perceived to be? How consistently are sanctions applied? We also need to know more about existing routines and how individuals feel about them. Are new policies perceived by those implementing them as an infringement on their own control of their tasks? Do individuals think that the routines need changing? Is the new policy perceived as an improvement by those required to alter their routines? How threatening is the new policy to those it directly affects? Do all individuals react in the same way towards the new policy? Why or why not? What makes the difference? What interventions successfully induce individuals to replace their old routines with new ones? How are new routines sustained over time? The assumptions held by this model appear to represent more of the reality of implementation than the systems model, but it also raises more questions than it answers. Elmore (1978:208) credited this model for its descriptive, not normative, power.

Implementation as Organizational Development (natural-systems, adaptive, and evolutionary approach). The organizational development perspective assumes that implementation is a process of negotiation between the policy-makers (or those responsible to the policy-makers for carrying out the directive) and the policy-users. Policies are seldom, if ever, implemented as planned (Rosenblum and Louis,1981:31; Majone and Wildavsky,1978:116), due to ambiguous policy goals, overly specified goals with unrealistic expectations, unanticipated organizational characteristics, dynamic characteristics that alter with time, the interaction of the

implementors with the policy and the context within which they are working, and cognitive limitations -- a lack of understanding of the context, the implications of the policy in that context, and of the implementation process itself.

Berman (1980:210-11) referred to this perspective as adaptive implementation and described it in this way:

> The ideal of adaptive implementation is the establishment of a process that allows policy to be modified, specified, and revised -- in a word, adapted -- according to the unfolding interaction of the policy with its institutional setting. Its outcomes would be neither automatic nor assured, and it would look more like a disorderly learning process than a predictable procedure.

Adaptive implementation involves not only a revision of the policy as its implementers attempt to 'fit' the changes to the setting, but also an adjustment of the practices of the implementers as they respond to the demands of the policy. Berman and McLaughlin (1978:viii) referred to this as "mutual adaptation".

A similar conceptual understanding of this perspective is found in the natural-systems approach. Rosenblum and Louis (1981:32) described the natural-systems approach as "a negotiated process involving compromises between rational choices and system characteristics." They conclude that organizational systems are too complex to allow decision makers to predetermine how policies should ultimately be implemented. There is usually, it is assumed, a lack of sophisticated information about the interaction of subsystems when change is introduced. How subsystems interact is in part a function of the extent to which they are tightly or loosely coupled. If it is assumed that a tight relationship exists between elements when indeed it doesn't, a highly prescribed, controlled implementation guideline may produce symbolic adherence only. The natural-systems perspective recognizes that factors such as organizational norms, structures, and organizational climate, factors that are less amenable to planning, may have a critical impact on the implementation process and the success of the policy (Rosenblum and Louis,1981:22).

This perspective is known by several terms. Elmore (1978:209) has labelled this perspective the organizational development model. Based on findings from the Rand 'Change Agent' study (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978) Elmore (1978:209) concluded that:

> The implementation process is necessarily one of consensus-building and accommodation between policy-makers and implementors. The central problem of implementation is not whether implementors conform to prescribed policy but whether the implementation process results in consensus in goals, individual autonomy, and commitment to policy on the part of those who must carry it out.

Elmore (1978:212) stated that the most important features of the implementation process are those that affect individual motivation, commitment, and interpersonal cooperation, not those that enhance hierarchical control. These factors, he feels, lie outside the domain of direct managerial control. Implementation can be facilitated by developing the capacity of the policy users to initiate changes, to interact with the policy-makers and manipulate the policy until the users can claim ownership. An extreme interpretation of this point suggests that those in the field -- the policy users -- are the ultimate determiners of what will constitute policy, and that the final product may bear little relationship to the original goals (Majone and Wildavsky,1978:111). A moderate view would suggest that policy-makers and the normative culture set parameters, and that policy users alter policy within these implicit or explicit guidelines. Elmore (1978:217) conceded that the organizational development model appears most appropriate under conditions of cooperation and consensus building. It ignores the problems of power, control, and conflict that may arise.

The evolutionary perspective is similar to the preceding conceptions of implementation as organizational development or adaptation except that it is more extreme in its interpretation of policy revision (Fullan,1981:203). Majone and Wildavsky (1978) have suggested that policies are dispositions -- goals and constraints -- that are shaped in the implementation process.

> When we act to implement a policy, we change it. When we vary the amount or type of resource inputs, we also intend to alter outputs, even if only to put them back on the track where they were once supposed to be. In this way, the policy theory is transformed to produce different results. As we learn from experience what is feasible or preferable, we correct errors. To the degree that these corrections make a difference at all, they change our policy ideas as well as the policy outcomes, because the idea is embodied in the action. (Majone and Wildavsky,1978:114)

The evolutionary perspective treats implementation as new policy formation. It assumes that we can never know beforehand how policy will be interpreted in the field, what constraints will lead to alterations, how discretion will contort the outcomes. The initial policy statement does have an effect on implementation:

> The more general an idea and the more adaptable it is to a range of circumstances, the more likely it is to be realized in some form, but the less likely it is to emerge as intended in practice. The more restricted the idea, and the more it is hedged around with numerous constraints, the more likely it is to emerge as predicted -- but the less likely it is to have a significant impact. (Majone and Wildavsky,1978:113-14)

The organizational development, adaptive, and evolutionary perspectives highlight several features that an analysis of the implementation process should focus on: the nature of the policy and how it may alter in its application or intent over time, the extent to which the policy users negotiate with the policy-makers over various elements of the policy, how consensus building and accommodation takes place, if indeed it does, the extent to which mutual adaptation takes place, the conditions and circumstances under which any adaptations take place, how organizational structures enhance or inhibit the motivation and commitment of implementors, how organizational structures develop the capacity of users to initiate change on their own, the relationships and dynamic interactions between various subsystems as the change unfolds (the extent to which tight and loose coupling exists between units, both formally and informally), and

the organizational norms and climate that influence how the users adapt, and adjust to the policy.

The several perspectives of the implementation process that have been presented are not the only perspectives but they do represent the critical core that can be synthesized from the literature. Many perspectives are only variations on a theme. In time, with the aid of more research, new perspectives may develop. With more research a better understanding of implementation may result.

For the researcher, does any one perspective hold more promise than another?

> The images one employs are important because each one represents a set of assumptions about what the world is like, about what matters and what does not matter. Hence, an image acts as a lens. It highlights some facts and shows how to interpret them, but it hides other facts. An image can suggest how to ask the right questions to get more and better data. It can open up new lines of analysis, but it precludes others. (Firestone and Herriott,1981:241)

The point to be made is that there is no one best perspective, but rather each perspective has merit, and will be more or less helpful to explain how implementation works depending on the situation. Elmore (1978:227) asked "of what use is the notion of alternative models to the analysis of implementation?" and responded to his own question in this way:

> The first is that applying different models to the same set of events allows us to distinguish certain features of the implementation process from others. . . .The important question is not whether these elements exist or not, but how they affect the implementation process. One way of disentangling the effects of these factors is to analyze the same body of evidence from the perspective of several different models. . . .The second idea proceeds from the notion that certain kinds of problems are more amenable to solution when using one perspective than when using another.

Fullan (1981:197) has described three perspectives (programmed, adaptive, and evolutionary) on the implementation of educational change and concluded that "the meaning of implementation can only be captured through an understanding of all three perspectives." Deal (1984:131) described four perspectives on educational change (individual, structural, political, and symbolic) and stated:

> Each of the conceptual approaches highlights an important aspect of change in organizations. Change affects and is affected by individual skills and attitudes. Change alters and requires formal patterns of roles and relationships. Change attracts and stimulates issues of power and conflict. Change alters and is influenced by culture. It serves both instrumental and symbolic purposes. To a conceptual pluralist, change is not one thing; it is many.

The analytical framework of this study is an eclectic one; each perspective is utilized to view the process of implementation in an attempt to understand it. This approach allowed the investigator to collect and analyse data somewhat naively: by not selecting one specific perspective, no attempt was made to fit the data to the model.

Each perspective initially provided a guiding framework -- a cognitive map -- for the investigator to focus on specific factors, incidents, and processes, but it was not meant to restrict the investigation to only these factors. What was attempted in this study was an in-depth investigation and analysis of the many findings that became evident from the data collection.

Chapter 3
Research Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of two principals who were implementing a teacher evaluation policy within a school. Specifically, the purpose was to investigate how a principal implements a teacher evaluation policy: what experiences and beliefs appeared to influence the principal as he or she implemented an evaluation policy, what was the context of this process, what meaning did the principal give to the policy, and what characteristics of the principal affected his or her implementation of this policy. A review of the literature on the process of change and policy implementation revealed numerous perspectives and, within those perspectives, a variety of factors that had previously been found to affect policy implementation. The intent of this study was to provide a 'thick description' of the experiences of two principals as they engaged in the process of implementation, and to analyse what happened.

Mode of Inquiry. The investigation was conducted by utilizing a descriptive case study reporting mode as this was seen to be "more adapted to description of the multiple realities encountered at a given site . . .because it is suited to demonstrating the variety of mutually shaping influences present" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:41-42). The case study methodology is useful to "understand complex social phenomena. In brief, the case study [design] allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (Yin,1984:14). Two sites were chosen as this accorded the investigator an opportunity to broaden the exploration process, to look at similarities and at differences, and to conceptualize the day to day world of two principals in a similar process of implementation. What was being learned about one principal could be used to probe for a deeper understanding of the other and to appreciate the uniqueness of each situation.

When the study began and the interviews were being conducted and analysed, it became apparent to the investigator that the problem was a very complex one. As the principals told their stories, it became impossible to ignore the rich and personal descriptions they offered of what they were

experiencing. To understand and report on what was happening it was necessary to approach the phenomenon from a different set of assumptions. It was during the process of analysis that it became apparent that a phenomenological paradigm provided a way of knowing that would best capture this saga, and allow the story to be told in more detail.

The phenomenological paradigm assumes "that the real world that we encounter 'out there' is such a dynamic system that all of the 'parts' are so interrelated that one part inevitably influences the other parts." (Owens, 1982:6) Phenomena must be therefore studied in context, and from the frame of reference of the individual involved. Lincoln and Guba (1985:37) posit five axioms of the naturalistic paradigm:

- Realities are multiple, constructed, and holistic.
- Knower and known are interactive, inseparable.
- Only time- and context-bound working hypotheses (idiographic statements) are possible.
- All entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping, so that it is impossible to distinguish causes from effects.
- Inquiry is value-bound.

The naturalistic paradigm provided a perspective, a world view that helped the investigator to make sense of the information that was collected.

Data collection. Data were collected primarily by interview but included document analysis and observation. Interviews were conducted with the two school principals from January until June, 1985. With one principal there were eleven separate recorded interviews, each session lasting between sixty and ninety minutes. With the other principal there were seven recorded interviews with sessions lasting about the same amount of time. The availability of the principal's time to be interviewed accounted for the difference in the number of interviews. There was an attempt to parallel the interviews in terms of basic questions and topics covered, but each interview was only semi-structured which fostered conversations that were unique for each principal. As new topics and issues arose in the course of the discussion, they were pursued. Teachers, secretaries, and custodians were interviewed for shorter periods of time (generally about fifteen minutes each) in a more structured format.

The investigator also spent time in the schools observing the everyday experiences of staff. Time was spent sitting in staff rooms, listening, observing, and talking with the staff during their breaks and lunch periods. At other times he walked around the school and visited classrooms with the teacher's permission. These observations helped to confirm information that was being collected through interviews.

Except for the very first meeting with each principal, all interviews with them were taped. The recorder was a small, relatively unobtrusive machine that was placed on the desk top between the principal and the investigator. The investigator stressed from the very first meeting that all conversations were in confidence and that the principal, the staff and the school were to be kept anonymous in the study. A relationship of trust was developed between the principals and the investigator, and between the school staff and the investigator. One practice that may have helped in this regard was that the investigator never spoke about anybody else that was involved in the study, or repeated what they had said in confidence or otherwise. The only exception to this was made at the end of the study when the investigator summarized for each principal some of the comments that staff had made in the course of their interviews. The names of the teachers were kept confidential.

The investigator met with both teaching staffs at staff meetings to explain what the study was all about, and to inform the staff about the background of the investigator. The meeting with Dan's staff took place early in the data collection period (mid January) but the meeting with Ben's staff could not be arranged until mid April. Ben explained that the staff meeting agendas were rather full until then. There may have been other reasons for this delay, such as a need for Ben to become better acquainted with the investigator and more comfortable with the process, but this is only speculation.

This schedule allowed the investigator to spend more time in Dan's school for the first three months of the study, and to concentrate on Ben's school in the last three months. Visits were made to each school, however, over the six-month period. Several staff members in each school approached the investigator after the first staff meeting to indicate their

interest in the study and their willingness to assist. It was with these staff members that the first interviews were conducted.

Interviews were also conducted with an associate superintendent who had responsibility for the two principals when the policy was first adopted by the Board. As the associate superintendent left this position during the course of the study, an interview was also conducted with the new associate superintendent.

Method of Data Analysis. Analysis of the data involved several steps or phases. The first phase was to transcribe the recorded interviews into print form. The first two tapes were transcribed using a selective verbatim technique -- only those statements deemed most relevant to the study purposes were written out. This method of transcription was not found to be satisfactory as potentially useful information could be unrecorded. All subsequent tapes were transcribed in full and the tapes of the first two recorded interviews were reviewed periodically during the analysis phase.

The second phase included a review of all the transcripts of the interviews of one of the principals in a search for topics that were descriptive of the experiences of that principal as he reflected on the process of policy implementation. As the interviews were semi-structured, that is, a list of questions were prepared before each interview, it is perhaps inevitable that many of the topics were predetermined. The interviews though were open-ended. The principals' responses to the questions generally reached far beyond the original intent. Dan and Ben appeared often to have their own agendas for discussion and they utilized the interview time to vent their frustrations and talk about issues that, in retrospect, were very much part of the whole implementation process. These discussions were very illuminating of the day to day world of the principals. It became evident that to understand how these two principals were implementing an evaluation policy one must understand them as principals and as individuals, and understand the world that they lived in as they understood it.

Topics or themes were identified in the taped interviews with the principals. These themes were descriptive of specific dimensions of the principal's experience as he reflected about the implementation of the evaluation policy. For example, one theme that emerged was that of the

principal's beliefs about evaluation: the purpose of evaluation, what should be evaluated, how should evaluation take place , and the effect of these beliefs on his attitude toward the policy. What was emerging from the data were themes that spoke of the many complexities of the phenomenon, and of the many dimensions of the principals.

In the initial analysis of the transcripts, categories or topics were readily established; nuances were seen as distinct so that detail would not be lost. These topics were coded so that all references could be marked in the margins of the transcripts.

As the transcripts were reviewed for references to these topics, a gradual synthesis unfolded. Many of the topics could be linked under more global concepts. The boundaries of these concepts or themes occasionally remained fuzzy, however, as several of the topics appeared to fit in more than one dimension. The old saw, 'the whole is greater than the sum of its parts', stands out as particularly appropriate in this situation. So too does the notion that an order was being imposed on this phenomenon as a means to better understand it; an order that may not be the natural state of affairs. There appeared to be many fuzzy boundaries. But the order, the themes, remain as a useful means to communicate to others one interpretation of a complex phenomenon.

Trustworthiness. A variety of techniques were employed throughout the study to ensure that the reader could 'trust' what they were reading, that the "findings of [this] inquiry are worth paying attention to" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:290).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) have proposed four criteria by which a naturalistic study may be judged: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Each of these criteria will be discussed in turn, with a description of the techniques that were used to ensure compliance or fit.

Credibility refers to the 'truth value' of the reported findings. To address this concern several activities were built into the inquiry process. First, the data were gathered over a prolonged period of time (six months). This allowed the investigator to gain an in-depth appreciation of each principal, and of the staff in each school. The period of investigation covered several mini-cycles in the annual life of a school which permitted observations of different work experiences and demands. The length of time

also helped the investigator to build trust so that the respondents could be candid in their comments. The principals and the staffs had sufficient time to assess the dependability of the investigator and to detect any hidden agendas.

This 'prolonged engagement' provided both scope and depth. As there were numerous lengthy interviews (sixty to ninety minutes each) with each principal, the conversations provided a considerable amount of details. Each interview pursued most topics until there was little more to say. The number of interviews, and the time space between interviews, provided opportunity for the investigator to reflect on what had been said, and to follow various issues with more pertinent and relevant questions.

The technique of triangulation was used to improve credibility whenever it was possible. This was done by verifying information that was collected from different sources. For example, the two principals involved in the inquiry both served under the same supervisor. At times it was possible to verify specific events that were reported by asking each principal independently, or by asking several staff members about the details of a meeting, for example. It was also possible to verify some information collected in an interview by examining documents such as the school evaluation policy. In one situation the principal shared with the investigator written reports of the expected outcomes that had been developed for several staff members. (These were not evaluation reports but the preliminary documents drawn up at the beginning of the school year.) The investigator used several different methods to collect information, such as interviewing, document retrieval, and direct observation, which offered opportunities to verify some of the data. Field notes were taken which also provided a recording of events, schedules, activities, and impressions and observations of the investigator.

The predominant data collection technique was the interview, and all but the very first introductory discussion with each principal, and the short interviews with staff members, were recorded on audio tape. The tapes were transcribed to print for ease of analysis. This allowed the investigator to use verbatim quotes, and to have a permanent record of the conversations should the need arise to verify the raw data. During the interviews with

teachers, notes were taken of their responses, and to the extent that it was possible, verbatim quotes were written down.

During the course of the interviews with each principal the investigator frequently paraphrased and summarized what had been said to ensure that the 'correct' meaning had been heard and understood. Towards the later interviews the investigator also shared with each principal some of the tentative findings that had been arrived at to check for credibility and confirmability.

Over the course of the inquiry a substantial amount of data were collected from several different sources. An analysis of this data, as described previously, helped to sort through what was relevant and what was not. As the data were coded, lists were drawn up of information that spoke to the same theme. This provided an opportunity to describe in detail the understandings of the principals, and the context of the implementation process. This 'thick description' will hopefully provide the reader with a "rich sense of understanding events and of having *insight* as to their *meaning* or, more likely, *meanings* " (Owens, 1982:17).

Two further criteria for judging the trustworthiness of the study will be discussed together as the techniques used to establish dependability and confirmability are essentially the same. Lincoln and Guba (1985:316-327) suggest that an inquiry audit be conducted to determine the dependability and confirmability of the study. While the actual process that Lincoln and Guba propose has not been carried out, that is, an audit has not been conducted, it would be possible to construct an audit trail from the data base.

As previously stated, the original data of the study has been kept in permanent record form, including the original audio tapes, computer disc files and the printed transcripts. Field notes and interview notes in printed form (some are hand written, others are recorded on computer disc and printed copy) also constitute the evidence base of the study. Within the written text of this study (the chapters which follow) verbatim quotes are referenced to the original transcripts. This evidence base provides for confirmability and dependability in the study, as well as an opportunity for further analysis of the data should this be desired.

As the data were analysed written lists were developed of possible themes and information categories. These topics were coded and cross-

referenced onto the margins of the transcripts. A second stage of analysis made use of another coding scheme which was also referenced to the transcripts. As the themes and sub-themes were developed notes were kept of 'significant' findings and insights of the investigator for future reference.

Conclusions. A case study design provided an opportunity for the investigator to explore in depth the experiences of two principals implementing a teacher evaluation policy. In summary, the design provided for the use of multiple sources of evidence (interviews with the key actors, with supervisors, and with school staff; the use of documents -- district and school policies, evaluation reports, and direct observation), a retrievable data base which was quoted from liberally to supply evidence to support the study findings, and a chain of evidence that allows the reader to follow the data from its source through to the propositions.

In the concluding chapters of this study propositions are made regarding the practice of implementation. These propositions are arguments that are based on the findings of the study and are set within a particular view of educational administration.

The chapter to follow presents a discussion of the background of the study, and is based on direct observations, documents, and information collected from interviews.

Chapter 4
Background

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with a description of the setting of the study and of the background to the development of the personnel evaluation policy. The chapters that follow will describe in more detail the principals' understanding of the context, the meaning of the policy to them and the values, beliefs, needs and personalities of Dan and Ben that were observed in the course of the policy implementation process.

The district setting. The study took place in a large urban school district in western Canada. The superintendent of schools had responsibility for the total organization. Associate superintendents were each responsible for a number of schools in a specific geographic region of the district, and two associate superintendents were responsible for central office services such as curriculum and finance. These associate superintendents reported directly to the Superintendent of Schools. This administrative structure had been in place for several years and at this time the district was generally considered stable. The Superintendent had held his position for a number of years. The associate superintendents and other central office administrators were occasionally transferred to other positions, including administrative positions in the schools. School principals became associate or assistant superintendents, associates became school principals or moved from one department to another. In January, 1985 the associate superintendent who supervised the two principals involved in this study moved to a new position. A high school principal was then brought in to fill this vacancy.

An important characteristic of the district was the extent to which schools were decentralized. School administrators were given considerable decision-making responsibility and authority. One example of this was the school-based budget system in which school personnel prepared budget plans each year for the operation of the school. The budgets were determined by various formuli using 'weighted' student counts (acknowledging that not all students require the same services, e.g. hearing impaired, learning disabled) and age and size of the school. The budgets

included costs for certificated (teachers) and non-certificated (secretaries, custodians, assistants) staff and for supplies, equipment, and services. At the time of the study the central budget still provided for some of the school operation costs such as building maintenance and utilities. With the budget responsibility came the authority to determine the staffing needs of school programmes and to hire the necessary staff. The Personnel Department was responsible for doing an initial screening of new teachers and other personnel, but the school principal was able to select staff from the pool that was available. The principal and staff also had a great deal of latitude over the provision of educational programmes (notwithstanding the provincial curriculum guides). Each school in the system could develop its own unique philosophy and concomitant programme. As there also existed an open boundary policy for students, schools in effect competed for students. This organizational mechanism helped to create a heightened sensitivity to the public. If a school could not attract enough students there was a danger that it could be closed. Overall this system was generally perceived provide the school principal and staff with a fair amount of latitude in operating a school and a great deal of responsibility.

The district administration provided direction to the schools through a statement of purposes, and through yearly objectives that were set by the Board of Trustees in accord with the purposes. The Purposes spoke largely to the district's commitment to student learning, community and employee satisfaction, and good resource management. These purposes frame what every employee in the district could be expected to be working towards, and could also then be held appropriately accountable. The central administration monitored the performance of the district and each school through a variety of measures, including a set of questionnaires given to students, parents, and all employees, and through student achievement data. The system provided the goals, allowed the principal and staff of each school to determine how to get there, shared the district resources on an equitable basis with each school so the staff have the means to accomplish their objectives. Thus it was possible, at least theoretically, to evaluate staff on the basis of the results achieved.

A set of propositions (Principles of Organization) were established in the district to guide employee behaviour. One of these principles had a significant bearing on the nature of the personnel evaluation policy:

> B. Every individual in the organization should know what types of results he/she is responsible for.
>
> Insofar as possible, both objectives and evaluation should be focused upon these results. (Appendix B)

This emphasis on results and the decentralized orientation appears to have had a significant influence on the nature of the evaluation policy.

Policy Background: the development process. In April of 1984 the Provincial Minister of Education announced a series of provincial evaluation policies in the areas of student, teacher, program, school, and school system evaluation. The provincial policy on teacher evaluation stated:

> The performance of individual teachers and the quality of teaching practices across the province will be evaluated in order to assist in the provision of effective instruction to students and in the professional growth and development of teachers. (Appendix C)

The guidelines accompanying the policy further stated that the primary responsibility for the evaluation of individual teacher performance lies with each school jurisdiction, and that each jurisdiction in the province would develop and adopt a policy, procedures, and guidelines to conform to this mandate.

When the policy was announced a formally adopted system policy on teacher evaluation did not exist in this school district. There were policies governing the evaluation of non-tenured teachers for certification purposes, and several senior administrators (associate superintendents) had developed, or were developing, employee evaluation procedures for their staff. Many school principals also had in place teacher performance appraisal systems.

By June of 1984 the Personnel Department of the district had prepared a policy statement, with an outline for the further development of guidelines and procedures by two committees -- one composed of teachers and the other of principals. This proposal was not accepted by senior administration on the grounds that this committee structure would take too much time to develop a full policy document.

In September, 1984 a new committee was formed consisting of two supervisors from the personnel department, a consultant from the planning branch, and a university graduate student (the author of this study) who was hired on a part-time basis as an administrative intern. Their assignment was to develop a policy under these conditions: existing evaluation procedures within the system were to be ignored, there was no need at the initial stage to gather input from the various stakeholders, the policy statement, guidelines, and procedures should not be too prescriptive (individual units within the system should be able to develop their own evaluation procedures, reflecting their individuality and unique conditions); and the policy would respond to a stated principle of this organization, that "every individual in the organization should know what types of results he/she is responsible for. Insofar as possible, both objectives and evaluation should be focused upon these results" (Appendix B).

This committee of four, after a great deal of discussion and reviewing of literature and policies from other school districts across Canada, drew up a draft document. Reaction to this draft was solicited from a selected group of teachers, principals, and parents. Parts of the draft policy were rewritten as a result of the comments made by these individuals, although the basic framework remained intact. The next step involved seeking reaction from the senior administrator responsible for the draft policy. He shared his perspective on the organizational administrative philosophy as it applied to personnel evaluation. This information led the committee to drastically alter the draft, emphasizing the appraisal of performance by 'results' (expected utcomes) rather than 'process'. The committee had apparently neglected to fully interpret the District's "Principles of Organization" in the manner desired by senior administration.

The revised draft policy on employee performance appraisal was next shared with other senior district administrators, including the superintendent. Again the reaction was somewhat critical but substantial changes were not made as a result of this input. The draft policy was then presented to the Board of Trustees, for information only, in early December, 1984. At the same time copies of the draft were distributed to all school staffs and other employee groups (central office departments) with a request for written reactions to be submitted if so desired. By January, 1985 188 submissions were received by the committee in response to this request. The comments varied tremendously, from support of specific elements to outright condemnation of the entire policy. The draft was once again rewritten although the changes were more cosmetic than substantial. Senior district administration then decided to proceed with the revised draft and on April 9th, 1985 the policy was formally adopted by the Board of Trustees on a motion with six Trustees voting in support and three against.

The policy. The District Performance Evaluation policy stated:

> The performance of each staff member will be evaluated by the immediate supervisor to maintain and improve the educational service provided to the students of the district. A written performance evaluation report based on how well the expected outcomes have been achieved will be provided to the staff member at least once a year. (Appendix A)

The guidelines and procedures specified such items as the responsibility of the immediate supervisor to develop, with staff, written procedures that provide for the setting of outcomes, and the process to gather information which will indicate the extent to which the expected outcomes have been achieved. The term 'expected outcome' was defined in the glossary attached to the policy as a "specific statement of what is to be achieved." An 'outcome' was defined as "the result of planned, goal directed action."

The guidelines also stated that it was the responsiblity of the immediate supervisor for the performance evaluation of each staff member. In schools, the principal is generally the immediate supervisor, but on large staffs an assistant principal or department head or head custodian or

secretary may also be an immediate supervisor. Every employee in this system was to have only one immediate supervisor.

The immediate supervisor had the responsibility of (1) developing written procedures for staff, (2) identifying expected outcomes for and with each staff member, (3) collecting data to determine the degree to which the expectations have been achieved, (4) meeting with the staff member to discuss the results, and where necessary providing assistance so that the expectations will be met, and (5) writing a report at least once a year to summarize the process and justify judgments made regarding the expectations.

Many evaluation policies describe the criteria to be used when assessing performance. In this policy the expected outcomes that were desired were not made specific. The immediate supervisor would set these for each staff member based on district, school and personal goals. The policy stated that

> characteristics of students, staff and the physical environment are taken into account when the expected outcomes are determined. . . . In establishing expected outcomes all aspects of student and employee growth and development should be considered. The expected outcomes should be commensurate with the responsibilities assigned to the staff member.

Implementation became the responsibility of each of the senior administrators (associate superintendents) for their staff. Each area associate superintendent then delegated the task of developing specific procedures to each school principal. Within the district, implementation of the policy varied according to the desires of those responsible. There was no district response in terms of inservice or direct monitoring of the process. Principals were asked to develop, with their staff, school wide procedures that would be operating by September, 1985.

An area Associate Superintendent was approached by the investigator and asked to provide the names of several elementary principals, whom he thought were at various stages in the implementation process of the new employee evaluation policy, and who might be willing to participate. Elementary principals were preferred by the investigator as his own

administrative background was that of an elementary principal and it was thought that it would be easier to relate to a principal with similar experience. Three principals in all were called on the phone and the nature of the study was explained to them. Two of the principals agreed to meet with the investigator for further clarification. They subsequently agreed to participate and to allow the investigator access to their staff and school building.

The School Settings

Dan's school. Dan was the Principal of an elementary school in a middle to upper income bracket neighborhood. He described the school as having 'class'. The school building itself was a one storey brick structure, shaped somewhat like an 'O' with a courtyard in the middle. The courtyard was not used much; there was a fountain in one corner that occasionally had fish in it. There were glass walls and hallways surrounding the courtyard on three sides, and an open area library on the fourth side. The halls were clean and a tour of the building left one with the impression that the staff and students cared about the appearance of the school. The head custodian spoke highly of Dan, praising him for paying attention to things like maintenance, painting and the like.

The children could be seen bustling through the hallways at break times. They appeared to be a happy, lively lot, often in a hurry to get from one place to the next. The presence of the investigator, strolling through the halls or sitting in a classroom, appeared to have little effect on the students. Occasionally someone would ask the investigator who he was and what he was doing, thinking perhaps that he was a supply teacher, or an official from the District. The students appeared to be used to strangers, and busy enough with their own affairs not to mind the presence of an outsider.

Dan had been a teacher for eighteen years, and for the last nine a school principal. Dan spoke proudly about his school and about the staff. There were seventeen teachers, one assistant principal, and about twelve support staff (secretaries, custodians, classroom aides, lunchroom aides). He considered the staff to be quite competent, commenting that he didn't give out many above averages when it came to evaluation: "there aren't that

many that can walk on water." Staff turnover was low; Dan described the school as a nice place to work, with good facilities, supportive parents, and children that make teaching a little easier. The staff that were interviewed generally agreed, although there were a few complaints about parents that expected too much, of their children and of the teacher. Both Dan and a few of the staff commented that life in the school seemed to be getting busier; more meetings, activities, just more to do in recent years.

Student enrollment had been declining for several years, typical of many established neighborhoods in the city, from 350 students to about 240. This had translated into staff reductions; in the past year alone the staff had been reduced by four teachers. In response to this Dan had asked for support from the District to establish an Academic Challenge Program which would draw children from other areas of the city, thus increasing the enrollment. The program was established and new staff were added as a result.

The staff room was connected to the general office area by a small work room/store room. The staff room had tables at one end where some of the teachers sat to eat and to mark student tests and assignments, or to do their preparation. There were sofas in the middle of the room and a small kitchenette at the other end. The staff room was a friendly place; relationships between staff appeared congenial. The presence of the investigator did not seem to have much effect on the staff. They, like the students, were involved in their own busy worklives. The investigator generally sat quietly at a table or on a sofa and listened to the many conversations that were going on, or he engaged in discussions with the staff about teaching, current affairs, or, when asked, what the study was about. At a staff meeting he had explained to them why he was there and that he wished to interview staff regarding the evaluation policy. The investigator stressed the confidentiality of these interviews, and of anything that might be said in general conversation. Over the several months that the investigator was in the school many of the staff did confide to him in private their feelings about the evaluation policy, the school procedures, and about Dan. There appeared to be a level of trust established which

allowed the investigator to sit in the staff room and not have any noticeable effect on staff behaviour.

Dan's office was comfortable, as principal's offices go. There was a big desk in the middle of the room with a high backed chair for Dan and a visitor's chair on the opposite side. A sofa and coffee table occupied one end of the room by the door. At the other end, behind the desk was a credenza for manuals, binders, and books. On the wall above the sofa, directly visible from where Dan sat, was a picture of Dan's cottage. Dan spoke proudly of this cottage that he had built. He spent as much time there on weekends as he could.

Ben's school. Ben was the principal of an elementary school in a middle to lower middle income bracket neighborhood. A big sign above the general office door welcomed visitors to the school. The head secretary greeted visitors, staff, and students with a warm smile and a friendly word. Students could often be seen coming to the office to share some accomplishment with the secretary and the principal. On the investigator's first visit to the school, the secretary ushered him into the staff room and offered him a cup of coffee, taking a mug from the visitors' shelf, as it was necessary to wait for Ben to conclude a meeting. As the staff room was situated directly adjacent to the general office area, one could see all the activity going on there. It was a very busy spot with students and teachers, secretaries and supply teachers all coming and going.

There were twenty-four full-time and part-time teachers on staff, including one assistant principal, and eleven support staff. Parent volunteers could often be found in the staff room, making instructional materials such as flash cards. A bulletin board on the wall contained name tags for the volunteers so that the staff could learn who they were and be able to identify them. Ben had a lot to do with establishing the volunteer program, and with encouraging the teachers to accept parents into the school, particularly the staff room. Occasionally, a teacher was heard to complain about the parents, but as the staff as a whole had voted in favour of parent participation other staff were quick to remind that person of the decision they had agreed to.

During visits to the staff room the investigator observed that many teachers were creatures of habit: they sat in the same seats, talked to the same people, followed the same routines. But they were also capable of changing these patterns, without appearing to be stressed, if for example someone else sat in their seat. This observation came about as the investigator consciously changed his location so that he could talk and listen to different staff members. Occasionally a teacher would start up a conversation with him about something that he or she was doing in their classroom, or ask him about the research that he was conducting. As the investigator reflected on this experience in the staff room the image of the 'supply teacher' came to mind: the supply teacher's presence in the group is legitimized by his or her function, and cordial relationships are generally extended, but everybody knows that the 'supply' is only there temporarily and therefore he or she has a limited stake in the ongoing life of the group. It was found that teachers were much more open in private interviews than in the staff room. For some, the interviews had elements of catharsis; there was a need to tell someone about the discomforts and the dislikes that they were carrying. The staff room remained a good place to observe group behaviour and the interactions of staff members, but private interviews yielded the personal thoughts and understandings.

Summary. In summary, the setting of this study had a district component, including the administrative structure and the operational procedures such as school-based budgeting and decision-making, and a history of the development of the personnel evaluation policy. There was also the school setting, with teachers, secretaries, aides, custodians, parent volunteers, and students. The setting was rich with life: personal stories, a history of relationships and friendships, work lives entwined with personal lives, worklives busy with students, parents, marking assignments, preparing lessons, planning activities, making time for extra-curricular events, worrying about students and their progress. For Dan and Ben the setting extended beyond the walls of the school to the offices in the central administration building and to the offices of their colleagues in other schools. It included their personal histories in the district and their

relationships with supervisors. It included their past and their futures, their aspirations and needs.

The next three chapters will discuss in more detail the personal stories of Dan and Ben as they went about implementing the evaluation policy.

Chapter 5

Situating the practice of policy implementation: a principal's understanding of the context

Introduction. The perspective taken in this study is that a principal's understanding of how the implementation of a teacher evaluation policy takes place can reveal a great deal about the implementation process. It is the principal's understanding and interpretation of both the policy and the context in which he works that shapes what the principal does. The meaning given to the policy by the principal also changes over time as he interacts with others, reflects on his own beliefs, and receives feedback about his own behaviour as he puts into practice those directives of the policy that he is compelled to and chooses to.

The context that the principal works in also helps to shape the meaning of the policy for him and to transform his understanding into action within the setting of the school. The perspective taken here is that the only contextual factors that have relevance to the manner in which the principals implemented the policy are those perceived by the principals. It is their interpretation, their understanding of the context in which they work that provides a framework for their actions and thoughts. The context consisted of influences that were found within the district setting -- the management philosophy (the values, both espoused and practiced), organizational structures (control mechanisms, the nature of accountability, the exercise of authority, the policy making processes, budgeting), district culture (the norms of behaviour: the rules of the game, a sense of cohesiveness, the degree of faith in, or support for the system as an entity, the workload of teachers and principals, commitment) and relationships with supervisors. Other phenomena or influences, such as those external to the district (provincial department of education and the teachers' association) or the public or parent community appeared to have minimal influence on the principals in this study.

The world of the principal is complex, of course. The implementation of one policy cannot be understood as an isolated process. Policy implementation takes place in contexts that are messy, that is, there

are competing as well as complementary activities going on at the same time. A phenomenon may slip in and out of a direct sphere of influence over time, or it may affect certain features but not others, and vary with the individuals involved. To describe this interactive, dynamic process it is necessary to simplify: to describe the setting and the context of the specific situation, to describe what the actors perceive the policy dimension to be, and to identify the characteristics of the key actors (the principals in this case) that help us to understand their perceptions of the context and the policy. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the context of the implementation process, the everyday work life as perceived by Dan and Ben.

Dan's situation

Although the discussions with Dan evolved primarily around the evaluation policy and the practice of teacher evaluation, it was impossible to ignore the significant impact that the context had on the whole process. Dan's understanding of the policy, and thus his response to its implementation, was framed within his understanding of the context of his work life. The interactivity of the implementation process was evident to Dan:

> When you pull a policy out, evaluation being one of those, you pull that out. . . it doesn't hang by itself, it's attached to all the other things that we do in the system, and attached to a lot of beliefs about decentralization and budgeting and open boundaries and all these things are attached to it and they all have tentacles going in every which direction. It's very difficult to talk about one and not bring in the other areas as well. (D#6:19-20)

> Note: codes are used to provide an audit trail for each interview excerpt that is used. D for Dan, B for Ben, #6 for the sixth interview, 19-20 for page number(s) of transcript.

The following discussion depicts a number of the contextual influences that affected Dan.

District management philosophy and practice. Many aspects of the district management philosophy had been fairly clearly articulated in a

statement of "Principles of Organization" (Appendix B). One of the principles stated:

> The organization should avoid uniform rules, practices, policies, or regulations which are designed to protect the organization against "mistakes". Such rules . . .tend to be designed with the least competent individuals in mind and their uniform application will tend to force all individuals to perform uniformly at the lowest common level of competence.

Dan's interpretation of this was clear: "The policy and philosophy of the system is that each school is different, and that uniform rules and regulations generally are set out so that they are for the least competent." (D#3 : 15) His reaction to this notion, however, is interesting:

> We do need to have individuality, but within individuality I'm not saying you need to be prescriptive, but to provide some background as to what kinds of things you should be addressing in your policy. . .You should be given some examples of the kinds of things you can and should do, and can't do. You shouldn't be left to find those things out by accident. (D#3:15)
> Previous policies, before we reorganized, were much more directive. The whole basis of this reorganization was to try and get away from that . . .I think they are now recognizing that there are different administrators, different levels of competency, different schools that require different types of leadership. . . The Board's policies are fairly loose, the Associate's requirements have become pretty loose too . . .In some respects that's not great because it would be nice to have some indication as to what the parameters that they would expect you to work in might be . . .This is the least that w would accept from you and there is no limit to the mos (D#4:20)

It appeared that Dan preferred more structure to policies than he was provided. He wanted to know what was expected of him in more explicit detail, by way of examples or through the setting of parameters. It seemed more efficient to him to be informed of several possibilities, that would then allow him to build on, or augment these scenarios, than to have him

'reinvent the wheel' for each new policy. District policies provided direction, or general guidelines on specific issues but for Dan this approach was too vague.

> The instruction that I got from my boss has been pretty theoretical in nature; as a consequence most of the principals that I talk with afterwards [after area principals' meetings] say 'what the hell was that about, we don't understand it, maybe it was that the explanation was so unclear or maybe it is that the theory is above and beyond us, or maybe it's that it is not practical and useful and we immediately disregard the information'. (D#2:10)

On another occasion Dan discussed how the associate superintendent tried to coach principals so that they would have a better understanding of district policies and the overall philosophy.

> He was attempting to do some coaching. . . [He would have] four or five principals in at a time and deliver a lesson and the lesson would be on various types of topics. I can't give you examples because I must admit that I didn't understand most of what he was talking about, and I don't think that there was anybody else that understood anything better than I did. It either didn't make sense because we didn't need the information or it didn't make sense to us because it just wasn't explained well to us. (D#7:11)

Although the system philosophy promoted diversity at the school level, Dan believed that a degree of uniformity resulted from the sharing of information 'under the table'. If a policy wasn't well understood from the information given by the associate or from written documents, a valuable source of information was the interpretation given to it by other principals. Dan did not have the time, the desire, or the interest to thoroughly research every policy and create a unique model or programme for his school, and so he borrowed. Networks of principals grew up to exchange information. Some groups met at regular intervals in the morning over breakfast at a restaurant. Other principals maintained close ties with their colleagues over the telephone. The network provided Dan with reassurance that he was not

alone with his concerns, and with a mechanism to help him articulate his own interpretation of district policies.

At formal meetings of the principals with the area associate superintendent, sharing information about school based teacher evaluation policies did not take place, at least during the course of this study when the district policy was first being implemented.

> We didn't get the information [from the associate]. . . We got it by hook and by crook, under the table from one principal to another, from one textbook to another. . . Informal network -- there has to be [one] for survival, and it shouldn't be. It should be formalized, it should be from downtown, part of the role. (D#2:11)

The informal networking of principals helped to provide a common culture which reduced to some degree the diversity that was desired by the central administration. It was important for Dan not to feel that what he was doing was totally aberrant from the rest of the system :

> I want to know if I do something here it's not an isolated situation. What's happening if I react in a certain way to something, how's the rest of the system going to take that. Is it going to be deemed as I'm going in one direction, everybody else goes in another, because we need to have some type of cohesiveness. (D#7:11)

Decentralization. Decentralization of many administrative functions was a hallmark of the district, consistent with the principle to avoid uniform rules, policies, and regulations. The principal had greater responsibility and authority over the operation of the school under this management practice than under a more centralized approach. Dan's reaction to decentralization was rather mixed. On the one hand he felt that the increase in autonomy had improved the satisfaction level of administrators -- they were now truly administering a plant. But the change in their function as principals meant less time as instructional leaders, or so it was believed.

Dan's perception was that principals and teachers were being given credit for their abilities, that "the strength is within the schools, it's not in

the central administration" (D#2:6.) What this meant was that the principal and in turn the school staff were given more opportunities to make decisions that affected them and their students, and with this authority came more responsibilities. The process to decentralize decision-making concerning many functions to the school level was taking place over time, a process that Dan believed to be very well managed. The responsibility for a particular function was generally transferred to the schools slowly; one year learning about something, a year to practice it, and the next year it was institutionalized.

The accumulation of responsibilities at the school level had an interesting effect. The role of the principal and the teacher was begining to change. Teachers were involved in more committees, and spent more time on administrative matters. The principal, in turn, spent more of his time in committee meetings with teachers, deciding matters that at one time had been the perogative of the principal, or of someone in the central office. As more and more issues were discussed and dealt with at the school level, the sense of empowerment was overshadowed by the burden of responsibility :

> People have just about reached the end of what they feel they can manage, and in terms of stress, and in terms of a lot of other things, and I guess it's unfortunate. I talk to so many administrators. . . . Everybody downtown wants meaningful participation of staff in all and sundry of these different decisions of budget, and do you take on utilities and do you not and do you conserve energy . . .and all these external things putting on to the teacher, and the teacher is just saying, hey, wow, I've got a class of kids and that's my responsibility . . .and you want me to talk about all these other things, and be on committees and there's a limit to what I can do. . . .I have not talked to a principal in the last number of weeks that has not said to me that there is so much junk coming from downtown that I sieve through it and throw as much of it as I can possibly throw away. (D#5:12-13)

Instead of increasing the principal's and teachers' sense of control by giving them more authority over decisions pertinent to their school, the added responsibilities were often perceived as a nuisance. The teachers saw their role as primarily that of instructing students. School facilities and

operating procedures for the school as an organization were interests only to the extent that they could facilitate their teaching. They wanted input but not the actual work that goes with it, at least not for everything. They wanted rules, regulations and operating procedures that were acceptable to them, that would allow them to fulfill their primary role with the greatest amount of success and ease. Input did not always mean having to do it themselves; it usually meant they wanted veto power over decisions that affected them and how they could do their work. Dan carried out the management tasks, doing the preparatory work himself and bringing the information to staff for their discussion when it was appropriate. He saw himself less able to be an instructional leader and to spend as much time with the staff supervising teachers in their classrooms as he thought he should. As school-based management was introduced, it tested the notion of empowerment and control.

Another of the outcomes of this management approach, however, according to Dan's observation, was that central office personnel did not really know what was going on in the schools (D#2:11). The associate superintendent spent little time in the school (D#8:13); Dan met with one associate not more than twice at his school in a year, and then only for a short time. New associates generally made valiant attempts to visit schools frequently when they were first appointed, but this activity never lasted once they became involved in other routines and modes of operating, such as reacting to crises. "Initially, he [the new associate superintendent] visited the school and came out for a luncheon with us and started with a bang. I haven't seen or even talked to him really in the last, well, month and a half. " (D#8:14)

It was not necessary to decentralize teacher evaluation to the principal as this had largely been in effect for many years. Teacher evaluation had been the responsiblity of the principal prior to the introduction of this new policy and the school-based management system, but the practice of evaluating certified teachers had a spotty history in the district. All beginning teachers were evaluated their first year of teaching in some fashion to determine their eligiblity for certification and continued employment with the district. Some principals did evaluations of certificated teachers regularly, others not at all. In general, all teachers were

not evaluated once a year. The actual practice of the evaluations that did take place varied from once a year observations of a few selected teachers, followed by a written, summative report to intensive collaborations between principal, or another staff member, and teacher using "Teacher Effectiveness" supervisory models. The new policy introduced a few changes to these practices.

One significant change was that each teacher was to be evaluated every year. This had implications for Dan on how he would spend his time. Another significant change had to do with the criteria for evaluation. The policy stated that staff members would be evaluated by how well expected outcomes were achieved. Expected outcomes were "based on district, school and personal goals" (Appendix A). The linkage with district goals produced an unexpected procedure -- a linkage with the budgeting process as well.

Budget process. Up to this time the school budgeting process involved the development of a plan that tied school expenditures to district goals. Each year the School Board established a set of goals for the district. The school staff then prepared a budget plan that outlined specific activities that would lead to the accomplishment of these goals. Soon after the personnel evaluation policy was adopted, senior administration altered the format of the budget plan so that it called for the identification of the individual or staff members who were responsible for accomplishing the activities outlined in the plan. These expectations were to be a part of the teacher evaluation process which Dan found problematic:

> In the budgeting process we were asked to indicate for each board priority what the school was going to be doing and then we were asked to indicate who was responsible for each of those items. That was to form the basis for evaluation. This is from downtown. This isn't something that we had agreed to when we developed the policy, this was an additive later on. . . .Here's one teacher, [she] has 14 objectives to deal with, now that would mean 14 of these pages,. . . two of which had been agreed upon for her evaluation. . .Some of these things are necessary, but are they of value, in terms of improving instruction? . . .Does that directly deal with how a teacher gets better at teaching kids? -- no it doesn't. (D#5 : 6-7)

Dan found that the link between the evaluation policy and the budgeting process made planning, and administering the plan, overwhelming. There were too many objectives to accomplish -- too many to remember or to do anything about. The board had seven goals, and therefore the school had to develop specific objectives for each goal and determine who was responsible for each one. The paperwork and the organizing that was required to accomplish all this was not perceived as being particularly worthwhile. Dan commented: "When guidelines are mandated, people do it to satisfy the mandate, not because it is a necessary function, or necessary for the policy, or that they have any real desire to do it." (D#2 : 11)

Commitment. The commitment to the management approach of the central office waxed and waned, depending on the issues involved. For the most part Dan complied because he either believed that what he was asked to do was reasonable, or because he felt he had no choice and it was incumbent upon him to obey the directives. Dan did not always agree with the directives of the central administration: "I'm just questioning the wisdom of some of the things that we are going to do, whether we are doing them to anybody's benefit or whether we are going through the motions." (D#9:10) Dan understood that the associate superintendents that he reported to did not always believe in the district policies either.

> I'm not really convinced that, at least with the two associates that I have had, they have felt a true allegiance to following the policy themselves. I mean they have done it, to some extent, but they haven't really felt that it's a saleable kind of thing, and I don't know how saleable I feel it is to staffs either. (D#7:10)

Dan did not so much accept what was going on as become resigned to not being able to change some things. "We try but we can't change it so you best live under the rules of the land." (D#9:23) Compliance was not universal, however:

> We had come up with this policy which he [the associate superintendent] had approved. When we started getting down to it [we] found that it really wasn't going to work the way that we said it should work. . . .I guess, based on the theory that it's

> better to beg forgiveness than ask permission, we are not following the policy that was initially approved. (D#7:14)

Faith in the system. Overall, though, Dan had faith in the system. "I think by and large it works pretty well. . . .I don't see any other way it could function." (D#4:19) Dan believed that positive attitudes had prevailed and that morale had been high. The teacher evaluation policy had created a concern amongst teachers, causing morale to dip a little, but other more positive aspects of the system generally made up for this.

> There's enough faith that the system works relatively well, there's enough positive feelings about the system that differences or disagreements are accepted and coped with; the system has lived up to the principles in general. (D#4:25-26)

One boss. Decentralization and the new management philosophy did bring with it another principle of management that had an effect on the practice of teacher evaluation: "Every individual in the organization should have only one supervisor." (Appendix B). Every teacher, every principal has only one boss, only one person in the hierarchy that can give orders or direction to another, or veto their decisions. Therefore there was only one person that could legitimately evaluate your performance. In a school with department heads, vice principals and a principal the reporting relationships had to be clarified. Even the reporting relationship of the school secretary, who worked primarily but not solely for the principal, had to be established so that person would know whose expectations to meet.

Dan conducted the evaluations for all the teachers in his school, although there was an assistant principal who could have been given some of the responsibility. Dan argued that there were too few staff to divide up the reporting relationships and the responsibility and accountability. There was a greater need to maintain continuity through the grade levels, and for staff to be cohesive rather than segmented as may be the case under divided management. This responsibilty to evaluate all teachers each year meant that time allocations for administrative duties were affected. Dan found that he could not spend as much time with each teacher as he desired, nor could he evaluate each teacher in the same way. The pressure to prioritise

administrative activities and delegate authority increased as more responsibilities were added to the principal's role. Dan had to make these decisions himself, there was no-one telling him how to do it or what the best way was.

> There are a lot of implications for establishing a policy like that and it has ramifications for how the system is organized and how things can be effectively carried out. It's not just as simple as evaluation because that impinges on a lot of areas and how we do things and how principals are inserviced. In essence we have never been inserviced on how to do it, how to evaluate. We asked for this numerous times and we were told -- its your baby, you handle it in your school the way you think its appropriate. (D#2:10-11)

Role of principal. Decentralization led to other interesting arrangements that affected the role of the principal. One practice in the district was to allow students (and their parents) to choose the school they wish to attend. This open boundary system created competition amongst schools for students. Principals were more involved now with marketing their schools to ensure enrollments. According to Dan the rivalry with other school principals was friendly --"We're going to end up complimenting each other in terms of the system and people will generally be provided an opportunity or a choice." (D#10:21) The district management philosophy which espoused the value of uniqueness and decentralization permitted principals and their staff to express their collective individuality. Some schools were beginning to carve out their own market niche by clearly articulating their philosophies and establishing unique programs that would serve specific segments of the student population and their parents. This practice contributed to the changing role of the principal and perhaps, in a sense, to the need to establish unique expectations for staff in each school, and for each teacher within a school.

Decentralization -- the shifting of responsibility for specific functions from the central office to the school -- was not without drawbacks, according to Dan.

> We've changed the role [of the principal] dramatically over the last seven or eight years. I've spent a lot more time in classrooms than I do now. I've become a manager, I spend a lot of time shuffling paper. (D#9:18-19)

> I think initially when we started this process people were sold on it but it seems to me that over the years there have been more and more things that have been dumped [on us]. (D#5:20)

With increased authority came increased responsibilities, not all of which were welcomed. The plant manager role was not entirely welcomed. Dan spent more time than he thought it was worth making decisions about the type of telephone system that should be installed, for instance. As the responsibility for energy conservation and utility management was shifted to the principal, more time was required to manage these functions. More time was spent with parents who were 'shopping around' for the best school for their children, and wanted personal communication with the principal. Dan found that he was spending less time in classrooms, less time working with individual teachers.

This last change in Dan's time schedule had other influences than just pressure to accomplish a greater array of tasks. Many teachers in Dan's school had not found that classroom visits were particularly worth while. At the end of the year when Dan asked his staff to comment on the evaluation process that had taken place that year, no one complained that he had not been in their classrooms enough, or suggested that he should spend more time with them. (D#11:7) On this particular issue Dan felt uncomfortable with his role. He believed that in the past he had been expected to visit classrooms. The Teacher Effectiveness program was predicated on it, and the central administration had been supporting this program. Now his associate would not give him a clear direction as to what he should be doing. This ambiguity was perplexing to him. And given the demands on his time to manage other aspects of the school, the decision to spend less time in classrooms was made for him. The press of multiple demands appeared to leave Dan less in control of his own administrative time.

Compliance. Dan's behaviour was influenced by more than the functions of his work. He was expected to comply with directives and policies from his supervisor and from the Board. The notion of compliance has many facets for Dan. One element of this was expressed in the management philosophy of the district that related to trust and integrity:

> The new organization established a set of district principles that guided everybody's behaviour. One of the principles relates to trust, integrity: "The leadership team must promote and maintain a strong relationship of mutual trust, confidence and respect among all members of the institution. Each member of the leadership team has an obligation to actively pursue the foregoing objective with respect to all employees under his or her supervision." The authority granted to those in authority is only a granted authority, nobody can ordain you. . . .The system has to be based on trust, and you have to say that I don't always agree with what the associate tells me, but I agree with enough of what they say that I will accept that authority role that they have. (D#4:25)

As a matter of principle Dan accepted the authority of the associate superintendent, not blindly, but in the realization that the alternative to not complying was to choose to leave the organization:

> In our system the direction would come through the Board from the Superintendent, from the Superintendent to the Associate and then to the school. That direct line of authority is there and so even though I may disagree with the Associate Superintendent, he has the power to direct me to do something and I must comply with that directive. I may not like it, I could appeal. . . .I can't imagine it getting to that level and getting approved. . . .I think that the administration has an obligation to listen collectively to the group of field administrators. . .and once it has been put in place by the Board, you don't have a choice to comply or not. . . .My obligation is obviously whatever the Board has decided, that's what will be. Now usually in most cases the Board approves in principle an idea and then it's up to the senior administration to put some guidelines on it for implementation. [If you ignored the policy?] You'd find yourself in a one room school someplace with two kids. . . .I don't believe, at least the way I operate, I might complain and fight and scream bloody murder

> if they don't do this and so to me, or make me do something, but when it comes down to the short strokes and they've made a decision then that decision I feel is binding on me. If I don't like it then that's too bad, I either leave the position or comply. (D#4:18-19)

Dan's attitude towards authority appeared consistent during the course of this study. In a later interview the same topic came up in our discussion. He repeated the same beliefs -- he would fight against something that he didn't believe while it was up for discussion, but once the Board made a decision, "away she goes, . . .if I can't live with it I have to quit. I obviously haven't felt that strongly about those things." (D#10:15)

Monitoring. Related to the issue of compliance is the issue of monitoring compliance. Dan was not monitored closely by his Associate, although there were some checks. In Dan's view the system was based on faith and trust, at least in part: "in other words if I say that I'm going to do something, the understanding is that it is being done" (D#4:22). The associate superintendent did not spend very much time in the school and so his knowledge of what was going on in the school was " by and large second hand or implied from certain things, the evaluation forms, all these other things; he gets that information from a variety of sources" (D#9:8). One significant source of information was from the annual surveys that the board conducted of student, parent, and staff perceptions.

> One of the things that principals are very cognizant of -- this report that comes out on an annual basis. That has had some effect on what people are doing. . .I guess unfortunately central administration is also looking at that and saying this is a popularity contest. (D#10:8)

The surveys provided the central administration with information about the satisfaction levels of various clients of the system -- parent satisfaction with teachers, school and district office administration, student satisfaction with the quality of education and care they were receiving, teacher satisfaction with the administrative support they were receiving. The surveys provided the associate superintendent with a great deal of information about the principal. The questions that were asked of the

different client groups provided the principal with a fairly clear message of what was valued in the system with respect to his behaviour. Transfers and demotions of principals had resulted from poor results on the surveys. This type of action drew attention to the significance of the surveys and ensured that the surveys, or rather the inferences from the questions on the surveys, would influence the behaviour of principals.

What the surveys did not do is provide information on specific activities of the principal, for instance, whether the principal was complying with all the procedures in the teacher evaluation policy. Compliance had more to do with ownership in many cases. Dan commented:

> Depends on what the item is, and if there is a mandate that I must write something down. But writing something down doesn't mean doing it -- change as opposed to the tip of the iceberg. . . . What you might do is entirely opposite to what you write down.
> The ownership has been taken away with this policy. . . .The concern is that we have to do it, so we had best do it in the least threatening manner. To be least threatening we had best do it and try to put it off onto other things that are more mundane than getting to the guts of teaching. (D#2:11)

Dan's understanding of the context that he was working in was that he must comply with the 'letter of the law', but it was not necessary to comply always with the 'intent', at least if the intent was not monitored closely. Dan did not feel that he had any significant input into the operating philosophy of the district, or of any specific policy. The direction for the district came from "one individual at the top having a philosophical point of view that is unalterable and unchangeable" (D#5:20). It was largely through the use of coercion, or through enticements, that 'buy in' was orchestrated. This fostered the paying of 'lip service' to those policies that Dan did not believe in.

There was a saying that Dan repeated which was reflective of the culture that Dan operated in :

> Well, as [the former associate superintendent] used to say, its always easier to beg forgiveness than ask permission, and he said don't ask me if you don't want me to tell you what you

> don't want to hear. And if you think there is a possibility that I'm going to tell you what you don't want to hear, then don't ask the question. (D#8:16)

There was little monitoring of the day to day activities in the school which left the principal with a great deal of autonomy over certain matters. The associates did not try to interfere with the management of the school, in fact, they studiously avoided this. Dan made this comment about one associate:

> At first principals didn't get support from him. They went to him with a problem, he would come back and say, solve the problem yourself, and solve it in a manner that I don't have to hear about it. . . .I think that later on he was to the point where he would support a position if you had a position and said this is what I feel should be done, that you would get support from him. (D#7:11)

On matters like the teacher evaluation policy there was some routine monitoring. The associate indicated to the principals in his area what the broad expectations were, and then met with each principal to review what each had done to comply. The issues were directly related to the policy statements, the obvious operational procedures such as the development of procedures to carry out staff evaluation. Clarification of the meaning of specific policy statements did not appear to occur during these discussions. The associate could learn from the principal if routine procedures were being followed: Was there an evaluation procedure in place? Was each staff member being evaluated annually? Was the reporting responsibility of each staff member clear? Were expectations set for each staff member, etc. What the associates did not appear to be doing was to be gathering information on how the principal was complying, and on the effect of the policy and school procedures: Was the practice of evaluation in each school meeting the purposes of the evaluation policy? The monitoring that took place was superficial. Dan was complying with the 'letter of the law' but he was not sure what the intent of the 'law' was. The lack of clarification left Dan with an uneasy feeling about what was expected of him:

> We are looking at it [the evaluation policy] in the sense of saying, ok, you've said that it's an open door and I can do a number of different kinds of things with it, and I guess we go with that until somebody says, hey, there are some other expectations that we didn't tell you about. . .a hidden agenda. . . Up to this point in the system in terms of saying what they mean and following through with what they mean, you are free to do what you wish. . .but there's always a nagging hunch that the next shoe is going to drop sometime. (D#9:11)

The sense that Dan had of a hidden agenda was abetted by the lack of specificity in the monitoring that took place. Although the messages that were being sent out by the 'system' were consistent to date, the freedom was not entirely enjoyed by Dan. He repeated many times that what he would have preferred was a little more structure.

External influences. In the discussions about life in Dan's school, little was said about influences outside the district, or outside the management of the district. The Teachers' Association did not appear to have significant input to how things were done in the school or in the district. When the teacher evaluation policy was being developed the Association prepared a brief that was presented to the Board which recommended many changes to the draft policy. The brief had little effect. According to Dan, many school administrators in the district did not entirely support the Teachers' Association. A rift had developed over the years in large part because the Association had not been seen to be supportive of principals. The Teachers' Association at the local level and at the provincial level was not perceived by Dan to be of great significance. If anything, the Association was to be acknowledged as an impediment to change, not a vehicle for improving things. Dan had had an experience with the local association in which an innovation that he and his staff had agreed upon regarding flexible teacher release time had been quashed. The Association's influence on Dan and the operation of the school was sporadic rather than pervasive.

Dan had no involvement with the provincial department of education regarding teacher evaluation. The department had issued a policy stating that each school jurisdiction was to develop a district teacher evaluation policy but had not specified what the district policy was to be

like. Dan's experience with implementing the teacher evaluation policy was bound more by district and school phenomena than by influences outside of those domains.

Ben's Situation

Ben's everyday worklife was influenced by the district context in a very different way than was Dan. As Ben discussed his situation, there were fewer references to the District's management operation and to possible influences from individuals or District practices. In large measure, Ben acted independently, following his beliefs but adhering where necessary to the rules of the system. In relation to this Ben was not as supportive of the system as a whole as Dan appeared to be.

District management philosophy and practice. Ben was frustrated to a certain extent with the District operation. He saw contradictions in some of the District management practices. For example:

> I still see our system trying to get more parents involved. I also see our system not being clear on what sort of ownership they want the parent community to have with respect to the school. . . . On the one hand the system is saying, "Get the parents involved in budget and budget decisions, however, Mr. Principal, you are accountable for everything that goes on in this whole thing and don't forget we manage the system, we as trustees manage the system and we are subject to the very good advice of our senior administration. At the same time we want good parent involvement here." So I see it as a paradox. I have to live with that. (B#5:3)

Ben was having difficulty with other apparent inconsistencies in the system such as the emphasis being placed on meeting the individual needs of students through individual programming and stressing principles of child development, yet all students were required to write achievement tests at grades three, six and nine. The interpretation being given to the tests by staff was that the uniform standards being developed for all students would result in teachers being obliged to bring all their students 'up to standard' within the timeframe of the academic year. There was an understanding that the District would publish test results school by school which would pressure teachers to ensure that their students performed as well as possible on the tests. The test results would in fact be a proxy for teacher evaluation. Ben commented:

> I'm sort of feeling inadequate about the whole business of trying to figure it out and cope with it and sort of articulate it as far as the school is concerned, to say something to the staff which has an inherent consistency with respect to our mission, our consistency with central office. (B#4:15)

Flexibility in process. Some of Ben's frustration with the system was fueled by the contrary views of teachers. There were those who preferred not to get involved in discussions of where the system was going or what it was trying to do. They only wanted to be told what to do so that they could get on with doing it. Then there were those who resented being told what to do in certain areas. Ben seemed to prefer to be given as much latitude as possible, and enjoyed the opportunity to have input into the direction of the system. Unfortunately, there was not a great deal of opportunity to be involved at this level. Fortunately for Ben the management practice of the District was to provide a great deal of flexibility in how things were done:" I certainly think it's advantageous to have the flexibility we do; on the other hand I wouldn't want to rule out all more structured kinds of things until I took a look at them."

Inflexibility in direction. An example of the inflexibility of the system in terms of direction was the policy making process. Ben's staff, and many others in the District, had prepared responses to a draft of the evaluation policy. Many recommendations were made to change aspects of the draft policy. It was Ben's perception that some changes were made in the final version, but that there remained contentious issues.

> The anticipation was that we would do something in terms of having an impact on the policy-makers. I don't think we really felt that we had a great deal of impact. . . .We had a long discussion with respect to formative and summative evaluations and the Superintendent has always maintained that he can't see the difference between the two, and we always maintained at that point that we could, and that we wanted to develop, sort of extend the effective teaching model where we had a collegial relationship with the staff member, and that the objective of all this was the enhancement of the teaching performance. If we were going to have an impact on that it meant more formative kinds of procedures. . . .When the policy finally came down I would say that I could see room for what I

> called more formative procedures. . . . The other thing, however, we didn't have any impact on the whole business of evaluating every staff member [every year]. (B#3:15-16)

Ben would have preferred a review of the policy after the first year, however that was not to be. "For whatever reasons we [the principals] perceive it as something in place and we just go on from here. It's not something that's going to be reviewed at this stage."

The party line. One of Ben's observations about the District was that there was little room for internal dissent and criticism. He commented:

> You really have to be part of the team in this system, to accept the teamness, the oneness of us all in order to get advancement. . . .[The leaders] really don't want people who are too critical or investigative. . .not too individualistic, you know, you go along with [illegible]. . . . But to be able to be open and secure enough to listen to people and what they are saying I think that's important.

Even the School Board was perceived to be working as a team with the Superintendent. Ben commented: "We have a system where there is very little indication of any conflict or any disagreement between our senior administration or our Superintendent and the Board of Trustees, there is none, that is not readily apparent at all, we are all working together."

Reason for policy. It was Ben's perception that the District evaluation policy was a direct response to the mandate from Alberta Education that every jurisdiction would have a policy in place. But Ben also believed that the Superintendent was committed to evaluation for he had been speaking to the associates and principals about evaluation prior to the Alberta Education mandate. On the other hand he was not sure how committed the Superintendent was to good quality evaluations as he had not structured the process in such a way that sufficient time could be allocated to gather data and conference with the evaluatee. Ben's experiences with his associate superintendents led him to believe that evaluation was not a high priority for the system.

> The Associate did not spend sufficient time with me to in fact be able to evaluate me. You know the word I was going to use was

> farcical, in a sense it was. He had me write up more or less a self-evaluation of myself and then wrote a letter which commended me for my work. . . .If this evaluation of principals was a high priority as far as the Superintendent is concerned, [he] might have made sure and ensured that the Associates did have sufficent time to ensure that those evaluations were well done, were credible, that kind of thing, in the eyes of the principal. . . . As sort of a blanket kind of thing you never sense the superintendent asks the associates to ask the principals how's it going as far as evaluations are concerned, and so once again I'm sort of wondering whether to what degree is this a priority. (B#3:7-8)

Treatment of staff by District. Ben's attitude towards the district administration was shaped in part by his perceptions of the way in which they operated, particularly how they treated staff. Ben related a situation in which the positions of supervisor of various programme areas were being 'downgraded' to consultant positions. There had been no discussion of this at the school administration level and no explanation given for the change. Ben believed this to be a "shabby way to treat people" and questioned whether the District would be able to maintain a leadership role in programme areas.

> I was thinking what about leadership in a programme area; surely the superintendent and the associates would want to make sure that [this district] was shown to have leadership in programme areas. I guess they're assuming that leadership can come from consultants, not supervisors because they are getting rid of supervisors of programmes. I thought to myself well maybe what they figured out about this whole thing is it would cause less trauma somehow to make the decree and then to explain afterwards to the people than to explain it ahead of time and then come out with the decree. It just seemed to me that people are human entities, ends in themselves, you need to sit down and explain this is why we are doing this, and accept the fact it's going to cause a lot of trauma and it would either way, but this way is the shabby way to treat people as far as I'm concerned. (B#5:9)

Parents. When Ben was asked whether parents had any influence on the school teacher evaluation policy, he responded that they had not. Parents had not been involved in the development of the school policy, or the district policy. According to Ben, the staff in his school had not been overly receptive to parent involvement in school affairs, although that attitude was slowly changing.

> I've got a lot of my own imprint on what goes on in the school, . . . but there certainly are legacies which remain. A case in point is the attitude I inherited [in this school] which is considerably suspicious about parental involvement or parents even being in and around the school. . . .When I came here I quite quickly tried to change that much to the discomforture of some. (B#6:6)

Some staff members were reticent to involve parents in any school activity, while others were adopting a much more open attitude. The time had not come to involve parents directly in the development of a teacher evaluation policy. The policy was influenced, according to Ben, partly by central office, partly by the Department of Education and partly by school staff. What appeared to influence the nature of the school policy more than anything was Ben's previous experience with the District Teacher Effectiveness program.

Previous experience with evaluation. The Teacher Effectiveness Program was a voluntary professional development activity sponsored by central office. Ben had been actively involved for a couple of years as had many of his staff. He had found the program to be very helpful and personally rewarding. He considered himself to be a 'secondary person' because of his previous teaching and administrative experience at the junior and senior high level, but had believed he had established "considerable credibility" with staff through his involvement in the teacher effectiveness program. Ben interpreted the central office support of this program as an indication of the expectations for the teacher evaluation policy. He commented that the superintendent may have shown foresight in implementing this program prior to the adoption of the teacher evaluation policy. Ben felt very confident with teacher evaluation as a result of the expertise he had acquired in observing teachers and

conferencing. This experience appeared to influence the practice of teacher evaluation for Ben more than any other single factor.

> In so many respects you have to hand it to our leadership in that they could see the value in the effective teaching programme, and how teachers latched on to this. . . .They put a lot of things together in that programme that was a tremendous enhancement, that did a lot of good work to enhance teaching. . . .We saw as this new policy was coming into effect. What is the difference between this and the effective teaching programme? That was one of the questions that we used to ask about it. In a sense I could see the difference now because, I don't know whether one is more enhancing than the other, you see I used to run a buddy system last year with teachers serving and providing positive feedback, or whether the present evaluation system is better where I'm providing feedback. . . .I've got all this expertise with respect to conferencing and observing teachers, so this is very helpful to me in terms of the present situation where I have to evaluate teachers, where you are involved in these formative teaching enhancement procedures which I had experience with prior to this. Now whether the Superintendent was thinking this is coming down the road so we can give teachers and principals opportunity to work on this, this kind of procedure, I don't know whether he thought of that or not. (B#4:11-12)

While the District was implementing the evaluation policy some principals were being asked by their associates to rank teachers from top to bottom. Of particular significance was the ranking of teachers who were eligible for a continuous contract with the District. The intent was to eliminate those teachers on probationary contracts that were ranked the lowest. Ben's response to this initiative was not very positive as his letters of recommendation for probationary teachers rarely contained "effusive" language. He preferred to use only modest praise, but as a result the teachers under his supervision would not receive as high a ranking by the associate as they might, had he chosen to describe them more glowingly. The practice of ranking teachers made Ben "shudder"; it certainly added another dimension to the concept of teacher evaluation in the district.

The Staff. One of the responses to the number of changes that had been taking place in the school system and in education in general over the last few years was the development of cynical attitudes by some staff. Change was usually seen by these individuals as just another "fad" to be endured until it too blew over. Ben described these teachers as "dogmatic and doctrinaire" and difficult to deal with because of their defensive structures. Ben appeared undaunted by these individuals and challenged to make a difference in their teaching lives.

Some of the staff in Ben's school accepted Ben's approach to evaluation. They claimed not to be threatened by him and most described the experience as either helpful to them or at least not a negative experience. They expressed appreciation for the positive feedback Ben gave them and the attention they received from Ben, although a few commented that it was not enough. The staff had a variety of opinions about evaluation and the school procedures, as the following interview excerpts demonstrate:

- "Evaluation should encourage learning and growth, it's good for all of us."
- "The criteria used in the effective teaching programme is credible --it's pretty straight forward, but not sure of how outcomes will be measured."
- "Evaluation can make a teacher more aware, but it is an artificial situation because you know when the administrator is coming to the classroom. But it does make you think about what you are doing --self-evaluation -- this helps to make one practise and improve."
- "The effective teaching procedures were brought into the school a few years back. There is a carry-over --a jumping-off spot from effective teaching to evaluation."
- "Evaluation is important, we need to be evaluated on an ongoing basis, but I don't agree with the way it is being done. The principal should just drop in, unannounced and give feedback to the teacher. The principal is the key to good evaluation."
- "I don't mind being evaluated, but it's important that the evaluator be knowledgeable about the circumstances of the class."
- "The procedures we use are good, the principal is positive and makes you feel good about yourself."

- "This process requires a lot of time to be spent in the classroom by the administrator --time that he does not have."
- "The effective teaching programme was a better way to bring about improvement --teachers were more involved in looking at what needed to be done, they were more self-motivated. Now the principal tells teachers what needs to be done."
- "I'm not happy with the school procedures. The principal did not understand what he was supposed to do. He is doing MBO's, and that doesn't work with humans. When it comes down to it, it is an opinion, there is no clear evidence."
- "To be valid the evaluation must be based on more than brief half-hour visits. The administrator must be aware of what's going on."
- "I would like to have been more involved in developing the school procedures."
- "We don't know enough about evaluation to do a proper job. It probably won't make a difference."
- "The policy was decreed by on-high. We were told what the school procedures were to be, but I agree with this, I didn't want to be involved."
- "I'm a little cynical about evaluation. Sometimes an ineffective teacher is rewarded with smaller class loads. When is 'good' good enough --when do I become stamped O.K.?"

Perhaps most telling, the staff did not perceive teacher evaluation to be a priority in the school or with Ben. The evaluation process had become routine to them. According to Ben, teacher evaluation was a high priority for him and he had allocated a fair amount of time to this activity. The difference in perceptions is interesting. Perhaps Ben's staff were not very aware of how he spends his time (they spent most of their time in the classroom, afterall) or perhaps Ben judged his priorities by different criteria.

When asked to suggest changes to the present procedures for evaluation, a few staff commented that they would like to see more peer observation and assistance, and a process that would provide continuity across the district. The lack of standardization and the emphasis on the principal as sole evaluator was a concern to some staff. Although the staff was generally very supportive of Ben and described him as fair in his evaluations, they were concerned about principals in other schools should they transfer to another school, or the principal be transferred to theirs.

Ben described the staff as being made up of diverse personalities and "self-sufficient to a great degree." They appeared to prefer to work by themselves although there was some evidence of joint planning and team work. Ben commented that he tried to encourage team work but it did not appear to be the norm in the school.

When Ben first came to the school six years ago as principal, many of the staff preferred not to involve parents in school activities. There had been several experiences with parents "telling tales" around the community about incidents they had observed in the school. Staff had felt unduly criticised and unable to defend themselves. The response to this situation had been to 'pull up the drawbridge' and operate with little parent involvement. Ben preferred to involve parents in the school and so he had worked over the years to change staff attitudes, with apparent success. Parents could be seen in the staff room on many days working on projects for the teachers. Some teachers included parents in the classroom as helpers. At a staff meeting one teacher commented negatively on parents sitting about the staff room but was quickly reminded by others that they had previously passed a motion in support of parent involvement. Ben was proud of the progress he had made in this area.

Authority and Compliance. One of the management principles prescribed for district operation was the notion of every employee having only one supervisor. Ben found that he could not operate under this principle in all circumstances:

> I'll be quite candid with you, I do get involved, and I would want to get involved. [For example] in the choice of the kindergarten aide, I want to be involved in the selection, to some degree I want to be involved in the assignment of responsibilities, not the very specific things of course, I'm certainly the one who determines pretty well the amount of time that she will work for them, and I would certainly be involved in evaluation in the sense that if there was any problem I would certainly have to know. So the other thing that is interesting here is that we have two kindergarten teachers and one aide, and so what do you do with that, in terms of shared responsibility as far as evaluation if you are not supposed to have it so I have turned a blind eye so to speak to that. So that's just the way it is, both of them have

> responsibility with respect to the evaluation of that kindergarten aide. (B#2:2-3)

Ben found that there were instances where a little 'creative insubordination' was called for. The lack of direct and frequent supervision permitted him to subvert some district policies, for example the policy on parent-teacher interviews:

> Like the whole business of parent-teacher interviews -- a very interesting thing in our system is that they must never occur during school time. . . . I'm not sure that's an important policy or not, but certainly that was something the Superintendent failed. . . .People are just getting around that now by just bringing in substitutes like I did that last year. (B#7:15)

On another matter Ben had been told that he could not charge parents for lunch room supervision for children that were bused in from a neighbouring area as they did not have a school nearby. This had been a Board decision, yet Ben's school was given no assistance to provide the lunch room supervision. After several years of using the school's program money to fund the supervision costs, Ben discovered that principals in other schools in the city were charging parents under similar circumstances even though they were not supposed to. This time when he approached his associate superintendent Ben was given permission to charge the parents.

Paying lip-service. Ben found that he could not abide by all the management principles or the policies of the district at all times and so he circumvented those he did not believe in. In general, though, Ben considered himself accepting of authority, particularly if he was to be supervised:

> I think that I have always felt as an employee of the system that if I am asked to do something it is my obligation to carry this out unless it is something which goes against the grain. And I suppose if it went against the grain to a great extent I would have to ask myself what I would do with that. . . . My makeup is such that I would comply with it [the policy] because I am supervised. I have a boss or two and that's what they wish me to do and I don't have any strong objections to it. (B#5:6-7)

> I anticipate some monitoring; I put this down because of my evaluation, how I'm doing in this whole area and I suppose the associate could always ask me whether I put it down or not. . . . I wouldn't choose to lie about what I was doing again, I'm just built that way, I don't lie, but I do know that the whole business of cutting corners to some degree. . . .Maybe some other principals are cutting corners more so than I did.
>
> . . . I think there's some fear, there's the fear that you know if you are directly insubordinate you won't have a job. (B#5:10-11)

Routine. By the first year of the implementation of the policy it appeared that central administration considered the policy to be a routine; that is, principals were assumed to be engaged in evaluating all staff in a manner consistent with the policy. Ben commented: "It's just accepted that it's in place and everyone goes on with it. There doesn't seem to be much attention to it now as far as the system's concerned. . . . Now we go on to something else, just added on kind of thing."

Commitment. Ben's perception of the commitment of Central Office to the implementation of the evaluation policy was that it was low. Each year the District published its priorities, and while teacher evaluation had been a priority in past years, now that a policy had been adopted it seemed that there was little interest in the subject.

> There was nothing mentioned in the Board priorities this time about the implementation of evaluations, and when I asked about that the response was, well, it was implemented, and the policy's [directives are] to be done each year, so there is no point in putting it into a Board priority again. So I really wondered about that, . . . if maybe that this wasn't an indication of a lack of commitment because if they were really committed to it they would take a look at it, they would review the whole thing and say, ok, what embellishment or addition or subtraction should we make, how are you guys doing with this whole business of evaluation is a valid question, for principals. (B#3:8)

As Ben was not particularly pleased with all aspects of the policy he would have preferred a review. What he was faced with was a position from Central Office that the policy was in effect and he was to carry it out. With minimum supervision of his practice, Ben went about conducting

evaluations in a manner more consistent with his own beliefs than with the written policy.

Ben perceived that his own commitment to teacher evaluation was fairly high, particularly in comparison with the associate superintendents: "they don't spend nearly the time on it that I do." He rated evaluation as a high priority amongst all the activities that he was engaged in this year. His interest stemmed mainly from the positive experiences he had had with the teacher effectiveness program. Towards the end of the school year he began to question how he was spending his time on evaluation. He found that he could not, and need not, work with each teacher in the same way. Classroom observation and conferencing were time consuming activities if one was to conduct the process successfully. He decided that in the following year he would only work closely with about one third of his staff; the others would have to monitor progress towards their performance targets more on their own. Ben also wanted to balance his time with other school activities. This year he had spent a fair amount of time helping to organize a student trip to the World's Fair in Vancouver. To the staff, perhaps because this type of activity was more visible to them, Ben had been perceived as spending more time on this than anything else, including evaluation. According to Ben, this was not the case.

Networks. Ben met with a group of principals for breakfast on Friday mornings every month and a half or so. They discussed common issues and problems and shared what they were presently involved in. Teacher evaluation was not brought up in these discussions except by Ben.

> We really don't bring up teacher evaluation, and it's funny we don't, and I think, I would say that's probably a reflection of its seeming lack of emphasis in the system. (B#3:10)

What Ben did find out in these sessions was that he was spending far more time than most on teacher evaluation. Some of the principals in the group had met with each staff member once in the beginning of the year to determine the objectives to be worked on, and once near the end of the year to discuss progress. Ben reflected that he appeared to be more judgmental in his approach with staff, and relied more on his observations of staff

performance than on the teacher's own account. These informal meetings with other principals helped Ben to understand what was taking place in other schools, and provided him with comparisons.

The Associate Superintendent. Ben reported directly to an associate superintendent who was responsible for all aspects of the school's operation. During the course of this study Ben's associate was transferred to another position in central office, and a school principal was promoted to the associate superintendent position. This change in leadership did not appear to make a difference in Ben's approach to teacher evaluation.

Ben had not found the former associate to be particularly helpful, whether it was to assist in implementing the evaluation policy or for anything else.

> I didn't find that his support or his suggestions were terribly feasible, . . .there [was] supportiveness and listening and attending to what you are saying, I don't think there is any question about that capacity, but in terms of providing something concrete I don't think that he did too much.
>
> . . .He did not know what in fact was going on in the school. . . . he spends far more time in some schools than at this school.
>
> . . . So in terms of leadership with respect to , or modeling with respect to this whole business of evaluation, I didn't find that there was an effective model. (B#4:3-5)

It was important to Ben that the associate become more familiar with the operation of the school if he was going to evaluate Ben. The associate relied on Ben's description of his own accomplishments, the district survey results, and complaints or comments he may have heard from parents. Ben considered his associate's evaluation "farsical". He commented: "If the model that we follow was the associate superintendent's evaluation of us then we really don't need to do much of anything. . . .It's not adequate." (B#6:15-16.)

The new associate superintendent was, in Ben's opinion, more interested in visiting the school. Since his appointment in January he had been out to the school four times, and had expressed an interest in discussing the general evaluation of staff. On the other hand, Ben found

that "he certainly is not expressing any particular independence from the superintendent, he becomes a spokesman for whatever the superintendent is saying, providing rationale and explanations." (B#4:8) Ben described the superintendent as being "a very strong person, strong personality" which influenced the role of the associate. It did not appear to Ben that the new associate was in any different position to reflect the concerns of teachers or school administrators to the superintendent or the Board.

Situating the practice of policy implementation

The context that Dan and Ben worked in, and their perceptions of that context, had many similarities. They shared many of the same perceptions about decentralization and its impact on their workloads, the district management philosophy and resultant district culture, monitoring and supervision and complying with directives, the associate superintendents and their relationships with the superintendent, and the district's commitment to the evaluation policy. Both principals found that there was no assistance given to them by their associates regarding the implementation of the policy, and both were involved in networks with other principals. Both Dan and Ben were involved in many other school activities and thus had to balance their time and energy to accomplish what they could.

They were both involved in the Teacher Effectiveness program with their staffs and borrowed from this model to construct a means of determining criteria, data collection and conferencing techniques for teacher evaluation. Their styles and personalities, however, influenced the extent to which they engaged this model in their practice, and the modifications they made to the process over time as they received feedback from staff and reflected on the consequences of their actions.

The context that Dan and Ben worked in was not static; it was dynamic and interactive. As they acquired new insights about the policy and district office expectations, became cognizant of staff reactions to their practices, and shared with other school administrators their experiences, their perceptions of the context in which they worked began to evolve and change. Concerns about hidden agendas began to dissipate. Pressures from other work demands waxed and waned and affected the degree of commitment that

each principal possessed. Dan and Ben worked in a complex environment, with many policies, beliefs, norms and actors at play at all times. Their perceptions of these phenomena were coloured by their own beliefs and values, and by their own needs and idiosyncrasies.

Chapter 6

Understanding Policy: Transforming meaning into action

Introduction. The meaning that Dan and Ben gave to the policy -- how they interpreted the terms used, the directions given, what they understood the intent of the policy to be, their beliefs and attitudes about teaching and evaluation, how the values underlying the policy were consistent or inconsistent with their own, the concerns that they had about putting the policy into practice, their sense of the efficacy of the policy, their commitment to the policy and to the practice of teacher evaluation -- and how this meaning changed over time, was a critical dimension of the implementation process. The understanding that they had of the policy was intricately woven with their perception of the context that they operated in. The context was a complex one, and the policy was not the only issue that they had to deal with. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the meaning, the deep understanding that Dan and Ben had of the policy.

Dan's interpretation: making meaning of the policy

As Dan reflected on how he was implementing the Personnel Evaluation Policy one of the dominant themes that emerged was the policy itself: (a) what the policy meant to him, (b) his concerns and attitude towards it, (c) his sense of the efficacy of the policy, (d) his beliefs about evaluation (the purpose of evaluation, what should be evaluated, how evaluations should be done), and (e) how he translated the policy into school procedures (which involved his prior experience with teacher evaluation, how new procedures were developed, and how they were evolving with time.) For Dan, the implementation process was one of negotiating between presently held personal beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours and the perceived demands imposed by this new policy. The policy theme is a complex one, interwoven with subthemes and other major themes in an interdependent and dynamic process.

The meaning of the policy. To Dan the evaluation policy was somewhat confusing, in the sense that he was unclear about what was

ultimately wanted by senior administration. It was not a matter of not being able to follow the basic directives (such as the immediate supervisor being responsible for doing an annual evaluation for all staff, or developing school procedures in consultation with the staff), but more a matter of not being clear about the District's expectations about the whole process. Dan's confusion lay in a much broader context:

> The tendency of the Board generally is to put the policy in such a way that it is not completely defined, it's not like a contract. The tendency has been at least in this system to leave some discretion to the schools because they felt that the strength is within the school, it's not in the central administration and we'll pass that down to the schools. A lot of times the policies come down and they are quite unclear and they require quite a lot of translation at the school level. In many instances you begin to wonder if that's a valuable kind of idea. (D#2:1)

Dan thought that the discretion left to each school on this policy was considerable although the Board was more specific on some items than usual. He would have preferred a more prescriptive policy " had it been very much what [he] wanted to do." Unfortunately many of the prescribed items (such as annual evaluations) were not to his liking and the discretionary items left him unclear. There were many issues that he felt were unresolved and about which he could not obtain clarification from his Associate Superintendent. One such issue had to do with classroom visitations:

> What is the system's expectations with regard to evaluation, not just in a sense of having a process. . . but what is it that they want you to do; to fill out that form. Is it an expectation, albeit unwritten, that each teacher is visited for x number of periods in the classroom, and those written reports are compiled and put together for a final report, is that the expectation? That is something I have never been made aware of, except that people say that there are different ways to evaluate. . . . I don't think that anybody has mandated that you must have, probably the exact opposite, that you must have classroom visitations . . .but what do [they] expect? There are other methods but tell me what you

> really expect me to do. . . . [D]o you really think I am remiss in my duties if I don't do classroom visits? (D#9:6)

Another issue that appeared to Dan to confuse the policy was the relationship between the District school-based budget process and teacher evaluation:

> The initial understanding that I had was that we were looking at improving teacher's ability to do the job, and that we should be working on one or two items during the course of the year to make that person better at doing their job, and that this was a learning experience for teachers. . . .[I]t wasn't until later [that] we knew the action plans for budget were part of the action plan [for evaluation] but those were in a different category. (D#8:11)

The budget plan now required the school to identify the staff member or members that were responsible for the accomplishment of each budget objective or goal. This information was transposed to the list of expected outcomes that each teacher had already established as part of their evaluation. It appeared that this system was meant to ensure that individuals could be held accountable for the school goals. For Dan this meant increasing the amount of paperwork he was required to do.

One of the more perplexing issues concerned what was meant by the term "expected outcome". The policy stated that evaluation reports were based on how well the expected outcomes have been achieved. In the policy document it is written that "expected outcomes should indicate what is to be achieved and are to be considered in the broad context of district, school or unit, personal and classroom goals." For Dan this term proved to be highly ambiguous on several fronts. He was unclear about what to evaluate, whether an outcome referred to classroom teaching processes, curriculum, student achievement, out-of-the-classroom responsibilities of a teacher, or all of these things. In the past evaluations had always been centered around classroom teaching skills. Now Dan was not sure. "Nobody said what kinds of things you should evaluate. . . .[There is] confusion in how you interpret expected results, outcomes. . . .You are not sure whether you are evaluating the teaching process." (D#3:14) At a later

date he stated: "There are things that we should all be looking for, none of [these] things were particularly made clear." (D#7:15)

He also had difficulty with the concept of a 'goal' based evaluation:

> An evaluation evaluates a certain set of goals that you have established. I have a lot of difficulty with that because I don't think it does. . . . We can try to set up certain goals. . . .I set up my budget last year and I changed it so many times because new things had been added, new programs, and it doesn't look anything like what I started with. (D#7:24)

> Expected outcome I guess would seem to imply that we're going to reach some goal at the end, and in many cases that's not possible. So expected outcomes I guess you would have to say is in my term, my definition, which is probably not accurate, would be moving towards the end result, it doesn't necessarily mean that we're going to get that end result. (D#5:1)

Dan found this lack of clarity in the policy unsettling. "I'm not sure where we're going from here and I don't think anybody else is [sure either]." In many of its practices the District promotes diversity at the school level. It was expected that each school staff would develop its own unique evaluation procedures, within the guidelines established by the policy. Dan commented on this:

> I would suspect that if everything was set up in such a manner that it was exceptionally clear we would probably [have] one end result, it wouldn't be 200 results (referring to each school in the district). . . . My understanding is that the practice was deliberately left in some instances loose for interpretation in different situations. . . . One of the requests that we had from staff was for consistency in evaluation. We have 200 different principals all evaluating different things, at different times, with different emphasis on things, and if I transfer schools I don't know what I'm going to get into. (D#7:15)

> What I would like to have seen and would still like to see is a very basic direction established by the Board and then pass that to senior administration as a procedure. Now the procedure being spelled out doesn't spell out specifically the kinds of things

> that we are going to work on, with individuals, it just spells out how we are going to go through the information. (D#5:17)

Dan's concern on this issue lay primarily with the lack of specific procedures, not with the direction per se of the policy. The concern arose from the discomfort he felt from not knowing what was expected by the senior administration, and from the pressure he perceived was coming from teachers who wanted some semblance of standardization on what they were to be evaluated. At the same time, Dan noted that teachers wanted evaluation criteria that mattered to them, criteria that had relevance to classroom teaching. Dan's understanding of the policy was interwoven with several notions: his need to satisfy the wishes of his supervisors and the needs of the teaching staff at the same time, his own beliefs about evaluation, and his tolerance for ambiguity. Teacher evaluation is a very complex phenomenon. Dan's appreciation of this complexity may have created a need for more structure than the policy guidelines and procedures, or his supervisor, offered.

Concerns and Attitudes. Dan had many concerns about the policy. Although he could accept it overall, he was not satisfied that it was the best policy that could have been adopted. The changes from his former practice of evaluation were considered by him to be fairly substantial. In his words he did not feel as good about evaluation as he had in the past: "What we've done is try to satisfy somebody else's needs and not necessarily the teaching need -- I think a lot of those were satisfied before -- so I am not really wholeheartedly convinced that this has been a better answer. " (D#7:1) His dissatisfaction with the policy led him to believe that the policy would change: "this isn't the ideal system so I would fully expect that we will evolve it into something different as time starts to go along." (D#8:27)

One of Dan's concerns was with the annual evaluation of all teachers. Initially he felt that this would not allow him the time to do a "decent job in terms of really getting to the meat of looking at teaching skills." (D#1:1) He referred to the annual evaluation as 'spray painting' everyone as there would not be enough time to do an indepth evaluation of each teacher. In the past Dan had been able to spend what he considered an adequate

amount of time with those teachers involved in an evaluation. The procedures consisted of a series of classroom observations and conferences with the few teachers selected. Now, although the new procedures still enabled him to do indepth observations and conferences, there was not sufficient time to use these procedures on all staff. The majority of teachers were evaluated by what Dan considered, at least initially, to be superficial procedures: the data were collected from casual observations, incidental behaviours of teachers that Dan was able to see, and from discussions with the teachers in which the teacher self-reported. Although Dan expressed guilt in not being able to spend more time with each teacher and not being able to do classroom observations, he began to find that he could collect information about a teacher from these casual observations (such as observing a teacher interacting with a student in the hallway at recess time) that did provide useful and accurate data:

> I kind of get a feeling that that's a better way to go than it is to visit them in the classroom and see one particular lesson. . . . Talking to the teacher in a straight and open manner provides you with an awful lot better information than going in to see one class in January. . . .If it is a warm, caring environment in the hallway when there is no one sitting there with a pencil but the casual observation is made, that's the way they are very likely to be in the classroom as well. (D#9:2)

Dan's concern about annual evaluations started with a concern about having the time to do classroom observations and conferences for every teacher. Through that first year he became involved in looking at teachers in and outside the classroom, and at teachers' roles beyond lesson instruction. He discovered that there were methods to collect data other than classroom observation, and other dimensions to collect data on:

> . . .the information that I get with regard to class management, what's going on, is much more based on the incidental type, where I'm walking into a class, talking to a teacher, or seeing the kids, visiting the kids, seeing the teacher react with those kids on the playground, around the hall or whatever. And on one side I feel quite comfortable doing that, because I think that I've been conned in the past with teachers, who do an awful lot of

> extra preparatory work to present a lesson when I go in for that one lesson. . . . The other side of me says there are other things to life than just sitting in a classroom, and there are other ways of getting information about the teachers.(D#9:1-2)

Dan's concern about doing an annual evaluation for each teacher changed as he slowly changed his ideas about how an evaluation could be done. The methods he began to employ were often informal; data was collected while he was going about other business, or directly from the teacher in a brief conference. Through this period he expressed some doubt about how he was evaluating a few of the teachers (that is, by not directly observing them teach a lesson in the classroom). This doubt stemmed from his years of experience doing classroom observations, his training with the District Teacher Effectiveness Program which stressed observation and conferencing, and his fear that District personnel really preferred classroom observation as an evaluative method but were not openly saying so.

By May Dan's concern about annual evaluations shifted to a concern about the need to write a report for each teacher. Reports in the past had been several pages long and took considerable effort to write, but only a few teachers were done each year. This new system required written reports for each teacher, reports that could be very time consuming to write. Dan began to question the value of these reports: "A written report, . . .I don't see any value in that at all. . . .The fact that it is written is not terribly useful to anybody except I guess to make sure that everybody does it." (D#11:5) This requirement to demonstrate compliance was not seen as sufficiently motivating to warrant writing reports.

The issue of the policy requirement that each staff member be annually evaluated was for Dan an issue primarily of allocation of time and effort. Not whether there was time to gather data and write the report for each teacher, but whether the time and effort spent was worthwhile. Was it sufficiently rewarding to warrant the time and effort required to evaluate each teacher using the formal procedures from beginning to end. The question was whether this was the most efficient manner for Dan to accomplish his goals for evaluation. In Dan's words:

> I guess it's just when you get a little closer to [doing the reports] . . .I mean it looks great on paper . . .but when you start working it out and say my god, I've got a teacher here and there are 15 objectives, I'm going to have to write 15 pages for this, and so it was fear of overwork. . . .My time is more valuable. (D#8:11)
> Maybe we should forget the paper, because the paper isn't too important to anybody anyway . . .but in terms of impinging on a principal's time is it a good expense of time, or would it be better to spend time discussing things with the teacher instead of an hour writing it. (D#9:10)

It is interesting to note that Dan's concern was not one of time per se but one of how he could best use his time to accomplish what he thought was his responsibility as a principal. The issue was more of control of time than of how much time. Did the policy impose requirements on Dan's time that he did not feel were worthwhile? And to what extent could Dan control these requirements so that he could still do what he thought was best with his time? What Dan did do was to work on a report form that would minimize the time required to fill it out. Dan did appear to be in control of his time. He allocated it by determining where he could be most productive. For those tasks that were necessary but not desirable he developed means to carry them out with the least amount of time and effort possible.

A Sense of Efficacy. Would this policy enable Dan to accomplish what the purpose of the policy stated? Dan was not very optimistic that it would:

> I wonder if we are going through a process to satisfy something and it's not very practical. (D#9:9)
> I'm just questioning the wisdom of some of the things that we say we are going to do. (D#9:10)
> I'm not sure that this is a system that I particularly like. (D#8:27)

There were three purposes to the policy: (1) to enhance or maintain the performance of staff, (2) to indicate the extent to which expected outcomes have been achieved, and (3) to provide information for making decisions. All three purposes were problematic to Dan. He believed that the policy did not adequately provide sufficient guidelines and procedures for the

purposes to be met. The policy model appeared to have inherent weaknesses that militated against the purposes being achieved.

For example, Dan questioned whether the policy provided the means to bring about the legal termination of a teacher. He had had an experience the previous year with a teacher that he believed should have been removed from the classroom by mid-year. His attempts to do so were frustrated by bureaucracy and expediency (it was more expedient to allow the teacher to finish the term and not renew his contract than to attempt to remove him). The new policy did not appear to rectify this situation; in fact, it may even have made matters more difficult, according to Dan:

> If it ever came to a situation where we had to terminate someone -- Was what you were doing legitimate? Was it consistent throughout the entire staff? Or did you have four different practices? (D#3:1)

Part of his anxiety rested with the notion that this policy did not provide a list of standard criteria applicable to all. How could the evaluator be fair and reasonable if each staff member was treated differently? This issue was perplexing, and Dan was annoyed at the policy makers for not dealing with it.

He believed that when a teacher is hired they should bring to the classroom some basic skills sufficient to do an adequate job. Because the hiring process was not able to screen out individuals who did not have basic skills, he felt that there should be a means to remove a beginning teacher before they did 'harm' in the classroom. He likened this to qualified tradespeople who could be immediately fired if they were not able to meet minimum standards in their work. Dan believed that if an electrician was wiring a house in an unsafe manner he would not be allowed to continue. He commented: "We expect that the electrician knows before he starts the job how to wire a house safely according to code. We do not pay him to learn on the job (apprenticeship programs aside)." Dan did not believe that it was his responsibility to help teachers develop basic teaching skills; that was the role of the university or pre-service program. He found it difficult to deal with a new teacher who was deficit in teaching skills: "The situation

says now that we have to provide some support, assistance, pump in all sorts of extra help, [even] if you don't feel like there is likely to be a whole lot of hope" (D#5:15).

The policy did not differentiate between beginning teachers and experienced teachers, nor did it provide a distinction between formative and summative evaluations, as he thought it should. Dan's sense of the policy was that, by itself, it would not provide a satisfactory mechanism to support decisions regarding the termination of employment of a teacher.

As Dan understood the policy, he believed that it did not adequately provide a mechanism for assistance to be given to experienced teachers who were having difficulties in their jobs, either. He would have preferred a policy that was more prescriptive in terms of expectations for teachers, and that would provide the teacher experiencing difficulty with a list of teaching behaviours against which their performance could be examined.

> Our policy that we have in place right now really doesn't direct itself towards [the teacher who is having trouble], and so what I do is I go back to an old form that I developed quite some time ago. It's based again on teaching effectiveness skills and there are about 15 areas that are fairly precisely indicated. (D#6:16)

The policy did state the expectation that assistance should be provided to teachers who were experiencing difficulty in achieving the expected outcomes, but Dan did not find this very helpful. He wanted something more concrete, more specific. He wanted to know what type of assistance should be given, and how to do it.

Dan did appear to take his role as evaluator seriously. He did believe that evaluation could make a difference in helping teachers to improve their performance. He accepted his responsibility to assist teachers, and to make decisions about staff specific to their employment status. The problem he faced was that he felt that this policy would not facilitate his accomplishment of the purposes, at least as he understood what the purposes were and what evaluation was all about.

Beliefs about the nature of evaluation and teaching. Fundamental to Dan's understanding and attitude toward the policy were his beliefs about evaluation and teaching. As he reflected in the investigator's presence about what he was doing, he was able to think out loud and to articulate the beliefs that he held. The interviews provided an opportunity for self-reflection and, at times, an opportunity for Dan to develop his beliefs about particular issues as he thought out loud.

In January when Dan was first interviewed he expressed the belief that evaluation of teachers consisted primarily of establishing criteria -- lists of teaching skills, observing classroom performance, and conferencing with the teacher to provide feedback regarding the observed lesson. Dan and many of his staff had been involved in the district teaching effectiveness program which stressed a formative approach to supervision. Teacher evaluation in Dan's school had previously been modeled on this program. The new policy on evaluation was conceptually quite distinct from the old format. Dan's beliefs about evaluation were initially strongly aligned with this process that he was now familiar and comfortable with. The normative culture in the school tended to provide a supportive atmosphere for his views, and made it that much more difficult to come to a better understanding and acceptance of the new values expressed in the district policy. The new policy stressed product or outcomes more than process, provided an opportunity for information to be collected in a variety of ways (not just classroom observation), and stipulated that common criteria for establishing expected outcomes be based on district, school, and personal goals (not lists of teaching behaviours). As Dan worked with the policy, his beliefs about evaluation changed.

Initially, he was concerned that universal standards did not exist across the district, and believed that central office staff could have provided uniformity and consistency in evaluations for all teachers. He believed that all teachers should be evaluated on the same criteria and with the same standards applied to all. This belief stemmed partly from the notion that there did exist common criteria that were applicable to all teachers and, from a more pragmatic perspective, that a common evaluation format would facilitate transfers of teachers and principals from school to school.

He viewed it as inherently unfair that a teacher in one school could receive a higher or lower rating for the same performance in another school. The impact of this would be for teachers to transfer to schools where they would receive higher ratings. His staff had expressed concerns to him about fairness. They wanted a system that would protect them from the capricious behaviour of some principals. A recent incident in one school in the district, in which the principal and a large percentage of the staff had come to major differences in their expectations and understanding of their roles, had sensitized some staff to their vulnerability under the authority of one person.

In a later interview Dan's ideas about standards had started to change and he expressed a different concern:

> We start talking about standards for teachers and say that we don't have [standards] where everybody's looking for improvement and performance, fair enough, but on the same breath, and on the other side of our face we announce standards for kids. . . . How far a jump is it before there's a standard for teachers, and what is the standard based on - - how successful your kids are on those tests? . . . There may be a hidden agenda. . . . It's an unspoken hidden agenda, they don't even talk about it. Do you have an evaluation policy -- yes. Are test scores part of that -- I don't know, that kind of reaction. Deep down in their heart of hearts they may feel that they sure are and when they start establishing norms and standards for kids how far is it going to be before they start establishing norms for teachers, and one more thing to worry about. (D#6:5)

Using student results as a measure of teacher performance was a very difficult and sensitive issue for Dan. In his own words it was an "unresolvable issue". Part of the issue evolved from the appropriateness of holding someone accountable for results that they may not have control over, or expressed in a different way, whether teachers would be held accountable for reasonable measures such as student gains relative to their abilities rather than percentile rankings of classes at a given grade level. And part of the issue was whether all the student results that were desired can actually be measured at the present time with existing instruments and

procedures. If not, teachers with a propensity for developing those skills and attitudes in students that are not easily measured may be at a distinct disadvantage. Dan saw many complexities to this issue:

> It's a little different when you're dealing with students and trying to measure the outcomes of learning because some of those may not be evident for years and some of those may not be testable. We test the paper and pencil kinds of things, the knowledge kinds of things in terms of mathematics and science or whatever but we don't test the social kinds of things which are equally as important -- is the kid well adjusted, is he achieving all you think he should achieve but going out and committing suicide, does that kind of thing bear any weight ? Well it certainly does and yet it's not measureable in the sense that we usually think of. (D#9:26)

Dan was also aware of another dimension to the accountability for student outcomes issue. He believed that teachers should be held responsible for student learning: "You didn't teach it if they didn't learn it". This places the focus on the child, not the subject matter or the process of teaching. Dan believed that teachers should look at individual student progress -- has this student made the expected gains over a specified period of time, has the class as a whole made significant gains, and not look solely at percentile ranks that compare similar and dissimilar classes at a given time without consideration of gains made. The fear that Dan had about the use of student results as a measure of teacher performance was that test information would be inappropriately used to compare teachers across a grade level without consideration of student differences and relative gains over a period of time. His fear stemmed more from a lack of trust in the system (the hidden agenda) than it did from the concept of using student results as a measure of teacher performance. It is interesting to note that the evaluation policy allowed Dan to use student results as an outcome measure in any manner he and his staff preferred, or not to use them at all.

There was another issue of standards that Dan raised as he reflected on evaluation. With the previous evaluation procedure that he had used teachers were ranked, from one to five, on various criteria such as discipline in the classroom. The ranking was largely subjective and based on cross-

teacher comparisons in the school, and on a notion that Dan had of the ideal teacher. The ranking of teachers posed problems for Dan:

> If I apply my standard to it, it tends to be a leveler, I end up saying well, if I'm ranking you, because that's essentially what a standard would be is a ranking, I would rank you as the best person on staff on discipline. So I rank you top, and you say, I've got a long way to go, I could do a lot of things in improving my ability to resolve conflicts and so, you're telling me I'm on top, I'm not top, and so have I served anything? I raised you up and you say well your standards are pretty low, and [to] somebody else I've said , well you need to improve relative to the rest of the group and you're applying an artificial standard to that and they say well I thought I was doing a pretty good job. So, deflated, [he] goes home and says that fellow is an ass, he doesn't know what he is doing. (D#8:25)

Dan's observation over the years that he has been principal is that beginning teachers often have an overrated sense of their performance, and high performing teachers are usually very critical of themselves, always striving to improve, and very aware of their performance vis-a-vis their students' needs. Uniform standards for all staff members, while it may help to rank and sort, does not necessarily facilitate improvement.

The essential purpose of evaluation for Dan was to improve performance. He believed that teachers needed feedback in order to improve: "I think that if teachers get positive feedback they tend to strive more for that positive feedback than they do if you're saying this is a negative type thing" (D#11:8). If a teacher was behaving in a way that was totally unacceptable, Dan would have no fear in informing that teacher about their behaviour. He would not wait until the end of the year when a report was being written to tell the teacher; once he was aware that something was occurring that he believed should not happen, he would indicate to the teacher what the problem was and work with the teacher to correct it. He accepted the responsibility for monitoring teachers' performance, but he believed that the use of positive feedback was much more productive than negative feedback. If an evaluator stressed the weaknesses of a teacher in the feedback given, it might be difficult for that

person to know where to start: "if there's hope for the person I think that your best method to improve instruction is to work on some positive kinds of things and make the steps small." (D#11:9)

Dan believed that feedback served to acknowledge to a teacher that their performance was, or was not, acceptable. Informal comments about specific activities or events signaled to teachers what he valued and thus helped to provide parameters for teachers. Paying attention to certain activities of a teacher and giving them positive feedback acts as a reward for that teacher which in turn might motivate the teacher to continue what he or she is doing. Conversely, a negative comment might serve to deter a teacher from continuing unacceptable behaviour. There is inherent in the feedback a judgement that what has happened is good or bad. Dan has found from his experience that many teachers do seek approval for what they do and would become "antsy" if he did not acknowledge their work. In this sense evaluation was occurring as an ongoing, informal interchange between Dan and his staff, concurrently with whatever formal process was in place. As I observed, an interchange was also taking place between staff that acted in much the same way -- reinforcing specific behaviours and deterring others. The normative culture that pervaded the staff was shaped by both Dan's expression of values and by the collective sharing of values among staff.

The discussion on feedback raised another issue for Dan related to his beliefs about evaluation. The old format that Dan had been using for evaluation consisted of lists of teaching behaviours. The new procedures called for expected outcomes to be set, but did not specify what they were other than being based on district, school, and personal goals. What Dan was now realizing, perhaps in light of the discussions we had had on feedback and informal processes, was that the expectations he had for teachers were very broad and "much larger than any evaluation form will ever be able to encompass." The nature of teaching was such that it was very complex and not easily reducible to checklists.

> We've got the one form that we fill in to start with that looks at a number of different descriptors of a good teacher. But that is just trying to codify an exceptionally complex individual. We

> have certain expectations with regard to teachers that never appear on any kind of evaluation. I guess there are a lot of things that a good teacher does that you take for granted and you make certain assumptions that all of these things are going along in place, otherwise the process would be too incredible to manage for one person. (D#9:4)

> When we go in as an administrator to sit in on a class what we tend to see is a lesson that the teacher has prepared and delivered to kids. We see a teaching lesson and that's such a small little point of teaching. . . .No matter how descriptive, a hundred pages wouldn't begin to describe what a teacher does and so what you have to look at is that feeling. . .it's intuitive, you walk by and you get a feeling for how things are going. (D#8:26)

Dan's understanding of the new policy left him in a rather difficult position. On the one side he viewed teaching as a complex process, not easily reduced for evaluation purposes. On the other, he was setting expected outcomes with individual teachers that only emphasized a few specific areas. The issue became difficult if a teacher did not appropriately meet the expected outcomes, but by other measures of their performance were doing very well. Dan commented: "Because teaching is such a long, lengthy, complex process that involves so many other things, is it worthwhile hanging someone out to dry for two items that they missed?" (D#9:10) If teachers were only to be evaluated on a few items, there may be a tendency to reduce risk-taking, or to select items that would not be difficult to reach. The lack of clarity on this issue in the policy left Dan to question the value of the written report. He would have prefered to conduct evaluations through a series of informal conferences in which the complex nature of teaching could be discussed with a teacher, but not reported on in full. Would it not have been enough to just report that evaluations (primarily the giving of feedback) had been conducted without describing all the details?

Perhaps the following comment by Dan best sums up his beliefs about teaching and evaluation:

> We don't know anything about evaluation quite honestly. I don't think we know a heck of a lot about what it is, what the process of teaching is because we don't know what learning is, what is it that everybody's got a different learning style. (D#10:23)

This comment demonstrated a change in attitude on Dan's part over the six months of the study. The formal practice of evaluation in the school had revolved around the teacher effectiveness program: evaluation criteria were chosen from lists of effective teaching behaviours; classroom observations were the primary means of data collection; post-observation conferences stressed the giving of positive feedback; and only a few teachers were formally evaluated each year.

Dan began to look at evaluation differently as a result of his experience with the new policy. He was still very committed to the value of positive feedback as a means of changing teacher behaviours, but he was less sure about the value of classroom observations as the only means of collecting data, and more aware of a wider array of teacher responsibilities. He would have preferred a more uniform, standardized procedure of evaluation in the district but more to satisfy pragmatic ends than from a belief that there was only one right way to do things. He also became more aware that teachers did desire frequent feedback about their work. He believed that informal evaluations could be used to provide teachers with the feedback that they desired. The writing of annual reports, however, was not particularly worthwhile or a good use of his time.

Dan appeared to alter his view about standards as they apply to evaluation criteria. He reflected that the ranking of staff on specific items did not facilitate improvement as his standards were either higher or lower than individual staff members judgements of their own performance, and this discrepancy created problems. Staff were either annoyed that he would rank them as low as he did and thus discouraged, or surprised that he would rank them as high as he did and thus skeptical of his judgement. He also began to be more receptive to the notion of staff being accountable for student learning, not just the process of teaching. There was still a fear that student results could be abused as measures of teacher performance, but

there was a slight shift from being totally process oriented to being more outcomes oriented. As Dan's beliefs about evaluation changed, so did his ideas about the school staff evaluation policy.

The evolutionary policy process. Dan envisaged the school policy to be an evolving one with changes being made as it was deemed necessary. "I guess the first time through you come up with a revolutionary new package and from then on it's evolutionary. . . .I mean if we have an end product it seems to imply that we have all the answers and I don't think we do."(D#11:2) The revolutionary new package was the district policy. Dan's school policy was originally more of an adaptation of his old policy to conform with specific requirements of the district policy. The evolution that was taking place was a gradual shift in some of Dan's beliefs about evaluation, and subsequently a shift in the actual practice of evaluation.

Dan maintained a belief that there should be a common, standard set of procedures in use in all schools in the district. He believed that over time, as school procedures were revised, principals and staff shared their ideas, and staff moved from school to school, the practice of evaluation in the district would become more and more similar in each school.

When the district policy was first introduced, Dan had many concerns about it. His beliefs and practice of teacher evaluation were quite discordant with the policy. But Dan was pragmatic and able to convert what he had been doing into what he thought he should now be doing according to the procedures of the policy. The policy was quite clear about several routines. Dan complied with these routines, at least on the surface where cursory inspection took place.

All staff were now evaluated annually. Previously Dan had been able to work with a few teachers each year on an intensive basis. To meet the requirement of annual evaluations Dan met with each staff member early in the school year to discuss what the expected outcomes would be, and met again with them later in the year to review progress and to share his report. For many of the teachers this experience was pro forma, to satisfy the requirement. Dan continued to work more intensely with a few teachers as he had done in the past.

The new policy stated that expected outcomes would be identified by the immediate supervisor in consultation with the staff member. It appeared to me that the term expected outcome was used to be consistent with a 'results orientation' that pervaded the district management philosophy. Dan allowed each staff member to develop their own expected outcomes that first year. He was not pleased with all the choices that his staff had made but he felt that for the first year it was better to provide them with some latitude. Some staff had suggested items that were related directly to teaching behaviours and classroom management, using the 'old' form as a guideline. Other staff had selected what Dan referred to as content oriented objectives -- curriculum implementation projects, objectives that Dan considered "safe territory" for a teacher. Although the use of student performance measures (gains) or other 'ends' oriented goals as expected outcomes remained controversial Dan appeared to be moving more in that direction. His comment "you didn't teach it if they didn't learn it" and his student orientation (as opposed to a subject orientation) were indicators of a slight shift from process to product objectives. It was still difficult for Dan to completely accept a results orientation, however.

As Dan reflected on the evaluation process for the coming school year he expressed a desire to be more involved in the development of the expected outcomes for at least some teachers. He was concerned about those staff who he perceived to have weaknesses in specific teaching skills but who had not targeted these areas for improvement. The old method of teacher evaluation that Dan had employed and the teacher effectiveness program that both Dan and many of his staff had been involved in revolved around remedying deficits. Prescriptive checklists and models of teaching behaviours had provided an ideal for Dan to measure his staff against. If a teacher did not demonstrate a self-critical perspective on their teaching skills, Dan felt that the teacher may need a little guidance to identify their own weaknesses.

Dan had in the past always used classroom observations as the sole data collection method for teacher evaluation. The new procedures brought other methods into play such as direct questioning of a teacher, observation of the teacher outside the classroom, and collecting data on projects

completed, activities engaged in, and results achieved. Dan began to view these alternate data collection procedures as useful and valid. It was difficult for Dan to shed his attachment to classroom observation of teacher behaviour as the preferred mode, in part because of the past emphasis in the district on the teacher effectiveness program, and partly because of his suspicions of the real expectations of district office officials. Classroom observations had provided a "safe, comfortable haven" for him. What may have helped to change his view to some degree were the comments he received from teachers as he was concluding their evaluations. "The feeling has been that that [classroom observation] doesn't improve classroom performance or change it, it just gives you a picture of my best teaching ability." The teachers were not asking for more classroom visits. As Dan reflected on the messages that teachers were sending him, his view of the efficacy of classroom observation was diminishing. What did become apparent to Dan was that feedback to the teacher, using information gathered from a variety of sources, was the critical dimension in the process.

While Dan's interpretation of the district policy, set in the context of his beliefs about evaluation and teaching, is critical to the development of a better understanding of how he was implementing this policy, what emerged from the discussions was the rather obvious notion that this one policy was only a small part of Dan's life as a principal in this school and in the district.

The role of the principal is very complex, as is the environment the principals work in. When you add to this individuals who are themselves multi-dimensional, the matrix is confounding. At best, when we examine a phenomenon we are looking at a slice of many possible slices, our focus cannot be all comprehensive.

Ben's interpretation: making meaning of the policy

As Ben discussed the policy and the issues related to it, he gave the impression that he was very sure about his understanding of the policy, and about teaching and teacher evaluation in general. The issues underlying the policy were pretty straight-forward to him; the concerns that he did raise about the policy he was able to come to terms with, or at least he gave that impression. At one point, during an interview in March, Ben expressed some doubt about what he was doing: "I'm just in a place where I'm sort of trying to figure things out, I don't really know what I want." Apart from that one comment, Ben spoke about his work with the policy in a very assured tone.

The meaning of the policy. Ben did not find the policy difficult to understand or very complex. He did describe it as difficult to achieve : "It expected a hell of a lot. . . .I still feel the notion of evaluating every employee each year, and do justice to that, is an immense task." What Ben did like about the policy was that it was general enough to fit his particular philosophy, and vague enough to allow him the freedom of interpretation.

One of the key terms of the policy, 'expected outcomes', was a source of concern for Ben:

> In terms of my policy or procedures I didn't use the term expected outcomes and that was very deliberate because I perceived the notion of expected outcomes as suggesting that the principal would be providing those expected outcomes for the teacher, as opposed to my use of the term objectives which is a matter of mutual consent and agreement. . . . I don't see too much of a problem with outcome at all, . . . it's the word expected and maybe it's just me. . . . I want to be challenging to [the teacher] but I also want to be success oriented. . . .It mightn't work, but you are going to try. Now, when you add expectations to that whole thing, I don't think it gives as much comfort back to the notion of risk-taking. I can take risks and I can try things, as far as my evaluator is concerned, he recognizes that I am doing this and I mightn't succeed but I'll try. . . . The spirit of trying and trial and error, the spirit of accepting mistakes I think is important. (B#2:5-7)

Ben stated that he preferred to work with staff in a collegial manner whenever possible. He interpreted the notion of 'expected outcomes' as

implying a top-down approach, not one of mutual sharing in which the principal and teacher negotiated a performance agreement. He believed that the intent of the policy was closer to the tone of 'performance agreement' which implied a collegial status and a negotiated objective than it was to a tone of hierarchical authority and imposed expectations. Ben discussed this with the associate superintendent and believed that this was an acceptable interpretation of the policy.

Although Ben liked the idea of performance agreements, he saw a need for two different types of teacher evaluation: one for temporary or interim contract and one for permanent contract teachers. He considered the teachers on staff with permanent contracts to be average to excellent teachers. With these teachers Ben believed a formative, collegially based model was most effective to enhance performance. For temporary and interim contract teachers he preferred to be more comprehensive and used a list of specific dimensions of teaching to guide his thinking when writing evaluation comments. Prior to the policy a form had been used for the evaluation of interim and temporary contract teachers. Ben asked his associate if he should still use the form: "Can I give out one of these forms, and he said, we don't use these forms anymore, write a letter, so I just did a sort of comprehensive evaluation in a letter." Although the policy did not differentiate between types of teachers (by contract) Ben's practice was to treat temporary and interim contract teachers differently than permanent contract ones. The form was transposed into a narrative style with the end result the same.

One area of the policy that Ben did admit to be a source of confusion was the meaning of 'expected outcome'. He defined an outcome in terms of objectives being met: an objective may be for a teacher to develop 'closure skills', the outcome would be that the teacher has closure skills in place. What Ben was not comfortable with was an interpretation of an outcome in terms of measures of student success, and the concomitant implication for teacher evaluation. As he thought about this implication he reflected on various related activities occuring in the District:

> Here is an outcome, a teacher has closure skills in place, she has a particular skill in place, a particular process in place,. . .but

if we are talking about how well the students are doing, we're really going to outcomes. . . .Our schools mandate is to bring about learning in children, and then we have all the attendant problems that come from measuring the teacher's competence or teacher's teaching based on what we can call the facile thing - - in the past was paper and pencil tests.

So now we are coming to something here, because our system has gone visionary. . . . We then go to work in the curricular division in our central office and they develop learning outcomes for each subject area and in each grade level, . . . then they also develop generic outcomes which have to do with those objectives which are, what shall I say, less tangible, . . .they are objectives that have to do with your affective domain, attitude toward self, attitude toward others, towards school.

. . .So our system seems to be riding a lot of horses here, because I've heard our Superintendent say, because he is looking for outcomes, results, a result orientation, . . . how do we measure student learning is the question therefore, so that we can say something about the teaching, so our system has tried to figure this out, quite frankly.

. . .And in the meantime we have whole language people in our schools who talk about child development, individualizing programs, that kind of thing, and not worrying too much about getting kids up to any particular standing. At the same time last year the School Board said we are going to aim towards standards, mathematics and language arts last year. . . . We also see these tests coming out which we have options to use this year but they are said to be compulsory. . . .They are going to be able to get school profiles on these, how we do in one school to another.

. . .Is this going to put an emphasis right back on where we were talking about child development, developmental things with respect to children. We're right back where we were, with respect to, well now kids, this is going to be frustrating for you, we're going to get you up to the standard.

. . .The teachers certainly in this school sense the dilemma, this is a dilemma. I bring this up in the simple context of outcomes, results orientation which our Superintendent espouses and tells us about, and our associates follow along.

. . .There's another dimension in our system, . . . that you somehow can get indicators of student achievement in the attitudinal areas, and you will be able to say I can measure myself as a teacher and my administrator can measure me as a teacher because of how the kids do with respect to all of these objectives. I think that's what they are trying to say to us, but in the

> meantime there is circumspection out in the field about how can we do that, . . . record keeping that you can't possibly cope with, how can they do that when you consider the subjectivity involved in terms of expressing judgments about what kids attitudes are? . . .Uniformity with respect to standards, standards suggest something uniform, how can you do this? How is this possible? (B#4:12-14)

Ben was not comfortable with the notion of 'expected outcomes' being interpreted in terms of student performance. He commented at a later date: "If, for example, a policy was struck which said your success is measured by results of students on some bigger test or something like that I would reject that very strongly." As there was no official clarification of what the term 'expected outcome' was really intended to imply, Ben continued to define it in a manner that suited him best, but with gnawing suspicions about the plans of Central Office staff.

He believed there were several inherent inconsistancies within the system that he had trouble reconciling to himself and his staff -- between a results orientation and a developmental orientation which were both espoused by central office staff, and between the District principle of avoiding uniform rules, policies and regulations and the desire to establish uniform standards for students. He sensed that his staff were also perplexed, but until the District became more overt about their intentions, Ben found it was easier not to make an issue of it.

Ben interpreted the policy overall as being vague enough to allow him to define the terms and decide on procedures that were consistent with his own beliefs. From his perceptions of things, it allowed him to conduct evaluations so that he could continue collegial relationships with staff. It allowed him to define expected outcomes as objectives and to maintain a focus on teaching behaviours. The policy provided staff with enough input to the procedures that it was not considered entirely 'top-down.'

Concerns and Attitudes. One of Ben's main concerns about the policy was the annual evaluation of all staff. As Ben's practice of classroom observation and conferencing was time consuming, he was not able to work with all staff each year in this manner. His response to this problem was at first to express the desire to spend more time with each staff member, but

acknowledge that some staff would only receive from him time to review the objectives that had been set. Later in the spring he conceded that for the following school year he would only schedule a portion of the staff for intensive classroom observations and conferencing, and that the others would work more independently on their objectives. Each teacher would be evaluated, but not in the same way. Ben was concerned about the stress it put on his time, and that some teachers, who wanted him to spend time in their classrooms, might not be afforded this opportunity, but there did not appear to be any other solution.

Ben thought highly of the teacher effectiveness program, and of the skills and expertise that he had attained with respect to conferencing and observing teachers. He found that he spent a great deal of time, both in classroom observations and conferencing, with each teacher that became involved in this process. His concern about annual evaluations for each teacher appeared to arise from his sense that an evaluation meant observing teachers in the classroom and conferencing with them, and that he would therefore not be able to conduct 'proper' evaluations for each staff member each year.

One of the policy procedures that Ben accepted willingly was the mandate for the immediate supervisor to conduct evaluations. Notwithstanding his concern about time, Ben believed it was better that he worked with each teacher than to continue the 'buddy system' that was part of the teacher effectiveness program. Ben commented: "The present evaluation system is better where I'm providing feedback, a lot of it positive. I think I would be more able to say something that was in an area that needed to be improved or that kind of thing."

The policy also called for the immediate supervisor to collect data which would reveal the extent to which an expected outcome has been achieved. From the data, judgements would be made. Ben felt quite able to collect the data and make these judgements; his experience with the teacher effectiveness program had given him confidence in his ability to observe and record teaching behaviours in the classroom, and to pass judgement on a teacher's performance.

Ben appeared to be very confident in his ability to conduct evaluations. As he was able to interpret the policy in such a way that he needed to only

slightly modify his existing practice, he had few concerns about the policy per se other than the issue of annual evaluations as previously discussed. Ben's unease with the notion of expected outcomes stemmed more from his perception of the direction that the system was headed in than from what the policy actually said.

A sense of efficacy. For Ben, teacher evaluation was a very worthwhile and rewarding activity. He commented: "I'm fairly satisfied with what I'm doing." From what he heard and observed, he perceived his practice of teacher evaluation to be making a difference. Ben was confident in his own ability to make a difference with teachers through conferencing and sharing with them ideas for improvement. He knew he had to be credible with teachers to elicit positive responses from them about the process.

Towards the end of the school year he met with each staff member and asked them for feedback about the evaluation process that he was practicing. He reported that the majority of teachers had suggested to him that they had benefited from the process. From his classroom observations he concluded that for many teachers there had been a level of skill development over the year. Although he also received a few suggestions from staff regarding improvements that could be made to the process, such as narrowing the objectives down in some cases, being more comprehensive in others, and scheduling fewer observations but doing more 'drop-ins', Ben was fairly enthusiastic about carrying on with a similar process the coming year. One conclusion he came to though was that he would need to be more directive with some teachers in the choice of objectives that was made at the beginning of the year. From his observations of some teachers he determined that there were specific areas in their teaching that needed improving, and that these teachers were not always able to identify their own weaknesses. Although this contradicted the original notion of a collegial process of negotiated objectives that Ben espoused, he seemed unaware of this predicament. Several staff members expressed the opinion that while Ben tried to be very democratic, he did not always succeed. Within Ben there was an unresolved contradiction between what he thought he believed and what his actions sometimes expressed.

The nature of teaching and evaluation. Intertwined with Ben's approach to the policy were his beliefs about teaching and evaluation. An effective teacher, according to Ben, is "one who abides by the principles of organization and principles of learning." He believed that there were commonalities to the teaching process, but that teachers brought their individual styles to the classroom just as students have different learning styles. The teacher effectiveness program gave Ben an organizing framework to view teaching, and from this framework he looked for skills that teachers should be exhibiting in the classroom. He made a distinction between teaching performance and professional performance -- professional performance included those responsibilities that reside outside the classroom, such as communicating to and relating with parents. Ben saw teacher evaluation as primarily concerned with teaching performance in the classroom and as exemplified by skills such as closure, or checking for understanding.

For Ben, the main purpose for evaluation was to enhance teaching performance. He saw himself as a facilitator, giving feedback to teachers, guiding them with suggestions and ideas, and negotiating with them over the objectives that they would work on for the year. He believed it was important to be positive with teachers:

> I mean I'm a very positive person, I don't believe in being overly negative. I don't think that pays off. . . .One of the interesting things that occurred to me - - I'm not sure that I'm always absolutely honest with the evaluatee and that what I do sometimes is to see positive things in what they are doing and I will acknowledge and reinforce those and say these things I like. That's almost a sin of omission, isn't it. (B#7:12)

Ben found that teachers who were self-confident were usually much more willing to be open and accept comments and to be reflective themselves. As not all teachers have high degrees of self-confidence, it was necessary to be positive with them and to establish a trusting relationship. Over the last several years Ben had been positive with staff for the most part and had built up a level of trust. Moving from the teacher effectiveness program into evaluation appeared to influence Ben to be more directive with teachers, both in terms of what objectives they worked on and

suggestions made for improvement. Ben's position on this matter was interesting:

> You also have to be persuasive and you succeed in that to varying degrees. I certainly can insist on certain objectives being worked on but the problem with that is to somehow establish ownership of those. . . . You have to pre-plan. You have to determine in your own mind, prior to ever sitting down, there are some things that that teacher needs to work on. And so even at this point, in a sense, I have done some preliminary work for next year in that I'm winding up the last observation conference. I've talked a little bit about next year in the sense that I've indicated to two people I think that I would like to work a little more closely with this and that. So that's going to be ingested at this time. I'm sure they are asking what does he mean by that kind of thing but at least it's sort of breaking ground. That pre-planning is based upon knowledge and the knowledge that I have is more intimate knowledge now that I've gone through the process. (B#6:5)

In several different ways the teacher effectiveness program was being changed. Ben spoke of one teacher that he wanted to encourage to have more parental involvement, and he wondered how he might suggest this to her as an objective for her annual evaluation cycle next September. Ben wanted to have more influence on the choice of objectives that teachers finally selected to the point that he was prepared to make suggestions to some of them. He also found that he was being more judgemental in his comments to teachers:

> The style which I use has been more or less consistent with the way it had been in the past. The difference would be that, I suppose, there is more an element of judgement in the conferencing that I do with respect to the specific objective that the teacher is working on, or sometimes it's an extraneous thing. I can remember once I asked a teacher whether he had used sarcasm in the lesson, and it's more or less a dirty word, and he acknowledged that he had, so that was somewhat extraneous as to what we were doing, what we were observing in the lesson. (B#3:2)

The teacher effectiveness program appeared to be slowly transformed from a collegially based professional development activity to a hierarchical, administrative evaluation process. Ben was using the evaluation policy to ensure that this view of teaching as a technically framed set of skills was adhered to by staff members. Ben believed that he was learning more about the staff and about the process of teaching as he spent more time in classrooms and talking with teachers. This 'intimate knowledge' of teachers also influenced Ben to be more prescriptive about the objectives that some staff were to work on the following year. He found the year end interviews with the staff to be very valuable, so much so that for the next year he was planning to bring in a substitute to cover for the teachers which would give him more time to meet with each teacher.

Ben's interpretation of the evaluation policy allowed him to maintain the practice of classroom observation and conferencing that he had previously been engaged in. The switch from a peer activity to a supervisory one Ben accepted quite willingly as he liked to be 'on top of things'. His involvement in classrooms helped him to know what was going on and to play a greater instructional leadership role in the school. The positive feedback that he received from staff encouraged him to continue with this practice.

Although many teachers did not perceive teacher evaluation to be a priority activity for Ben, it was Ben's belief that he did spend a significant amount of time working with teachers, observing, conferencing and report writing and that it was a priority for him. His involvement with the preparation for a major student field trip to Vancouver was much more obvious to staff than his confidential forays into the classroom.

Ben did not receive a lot of feedback from his associate superintendent about his interpretation of the policy. What he did get, such as acknowledgement that his notion of performance agreements and objectives was consistent with the intent of the policy, reinforced his views. The lack of dialogue about what was meant by the term 'expected outcomes' did leave Ben in a state of confusion, but given what he believed was a plausible interpretation of central office thinking, he preferred not to have the issue raised at this time.

Following the adoption of the policy by the Board there had been virtually no inservice sessions or interventions by the associate superintendent that might clarify the policy. In many respects Ben was quite willing to accept this as he preferred to be able to interpret the policy in a manner consistent with his views of evaluation and teaching. He believed the policy was sufficiently vague to allow him significant freedom of interpretation, which was what he wanted.

Ben's understanding of the policy was 'filtered' by his previous experiences with teacher evaluation and the teacher effectiveness programme. The only critical issues that the policy raised for Ben were annual evaluation, and how to interpret 'expected outcomes', and these issues he learned to deal with by either slightly modifying his practice (only intensively evaluate a portion of the staff each year) or by interpreting the terms in ways that best suited him.

Dan and Ben worked with the policy in different ways -- their interpretations of various elements of the policy were in some instances similar and in others, different, as was their understanding of the context they worked in. Their reactions to the policy, and the changes in their thinking over time, were reflective of their different personalities and characteristics. In Chapter Seven some of these characteristics will be discussed to help illuminate how the implementation process was taking place.

Chapter 7

Dan and Ben:
A Personal Perspective

Introduction. Dan and Ben brought to their roles as principals their own characteristics (e.g., ways of thinking, beliefs, values, attitudes, perspectives, perceptions, skills, knowledge) which in turn were shaped by their experiences in their roles. As they implemented the teacher evaluation policy their idiosyncrasies and predispositions coloured their actions and even their responses to the consequences of these actions. During the course of this study specific beliefs, values, perspectives, that is, characteristics of Dan and Ben became evident. These characteristics that were observed, and inferred from observation, provide another dimension to understanding how the teacher evaluation policy was being implemented by Dan and Ben.

An analysis of the data revealed many different dimensions or characteristics of each of the principals. Some of the characteristics pertain to the principals' relationships with staff members (eg., dealing with conflict, sensitivity to others, perceptions of role of principal, leadership style), others with the manner in which they perform their jobs (eg., motivation, locus of control, sense of responsibility, empowerment), and others that pertain more to their needs and their conceptualizations about things (eg., their need for structure and support, their self-concept, how they relate to change, the extent to which they are reflective and analytical). The purpose of this chapter is to describe these characteristics in relation to the implementation process.

Dan

As Dan described his beliefs about teacher evaluation, his concerns about the district policy, and his understanding of the context he worked in, he revealed many things about himself. To appreciate how Dan was implementing this policy, it became evident that it was necessary to understand Dan as a person. The questions asked during the interview sessions were not directly posed to explore this area, but Dan's responses to

questions were framed by his perspective, or his view of the world and how he believed he operated within this world view.

Dealing with conflict - - being sensitive. Dan found evaluation personally stressful. According to Dan, " evaluation, no matter how you slice it, is a stressful situation. . . because it's an unpredictable thing, you don't know if you're doing a good job unless someone tells you." (D#2:7) Evaluations created a tension: on the one hand Dan wanted to be positive with staff, to give them positive feedback but on the other hand he knew that there were times when you had to confront a teacher about some aspect of their teaching that was not acceptable.

> I don't think there's anybody in the world that likes to give bad news. . . . When I have to talk to a teacher about some problem that that teacher is experiencing I don't do so with a great deal of glee. I might spend a few sleepless nights thinking of what I'm going to say. . . . Nonetheless I do talk to the teacher about it because I think you have to do so. (D#10:15)

Dan spoke of the emotional turmoil that he felt when he had to deal with teachers who were having problems: "these are not easy things on the individual, but they are certainly not easy on me either. They churn my stomach just as much as anything else." (D#5:15) It was important to Dan to be fair and honest with teachers, which meant that he occasionally had to give negative feedback.

> The concern is of course when you reach a situation when you have a staff member or members that are not performing satisfactorily, and depending on how that individual relates to other people on staff, it tends to become a very upsetting kind of thing if you have to do something about that individual. . . . You are attempting to do something for them as much as possible and everytime you turn around you feel like you're going to watch your back because there might be a knife in it, and the person may or may not appreciate what it is you're trying to do. And when you finally said well there has to be a change you know, and I'm not successful, I've tried this, you haven't listened to me and goodbye, you need to move to someplace else, that type of decision is not one that is easy for staff to understand

> or comprehend because they don't have all the information. (D#5: 13-14)

Dan expressed a sensitivity to the opinions of the school staff: "if the teachers in this school don't support me and feel that I'm doing a rotten job they can raise enough stink that I'll be removed." (D#4:25) A school principal often has information about a staff member that is privileged, that is, he is able to observe a teacher's behaviour in a classroom that other staff may not be able to see, but he generally does not share this information with anyone other than the teacher observed, or his own supervisor. Evaluations are considered confidential matters. On the other hand teachers often do talk about the principal amongst themselves, and if a teacher believes that he or she is not being treated fairly by the principal, the talk may be very critical. The principal usually does not have an opportunity to defend himself. Dan had been in a position like this the year before with a teacher that he considered to be having great difficulties in the classroom. This teacher had developed friendships with other staff members, who, Dan believed, were not able to share the same opinion of this persons teaching abilities as he had. The need to keep the staff satisfied with his ability as principal while exercising his responsibility to supervise staff and maintain standards of performance was at times difficult to achieve. This particular teacher was removed from the school at the end of the year, and Dan had the impression that at least some staff did not feel that this should have happened. This experience with the staff appeared to sensitize Dan in terms of the degree to which he was willing to confront staff on matters of evaluation.

One of the issues related to this teacher evaluation policy was whether the expected results were process or product oriented, or both. This concept appeared unclear to Dan. Dan's experience with a teacher effectiveness program was such that he liked to emphasize teaching behaviours in the classroom as the expected results that teachers should achieve. Several teachers had selected the implementation of specific curriculum outcomes as the areas in which they wished to achieve results. Dan did not consider this choice to be the most desirable, but he was not prepared to negotiate a different area with the teachers.

> I had a feeling that people were not 100% comfortable with what was going on and you're always safe to look at curriculum and use that for evaluation. . . . Generally the people that did that had at some point in time been burned with evaluation and wanted some safe territory, and so I was prepared to give them that safe territory this year. (D#5:4)

Dan had been involved in a district inservice program which trained teachers and administrators in the use of 'effective teaching' behaviours and conferencing techniques. The program emphasized the use of positive feedback in conferences to facilitate change. Dan subscribed to this practice as the most beneficial technique to bring about improvement in most teachers:

> If there is hope for the person I think that your best method to improve instruction is to work on some positive kinds of things and make the steps small. . . . I think if you're dissatisfied and you're getting negative feedback you're not likely to be happy in your job and you're not likely to be able to improve a whole lot. I don't think the negative helps you improve, I don't think it helps you improve as much as the positive. (D#11:8-9)

Unfortunately, being positive does not work for all teachers or in all circumstances, Dan observed.

> Teacher effectiveness is one process that is very valuable in the sense of improving good teaching. . . . Teacher effectiveness was essentially sold to principals as a method of improving instruction, and it does, but they categorize it as a blanket improvement of instruction for all and sundry and that's not the case. I don't think that you can use that method to improve somebody that is not doing very well. I really have some concerns about pussy footing around when somebody is not doing the job. . . . I think that at some time you have to hit that person square in the middle of the head with a two-by-four and say, hey, enough is enough, there are some positive things but there's a lot more negatives there too. (D#9:6-7)

Dan expressed reservations about dealing with a teacher when he believed that he should be providing the teacher with negative comments about their teaching, particulary if the comments were going to be written in

a report. He indicated that there should be support from central office in terms of having individuals who would offer second opinions, particularly from someone who had a perspective of the quality of teaching in other schools. But such an arrangement would also pose difficulties for him:

> If I say everybody's good I never have to have anybody in to confirm my opinion. I don't want to have someone looking over my shoulder and I'm supposedly in charge of this school. I know if I have a bad review of you, you're going to want a couple of other people in, well, oh hell, I'll give you a good review, and then we are right back to, we might as well not do it. (D#8:21)

Dealing with conflict is not easy, and while Dan believed that he had a responsibility to ensure that students received appropriate instruction, he did not like to confront the teachers in his school with something negative if he could avoid it. Evaluation was stressful for Dan: "there's no question that it has to do with how you treat and react to people." (D#10:26)

Dan conveyed a sensitivity towards teachers on numerous occasions: "I think that my particular goal would be a concern and an empathy with the teacher" (D#5:13) He expressed a belief that many teachers were already stressed and could not cope with dramatic changes or expectations for improvement. He wondered whether we should be stressing that teachers constantly improve or if it was more important to stress that teachers should be trying to improve, as long as they met an acceptable standard to begin with. On another occasion Dan spoke of how he would approach a transfer to a new school where a lot of improvements were required:

> You don't do it [make changes] by going in and saying, my god, this is just a total wreck, I need a whole new staff. . . One of the things that principals are very cognizant of - - this report that comes out on an annual basis.
> (Because the teachers are given an opportunity to say whether they like you or not?)
> Yes, that's exactly right. . . . I guess, unfortunately, central administration is also looking at that and saying this is a popularity contest. (D#10:8)

For a variety of reasons Dan approached the task of teacher evaluation in a manner that would reduce the amount of conflict between himself and teachers. He believed that it was important to establish good rapport with staff, and to work with them as much as possible: "if you are dictating what it is the person is going to do, and how much they are going to get better, I think you've got an uphill road." (D#5:11)

Dan's sensitivity to staff provided him with insights about his relationships with individual staff members and his consequent ability to promote improvement. An interesting dilemma arose for Dan when he asked teachers to rate themselves on an evaluation form:

> As principal I would level things out, which caused a problem. I would pull someone's self-esteem down if I rated them lower than they saw themselves; gives them a defeatist attitude. With the other teacher it would show that my standards are out to lunch if I rated them higher than they saw themselves. (D#1:3)

For the most part Dan appeared very positive about his present staff: "I know the teachers pretty well, very well and I have a lot of faith in their good judgment, in the way that they do things." (D#11:13)

Perceptions of role as principal. Dan's perception of his role as principal provides insights into how he went about implementing the teacher evaluation policy: his notions of his responsibilities, his priorities, his style. Dan saw himself in a "support role to the teacher in a sense of getting supplies and services so that the thing runs smoothly" (D#9:25). He saw his role as having changed over the last seven or eight years from one of teacher supervisor, whereby he spent considerable time in the classroom observing teachers, to one of manager, shuffling paper and responding to requests from 'downtown'. As the district decentralized with school-based management, Dan's perception of this was that principals increasingly became responsible for those things that somebody in central office did not want to do, such as looking after utilities or booking the schools for community activities. As the principal became responsible for more functions it became more important to prioritize one's time.

> If you are going to do more things in evaluation, you have to do less some place else and nobody has come out and [said what

> that might be]. Localized decision-making: you make decisions in your school but what do you need less of, and there's not a hell of a lot that you need less of, probably lots that you need more of, and evaluation is one of those and there isn't enough hours in the day to do all those things in.
> When you are trying to determine what it is you should be doing and how much time you should be giving it. . .setting priorities. . . however, what do you operate, a school or an evaluation system. If you operate a school one of the things that started a number of years ago was open boundaries. We are in a declining population, and we are looking for students and if we don't appeal to the general public in terms of them wanting to transport their kids across boundaries to come here. . . so what we are in is public relations. . . .And so you become a salesperson, . . .sell the program and deliver the goods. . . .It's a job and it takes a lot of time to do that and that's not to say that it's time poorly spent. It's time that if you didn't have that I guess you would have less work all around because you would have less teachers and less to evaluate and away you go, but that has had an impact on, in this particular location, every school's going to be different. (D#6:9-10)

Dan went on to say that he would prefer to spend his time dealing with kids, doing something educational, rather than dealing with parents as a salesperson. He also found that he didn't spend as much time evaluating teachers, at least as much time in the classroom, as he had in the past. The teacher evaluation policy was not one of his high priorities in terms of his time:

> Taken at large, it [the policy] is one of a great many things that we have to do in this school and how much time or effort you put into it is dependent on how much time and effort you are going to put to all of the other things as well. So taken in context, I don't think it has got an over proportionate amount of time. I don't spend a whole lot of time in doing this. You have to glean a lot of your information in other ways outside of directly working with a teacher. . . . Coaching people is not very high in terms of the proportion of time. (D#6:12)

One of the issues that Dan was dealing with in terms of his role and his time was that of report writing. He became very concerned that he would be spending too much time writing reports on the many expectations and

budget objectives that each teacher was now being held responsible for. He saw himself writing pages and pages describing a teacher's performance on each objective and he did not see this as time well spent. As he explained, it was a fear of overwork on tasks that were not considered valuable.

> It seems to me that we are interested in a piece of paper to codify what it is we've done. Maybe what we should be doing is to forget the paper, because the paper isn't too important to anybody anyway unless you want to read it later. . .But in terms of impinging on a principal's time is it a good expense of time, or would time be better spent discussing things with the teacher instead of an hour writing it. (D#9:10)

Dan viewed teaching as a very complex activity, and thus found his role in teacher evaluation as problematic. The policy required that he work with each teacher to describe specific outcomes that the teacher would then be held accountable for. He feared that this might produce undesirable consequences such as teachers specifying easy to meet outcomes and ignoring the more significant but harder to achieve outcomes. Because he wanted the teachers that he supervised to not feel threatened by this new form of evaluation, he did not push them to specify more difficult or significant outcomes.

Dan also found that specifying only a few outcomes, whatever they might be, made it more difficult to truly assess the performance of a teacher: "Teaching is such a long, lengthy complex process that involves so many other things, is it worthwhile hanging someone out to dry for two items that they missed?" (D#9:10) If those items were not significant in the first place then it does prove to be problematic. On the other hand, because teaching is so complex, Dan commented, that he assumed that he could take for granted that many aspects of teaching were going along alright. Otherwise "the process would be too incredible to manage for one person". Dan believed that there are certain expectations that are held for teachers that never appear on any kind of evaluation. Yet these expectations do form the principal's perception of how well a teacher is doing. Dan spoke of evaluation that deals with an understanding of the whole teacher and evaluation that deals with discrete elements of teaching:

> You use two different formats or methods of proceeding when you are dealing with teachers that are likely to be experiencing difficulty and those that are not. That's when you start to get into feelings alright. Let's just say that Sept. 1 I've got a teacher, [she] sits down and identifies for me two areas of process, some other ones are identified through budget, this teacher is to be working on through the course of this year, through a variety of methods, be it casual observation of the teacher in the school in dealing with kids, informal walking into the room to talk to them on some other form which I do quite a bit of, some other kind of thing, you make observations of what's going on and how the kids are reacting, what you see in the school and the number of kids that come to you from that teacher, with complaints or whatever, and the number of parents, all of those things come together to build a picture of that teacher. When the picture starts to become a negative picture you then start going in and it doesn't take very long for that to start happening. If after another few weeks it's persistent and you've talked to the teacher, then you start looking at all of the other things and you go back and say, you know we said you were going to work on 'a' and 'b' but I really feel a need to do a more in depth analysis of you and know exactly what's going on and that's when you go back to this whole form, then you need to go through it on a checklist basis with the teacher. (D#8:23)

There was a strong element of intuition in teacher evaluation for Dan: "you walk by and you get a feel for how things are going. You either like it or you don't like it." (D#8:26) This informal evaluation process was more meaningful to Dan than was the formal process. He found that what he learned about a teacher from informal observations - - in the classroom, on the playground, in the hallways, interacting with students in a variety of situations - - was more informative than what he could learn from formal classroom observations. Dan believed that teachers, perhaps inadvertantly, were able to 'con' him by doing an awful lot of extra preparation for lessons that he formally observed. What he saw was a teacher performing at their maximum potential, but not at their everyday level. When Dan asked the staff about classroom visitations the response he was given was that it did not improve classroom performance or change it. The staff were actually more comfortable with informal observations.

Dan saw his role with teachers as one of facilitating improvement but also as one of motivating and supporting:

> Part of this process is keeping the person updated in their field and keeping them interested in what they are doing and keeping them excited about meeting those kids and planning a particular kind of lesson and getting some satisfaction back from it rather than a constant level of improvement every year. Let's face it, teachers are at this game for 30 or 35 years and its pretty damn tough to get better in everything every year. (D#5:10)

When Dan was asked how he would describe his style of leadership, he responded:

> I don't know whether I have any style or not. I guess the thing is that the style evolves as you get a little more experience and it constantly changes and the school that you're in changes. . . . I guess the thing that I would say that is if you have good people let them do their job, stay out of their way as much as possible. (D#10:12)

Dan saw himself as a flexible leader, one who could be democratic when the situation warranted that type of behaviour but also a leader who could be autocratic. When a decision needed to be made in a hurray and there was not time to consult with the staff, he made it. Or when he was requested to do something, or carry out a given responsibility, he would pass this on to staff and expect that they, too, would do what was needed. He did not believe that it was possible to characterize himself or others by distinct leadership styles, such as being humanitarian or task-oriented, as his own style varied according to the situation he was in.

Responsibility. Dan expressed very positive feelings toward the staff he was presently working with and had a lot of faith in their teaching abilities. Dan believed that if you have the right staff you can let them take responsibility for a lot of what goes on in the school.

> By and large, the majority of staff in here works very well and they don't have to have a heavy handed approach and as a consequence you can be more comfortable with the system. I think if you're taking a much more overbearing [approach] and

> tried to control a lot of things it just wouldn't work here, the staff is too free-wheeling. (D#10:7)
> One of the things that I have learned . . . is that teachers need to take more responsibility for a lot of things that go on in a school - - like they don't need as much direction. . . . Staff generally need to plan the program on the basis of what's best for kids and be damned with other kinds of considerations. As an administrator you have to look at that and say that teacher's breaking all the g-- d----d rules but they're sure doing a good job - - let them go. I guess that's one of the things that we have to do a little more of and I would certainly be wanting to do that. It places you at risk as well. . . if you have good people let them do their job, stay out of their way as much as possible. (D#10:11-12)

Dan supported teachers that took initiative and responsibility. He commented that teachers were generally more committed to their own ideas, and thus were often more successful in carrying them out. But he also found that teachers did not always assume as much responsibility for things that go on in the school as he thought they should. Too often they preferred to be told what to do, when to do it, and how to do it, and then if it did not work they could blame someone else.

But here-in lies a contradiction with Dan. While Dan was interested in promoting more responsiblity for teachers, he was reluctant to accept total responsiblity for some aspects of his role, at least as it related to teacher evaluation. Dan accepted responsibility for conducting teacher evaluations for the purpose of improving teacher performance; he expressed the belief that he was responsible for teacher performance if they functioned in the average range. At the extreme ends he felt that he had less to offer a teacher. On the other hand there was evidence that Dan took responsibility for conducting evaluations but that it was a perfunctory exercise: he did it because he had to. Several teachers expressed the opinion that Dan was evaluating them to comply with the policy, but little was being done beyond the minimum. When Dan was approached about this he agreed with the observation. The new policy was not entirely to his liking and the incentive to spend more time with teachers coaching them was not there.

He was also very reluctant to take sole responsibility for making decisions about a teacher's dismissal: "I don't want to be held the sole one

accountable for doing that [getting rid of a teacher]. . .It's a hell of a decision to take away from someone their livelihood." (D#2:9)

On several occasions in our conversations Dan suggested that he wanted more guidance, more structure from central office:

> He [the associate superintendent] left it pretty well open for us to develop [a school policy] and that by the way caused a lot of problems for administrators out in the field. . . . Teachers and principals were not terribly happy about that idea. . . . They said you want an evaluation, fine, tell us what you want and we'll do it. . . . Don't say we want an evaluation and we're not going to tell you anything. (D#2:6-7)

Dan's need for direction appeared to stem from several issues. He seemed unsure about the policy in terms of what was expected by central administration. He wanted advice on various issues from his supervisor so that he might avoid getting into trouble in the future. He believed he would be more secure if he was doing what others were doing. He wanted support from central office when he believed it was necessary to get rid of a teacher. He wanted help because he was not entirely sure what to do.

> The primary concern was that everyone was going to do their own thing, every school was going to be different, and that still hung on me in some ways because it was upsetting to think that 200 people are going in perhaps 200 different directions when we could have some type of unified action. (D#3:13)

> I think there is pretty much a cry for uniformity. (D#9:11)

> Nobody said what kinds of things you should evaluate. (D#3:14)

> I want to know if I do something here it's not an isolated situation, what's happening if I react in a certain way to something, how's the rest of the system going to take that. Is it going to be deemed as I'm going in one direction, everybody else goes in another, because we need to have some type of cohesiveness. (D#7:11)

> But tell me what you really expect me to do. . . .Do you really expect me to to go and do classroom visitations. . . .Do you really think that I am remiss in my duties if I don't. (D#9:7)

> You've said that it's an open door and I can do a number of different kinds of things with it, and I guess we go with that until somebody says, hey, there are some other expectations that we didn't tell you about. So you hate to be the guy that's hanging out to dry on that kind of thing, saying well I've done it that way for three years now and now you are telling me that you had a hidden agenda. . . . I guess up to this point the system in terms of saying what they mean and following through with what they mean, you are free to do what you wish on a particular item, that's exactly what they meant, but there's always a nagging hunch that the next shoe is going to drop sometime. (D#9:11)

Dan was going through a period of uncertainty with the evaluation policy. He would have appreciated the associate superintendent's assistance, but the associate was spending less and less time in the school as time went on. Dan interpreted this as a sign that ' was doing a good job as a principal, and did not need close supervision from the associate. But the lack of contact also had its drawback. It left Dan feeling unsure, and the policy having less impact than it might have.

Dan wanted a formal inservice process that would guide himself and other principals through implementation of the policy.

> In essence we have never been inserviced on how to do it, how to evaluate, and we have never been given, and we asked for this, numerous times, and we were told, it's your baby, you handle it in your school the way you think it's appropriate. (D#3:16)

> The policy wasn't the problem, there were areas I didn't agree with, but that aside, . . . the implementation of the policy was quite a different matter, that left a lot to be desired. If you are talking about change, if you want to trigger change without those suggestions you won't trigger change. You can put all the !#*! policies you want to on the books and nobody will change it until they either find a dramatic need to change or they get some kind of guidance in exactly what kind of change you have in mind. (D#2:11)

Dan liked to discuss issues and problems with fellow educators: "I like to hear what they have to say, what their ideas are." (D#7:2) He was a

concrete thinker and found that he benefited from practical suggestions from others.

> As an administrator in a plant you want to know: here's the problem and here's the answer and here's how I did it and here's some alternatives. Very specific to deal with a specific problem. (D#8:5)

He wanted central administration to take more initiative in establishing meetings of small groups of principals. Although there were many informal groups that met, Dan understood that some principals were left out of these gatherings. Dan believed that it should not be left to chance that a person be included.

> I like to get information from as many reliable sources as possible and rather than exclude any of them I would be much happier to include other ones. . . .Why don't we all listen to the speakers, get their various points of view, talk to all of the experts and then come up with a procedure and a practice. . . . I like to hear from people who are within the system about the constraints. . . . I then like to sit down with the policy as however it happens to be drafted and look at it in that whole light, have a chance to work on it and work through it, and then come back to it, a discussion group with my compatriots in a small group. . .and say, did you know this is what it means, did you understand, and go through that as an open policy. (D#3:16-17)

During one of our later conversations Dan shared a thought with me that spoke to both his interest in discussing the policy with a variety of people, but also the effect of being involved in a research study that required him to reflect on what he was doing: "I think that one of the things that helped is our discussions, because one of the things that we generally don't do in this field is talk to anybody. It can be a fairly lonely occupation here." (D#8:12)

Cynicism. One of the effects of the lack of inservice and discussion about the policy was Dan's commitment to it. It became evident in many of our conversations that Dan was paying lip service to the policy. A sense of efficacy was lacking: the policy was a political document "to satisfy the public

that we know what we are about, . . . to say that we had done something." (D#6:1-2)

> I don't think it has made a significant difference . . . in a sense what we've done is try to satisfy somebody else's needs. (D#6:6)
>
> I'm not really convinced that at least with the two associates that I have had that they have felt a true allegiance to following the policy themselves. . . . I don't know how saleable I feel it is to staff either. (D#7:10)
>
> When guidelines are mandated, people do it to satisfy the mandate not because it is a necessary function, or necessary for the policy or that they have any real desire to do it. (D#2:11)
>
> If there is a mandate then I must write something down, but writing something down doesn't mean doing it - - change as opposed to the tip of the iceberg. . . . What you might do is entirely opposite to what you write down. (D#2:11)
>
> We are all doing this evaluation now but we are giving it lip service or whatever in accordance with the Board policy but we are not really dealing with it in the way that we should be dealing with it. (D#2:12)
>
> I'm just questioning the wisdom of some of the things that we are saying we are going to do, whether we are doing them to anybody's benefit or whether we are going through the motions. (D#9:10)
>
> I think that when we look at things like that now we need to look at them in somewhat of a different light and say, hey, what is it that we are doing and what is it that we are trying to do and is it any better than what we were doing before, or is it just different, and maybe even worse. (D#7:4)
>
> Part of the process is so that the Board will say we want to see improvement in student achievement. This whole process is intended to specify that so that I guess in theory the Board could come back and say who is responsible for achievement. . .So I guess part of the difficulty I have with that is that it becomes a political document. (D#4:28)

Despite the cynicism on this matter, Dan was able to keep things in perspective. He believed that overall the system worked well and that positive attitudes generally prevailed. He had enough faith that differences in opinion and disagreements were coped with because of the high morale. Positive attitudes were fostered because they became part of the reason that people felt good about the system - it was a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Being reflective. One of the characteristics that Dan exhibited was the ability to reflect. Our conversations provided him with an opportunity to think out loud about what he was doing, and how it all fit together. He listened to feedback from his staff about the teacher evaluation policy and was open to their comments. He appreciated hearing what other administrators had to say so that he could learn from them.

> There's an awful lot of good thinkers that analyse a problem from a different point of view that you may not have thought about. You can learn from that . . . even if you think I have the answer to that. . . . You better find out how the other people are reacting and what is it they're doing because . . . sure as h--- they're around the corner and you may run into them sooner or later, better to have some solutions in your box of tackle. . . . There's no answer to say you've ever arrived - - it's a journey that you go on. . . . We don't have all the right answers right now, probably never will - - it's an evolution. (D#10:23-24)

Dan's 'world view' was one of complexities and interrelationships, whether it had to do with the process of teaching or the process of implementing the evaluation policy. When asked about the implementation process, he responded:

> You have to, I think, pull those other connections apart, those connections have a vital kind of link to what goes on and how the policy's interpreted and implemented and everything else, and without some idea of how those operate you are doing your study in a vacuum. (D#6:20)

Ben

Ben's understanding of the policy and context he worked in was different than Dan's. His work experience background was different as were many of his beliefs and values about evaluation and teaching. He was motivated by different needs and he responded to directions and authority in his own way. His implementation of the teacher evaluation policy was different in many ways to Dan's.

What was Ben like? He appeared quite self-confident and assured. He gave the impression that he knew what he wanted to do with respect to teacher evaluation and was doing it. He openly disagreed with the term 'expected outcome' with the associate superintendent and had convinced him that the term 'performance agreement' was better suited for his purposes. But once in a while he questioned what he was doing as if he was seeking reassurance from others. At one point he shared with the investigator positive comments that a fellow principal had made to him about his teacher evaluation model. And he commented that he wanted staff to react positively to his evaluation practice as it was important to him to have staff support. What follows is an exploration of Ben as a person in his role as principal and implementer of the teacher evaluation policy. It is not meant to be complete, but only an initial attempt to provide a description of some of the human dimensions of the implementation process.

A need for support. Although Ben was quick to accept the invitation to be part of this study, he gave the investigator the impression that he was a little uncomfortable with the staff being interviewed. When asked in January for a staff meeting date at which the investigator could be introduced, the study explained, and the ground prepared for teacher interviews, Ben replied that the next available time was not until April. The agenda for the staff meetings in February and March had already been set and were apparently full. As Ben's support and good will was essential to the data gathering process, the investigator agreed to meet with the staff in April, and shortly thereafter began interviewing a number of teachers and staff members. In June Ben interviewed all the staff himself to discuss the evaluation process and obtain feedback. He very eagerly offered to share their comments with the investigator.

One by one Ben reviewed his notes and related what the staff had indicated to him about their involvement with teacher evaluation. In fact the teachers had been quite consistent in their comments to Ben and the investigator about the evaluation process. They had also been very willing to describe Ben in the interview process. For the most part those who had been involved in classroom observations and conferencing were quite pleased with what Ben was doing; they appreciated his positive feedback and helpful comments, and found Ben to be quite trustworthy and fair. Teacher evaluation as a concept was seen as worthwhile and necessary by all the teachers interviewed. Most teachers did not believe that teacher evaluation was a high priority in the school, or that Ben spent a lot of time on this activity however. Ben was portrayed as a conscientious, methodical administrator who was complying with a district mandate to conduct annual evaluations, and was doing so in a relatively unobtrusive fashion. A few teachers commented that they did not believe that very much had changed from the previous practice of evaluation in the school, except that peer supervision was no longer being practiced. Several teachers commented that they had spent very little time trying to reach whatever objectives they had set. Some could not remember what their objectives were. Teacher evaluation was perceived by most teachers to be a 'non-event' in the school.

Ben reviewed the comments with the investigator that the staff had made to him at the end of the school year. It almost seemed that he wanted to have 'on the record' all the positive comments that staff had made. Whether this was defensiveness or self-justification was hard to tell. An earlier interview with Ben did reveal the following however:

> You caused me to think about this to some degree because you are interested in what the system is thinking. I don't see there being a particular high priority about this whole area [teacher evaluation]. . . . If I was spending all kinds of time on this and the system is going off here and there. We at a school level presumably reflect what the system priorities are. We are in fact obligated to, we're given these trustee priorities but all of them take time and so you wonder if at any rate this is a refocusing. . . . I'm in a state of wondering; on one hand I want to lessen the time component I spend on it, but the thing that would keep me with it to the same degree would be staff feedback as to its value.

> . . . I really like openness with staff [but] they have to be able to read me to see what degree I'm able to absorb. . . it could be criticism about an approach. . . . I don't care who you are you can I suppose only stand so much personal criticism. (B#5:5)

Ben may have sensed that teacher evaluation appeared not to be a priority of the school board, while it still was one of his. By asking staff whether they believed teacher evaluation still deserved the amount of effort and time he had committed to it, Ben would be able to justify his involvement if the staff gave their support. The comments that Ben did hear from staff were very positive; some staff had asked that he visit their classrooms more often. Ben decided to continue with his current practice in the following year with a few modifications. He would delimit the number of staff with whom he worked intensively in order to give each of them adequate time. Other staff members would be engaged in more self-directed activities. Ben appeared committed to conducting classroom observations and conferencing with staff. He wanted to develop the classroom teaching skills of staff and was receiving sufficient feedback that the work he was doing was worthwhile.

Sensitivity. Ben was sensitive towards others, as well as being sensitive himself. In supervisory conferences with staff he much preferred to be positive than to provide criticism and yet there were teachers that he just had to tell outright that a specific skill needed work. By building a trusting relationship with the teacher Ben believed that he was able to create a receptive climate for his suggestions. He was characterized by many of the staff as being a very caring, loving person, almost to a fault.

From his behaviour during staff meetings, he was perceived as being non-confrontational, a negotiator, someone who did not like the boat rocked. Several teachers believed that this style occasionally led to a divisive nd fragmented staff. They would have preferred stronger leadership to pull the staff together. The majority of those interviewed had a lot of respect for Ben, however, and believed that he had a clear sense of direction and really cared about kids. Although he made some school decisions without consulting the staff, he believed he was sensitive to staff reactions: "I know the staff. . . . I tend to veer away from decisions made by myself which would upset them." Ben described himself as a democratic leader, as did

many of the staff. But he was also known to be autocratic at times and did not rely on the staff sufficiently - - he "liked to do a lot by himself." It is interesting to note that Ben described the staff as being "very self-sufficient" and independent as well.

Democratic-autocratic leadership style. A few teachers commented that Ben had a tendancy to operate alone on many activities. For example, the assistant principal was perceived by staff as having very little influence or involvement in school decisions. In commenting about changes for the following year Ben mentioned that he was considering giving the assistant more responsibility for evaluation than she had. Ben had also developed the school evaluation procedures on his own and then presented them to the staff. There had been little discussion and virtually no staff input other than what Ben had gleaned from the staff reaction to the district policy. He spent little time in the staff room talking with staff although his office was right next door. He seemed to prefer talking with staff on a one-on-one basis. He did seek input from staff on many decisions, but was not perceived as always listening.

Ben described himself as a democratic leader but acknowledged that at times he could be autocratic. Ben's sense of democratic leadership seemed to be that he would rely on persuasion rather than authority to get the staff to agree to an idea that he wanted to put into practice. On matters which he anticipated might result in negative reaction were he to state a decision, he preferred to present the staff with a suggestion and proceed to convince them that it was the best choice: "what you have to do with that [an idea] is that you have to get the teachers to somehow agree." Although many staff members described Ben as being democratic, a few suggested that "he likes to think that he is democratic", or that "he tries to be" so but in practice is more autocratic. As Ben was commenting about the selection of objectives for the evaluation process he stated:

> You also have to be persuasive and you succeed in that to varying degrees. I certainly can insist on certain objectives being worked on but the problem with that is to somehow establish ownership of those. (B#6:5)

Ben had experienced the effect of being too directive with the staff on matters that concerned them: it generally was not successful and the backlash from staff created another problem to deal with. Ben recalled a decision that he had made several years ago, without staff consultation, regarding the hiring of an outdoor education teacher. He had not been aware of the concerns of teachers and as a result his decision was not very popular:

> I didn't back off of that one but it wasn't worth it when I look back at it because there was so much discomfort and people were antagonized and some were saying well I agree with you and others were just angry and they felt manipulated. (B#6:21)

What Ben now tried to do was to present the staff with a recommendation on matters that he felt strongly about and persuade them to accept it. If they did, he believed they also accepted some ownership and were more willing to make the idea work. On other matters it was the staff that made the recommendations and the decision. In this case it was he that supported the staff decision through implementation.

Responsibility. Ben believed that teachers had a basic responsibility to improve their own instructional skills, but that he had a responsibility to assist them in this process. As educational leader Ben wanted to have an impact on teacher performance, but in a particular way:

> I don't want to create particular kinds of dependencies amongst teachers. I am going to improve your teaching somehow so that [it] is basically something they own. Still I do have some responsibilities, back to encouraging, cajoling, persuading and sometimes arbitrarily saying we're going to do this. (B#7:1)

On the other hand he believed himself to be responsible for the affairs of the school, and preferred to work out any problems that he ran into on his own. His experience with the former associate superintendent in terms of getting useful suggestions for problems that he had encountered had not been very positive. Ben perceived his own independent stance as being partly the result of these previous experiences. He was critical of the associate for not having as much contact with the school as he might have, and was more optimistic that the new associate would be spending more

time in the school. Ben appeared to be proud of his accomplishments, particularly the work he was doing in teacher evaluation, and needed confirmation from others. He was prepared to take responsibility for the school, but with this came a need for appreciation as well.

Being reflective. From what Ben could tell the teacher evaluation process was going well in the school. Feedback from staff had been positive, and he was seeing improvement in the instructional skills of some teachers. He had decided to make a few changes in the procedures for the coming year to allow for sufficient time for observation and conferencing with at least a third of the staff. From what he had learned about the performance of various staff members he was better prepared to make suggestions to them about objectives they might work on for the year.

Ben considered himself to be a learner. He wanted more feedback about the teacher evaluation process than he was getting, but he was not prepared to take too many risks. As he admitted, he was sensitive himself about negative feedback. Ben wanted more discussion about teacher evaluation at principal's meetings or district sponsored workshops and conferences than had happened. He would have liked to see the Associate spend some time with the principals in his zone discussing the policy and sharing what each had planned to do. It seemed to Ben that there were things happening in the district that related to the policy, such as the notion of student assessment, that needed to be discussed out in the open.

"You need to sit down and explain, this is why we are doing this, and accept the fact it's going to cause a lot of trauma. It would either way, but this is a shabby way to treat people as far as I'm concerned." Ben's comment spoke to the paternalistic attitude that seemed to have prevailed on the whole issue of expected outcomes and the district intent. Ben would have been much more comfortable had the Superintendent and the Associate been more honest and open with the direction they saw the district headed in. Ben commented: "To be able to be open and secure enough to listen to people and what they are saying, I think that's important."

Chapter 8

Discussion, Conclusions and Propositions

Discussion

In the preceding chapters a description has been given of how two principals, Dan and Ben, were implementing a district teacher evaluation policy. This description was framed within three themes: the contextual experiences that influenced their thoughts and behaviours, the interpretation they gave to the policy, and the values, beliefs, needs and personalities that characterized these two principals in relation to the implementation process. The data were organized around these three themes as a means of providing an initial conceptual framework for making sense of how these two principals were implementing a teacher evaluation policy. While the themes provide focus, they are not meant to constrict vision. As will be argued, an holistic approach provides a better image of what occurs, but to communicate this picture it is still necessary to portray specific perspectives one at a time.

At this point in the study it is appropriate to reflect upon the descriptions provided within these themes and ask: What can be concluded from these two case studies? What propositions and questions do these conclusions raise? What perspectives can be taken that will further our theoretical understanding of this process? The purpose of this chapter is to revisit Dan's and Ben's experiences from a conceptual perspective and to frame several propositions about the process of policy implementation.

A conceptual framework revisited. In Chapter Two reference was made to several perspectives of implementation that guided the initial framework of inquiry for this study: resocialization (learning), conflict and bargaining (political), rational (programmed), bureaucratic, organizational development (adaptive, evolutionary), macro level (system) and micro level (individual). Implementation was conceived as an iterative, messy process of inter-relationships amongst many macro and micro level factors. The linkages and inter-relationships amongst the factors were dynamic and symbiotic -- each factor shapes and is shaped by other factors, the actors influence events and processes as these phenomena in turn influence the

actors -- a process of mutual causality. The approach taken within these eclectic perspectives was that it was the principal's perceptions of the system's characteristics (the context and the policy) that would provide insight into the decisions that they made. The decision-making process in turn was influenced by the principal's needs, values, beliefs and personalities. Each of the perspectives helped to provide an initial focus for questions and a framework to interpret the answers. No one perspective, however, adequately revealed all the factors or the relationships that described how Dan and Ben were implementing the teacher evaluation policy. While there were elements of conflict and power struggles between the teachers and central administration, this alone did not account for the implementation process. There certainly was a challenge to the prevailing values of the administrators and teachers which caused many of them to think about evaluation and to question what they had been doing. The organizational structure -- the hierarchical bureaucracy -- also played a role in how the policy was implemented. These, and other, conceptual perspectives provide a dimension to the understanding of this process. But no one perspective or model alone can adequately explain what went on.

In summary, the implementation process was framed by the principals' interpretations of the policy, their perceptions of the context in which they worked, including interventions and organizational operating procedures, and their own characteristics: their beliefs, values, needs and personalities. The implementation process was an evolving one -- the 'variables' changed over time as the principals lived the experience.

Conclusions

Many conclusions can be drawn from the way that these two principals were implementing a district policy on teacher evaluation within their schools. Specifically, this implementation process was characterized by:

- change, as the principals reacted to and learned from their experiences, as they 'networked' with other principals and shared their experiences and understandings, and as they listened to their staff and reflected on this feedback;
- conflict and negotiation, as the principals worked (and did not work) with the associate superintendent and the staff of the school to give life and

meaning to the policy, as they shared interpretations and failed to communicate on some of the issues, and as they acted out their roles as supervisor and supervisee;

• symbolic allegiance, as they paid lip-service to the policy elements which they could not accept, and as they followed directives in simple fashion but with little regard to the policy intent;

• a 'top down' district policy development process, which did little to build commitment to or understanding of the policy;

• conceptual confusion, as the principals struggled with the meaning of a 'results' orientation in terms of accountability and responsibility;

• previously determined 'cultural' norms (school norms and teaching norms) which set parameters for and restraints on the conduct of evaluations -- the criteria (implicitly, how teaching is defined), the data collection techniques, how feedback is given, the relationships between evaluator and evaluatee, the formal versus informal evaluation process;

• a district management practice which did not support uniformity or standardization of evaluation procedures and left the principals to struggle on their own to develop a school response to the district policy;

• an expression of personal values and beliefs, as the principals made choices about staff involvement in the policy development process, the expected outcomes or objectives that individual staff members worked on, the amount of time and energy each principal devoted to staff evaluation, and the manner in which evaluation data were collected and reported;

• idiosyncrasies, as the principals acted to fulfill their own needs for external support, direction, structure, control, recognition, information, security and advancement;

• rational decision-making, as the principals articulated for themselves the intent of the policy, identified evaluation procedures, confirmed their roles and responsibilities, re-assessed their workloads, and determined those things for which they would be held accountable;

• role conflict, as the principals continued to take on responsibilities for managing the total school operation -- from marketing their schools to parents, developing goal-based budgets, to providing instructional leadership;

- the use of their authority, power and organizational sanctions as the principals decided what to do, what to comply with, and how to relate within this hierarchical framework to their staff;
- adaptations to the policy at the school level as they interpreted ambiguous terms and dealt with difficult requests;
- limited communication between the central administration and school personnel about the policy and its meaning;
- modifications to some existing routines as they applied the format of the Teacher Effectiveness model (preconference, observation, post-conference, emphasis on teaching behaviours and the use of feedback) to their new evaluation procedures; and
- changes to the principals' level of commitment to the policy and to teacher evaluation in general as they experienced the consequences of the policy procedures.

While the implementation process can be characterized conceptually in the preceding manner for both Dan and Ben, there were also many differences in the practice of the policy in the two schools. The similarities and differences contribute a richness to an understanding of this very complex process and help to illuminate the idiosyncrasies that strongly characterize the process. A review of the three themes (interpreting the policy, contextual experiences, and personal characteristics) that framed the earlier description of the implementation process will be conducted to emphasize the similarities and differences of the findings across settings.

Interpreting the policy. For both Dan and Ben, implementing the evaluation policy meant interpreting the intent, the terms used and the requirements of the procedures. It meant paying lip-service to some of the policy elements. It meant complying with procedures that could be monitored, such as report writing, out of a sense of responsibility, loyalty to the organization, respect for authority and a little bit of fear of possible sanctions that could be imposed. It meant slightly modifying some of their existing routines to conform to new requirements, such as meeting with each teacher near the beginning of the school year to establish expected outcomes or objectives.

For Dan, it meant setting aside professional development time to develop school procedures with the staff. For Ben, it meant drafting a document that was subsequently presented to staff for their approval. For Ben, it meant negotiating the meaning of the term 'expected outcome' with the associate superintendent so that he could interpret it to mean 'performance agreement' and 'setting objectives'. For Dan, it meant modifying some forms so that no-one in central office would notice any changes that he wanted to make. For Ben, the policy was ambiguous enough to be interpreted in a manner that he desired; but it also meant seeking confirmation of his beliefs from colleagues, staff and evaluation models in practice elsewhere. For Dan, the policy was too ambiguous, he wanted clarification of the intent from district office. He needed to know what was acceptable and what was not. He needed more structure and more examples than he was being provided. Dan was less sure of what he should do than Ben, and more conscious, or perhaps more concerned about the politics within the district.

For both, it meant covertly challenging the notion that teachers could or should be held accountable for student learning. Dan and Ben were both concerned about the lack of instrumentation in student evaluation that could adequately assess student growth as well as measure all the less tangible objectives that teachers strive to reach with their students. Dan was reticent to hold teachers accountable for reaching any goals. He understood goals to be something that teachers worked towards rather than something that was actually met. Ben had trouble reconciling the difference between a developmental perspective to student growth that the district appeared to be taking and the district's attempt to establish uniform standards for all students. How could teachers be asked to help each student to develop to his or her potential, and at the same time to hold teachers accountable for having their students reach pre-determined standards? Ben's understanding of this apparent dilemma made him feel rather negative towards the district's espoused results orientation.

The policy was quite clear in requiring every staff member to be evaluated every year, but Dan and Ben concluded after the first year that this could only be done if different methods were used for some staff. For Ben, it meant admitting that he would only be able to conduct classroom

observations and conferences with about a third of the staff, and so alternate, self-monitoring procedures would be established for the remaining staff. For Dan, it meant that some staff would only receive rather perfunctory service, while others would be subject to more intensive activity. He did conclude, from his own observations and feedback he received from staff, that he did not need to conduct as many formal classroom observations as he had been doing. He questioned whether the information he collected in these observations would yield a reliable measure of a teacher's performance. Even some of the staff suggested to him that the formal observation and conference session did little to contribute to the improvement of their performance. He believed that he was better able to collect valid information about a teacher from incidental observations -- seeing them interact with students in the hallway, on the playground, and from unannounced, informal visits to the classroom.

Dan's perception of teaching was that it was a very complex process, and not easily reduced to a list of skills or behaviours, or measured. Assessing a teacher's performance by reviewing a few objectives each year, or by sitting in a classroom occasionally did not make a lot of sense to Dan. There appeared, however, to be an informal evaluation process in place in the school. To a great extent, common expectations of teaching were shared by Dan and the staff in the school. These expectations were comprehensive, covering such aspects of teaching as classroom management, instructional methodologies, student evaluation procedures, student-teacher, teacher-teacher, and teacher-parent relationships, yet they were unwritten -- part of the common, shared culture of teaching. Dan's informal monitoring of teachers, in accordance with these expectations, provided him with an intuitive, global picture of teacher performance. When he detected that a teacher was making a major breach of these expectations he would intervene. As Dan reflected on his views of teaching, and analysed the district evaluation policy and his own school procedures from this perspective, he was not comfortable with what he found. His ideas of how to conduct formal evaluations changed as he came face to face with the new realities imposed by the district policy.

The policy was consistent with several of the 'principles of organization' of the district -- one of which stated that "every individual in

the organization should know what kind of results he or she is responsible for. Insofar as possible, both objectives and evaluation should be focused upon these results" (Appendix B). The evaluation policy stipulated that staff were to be evaluated on how well they achieved expected outcomes. The terms 'results' and 'expected outcomes' were problematic in the implementation process for both Dan and Ben.

The concept of a results orientation is very complex as a 'result' or 'expected outcome' can be interpreted in several different ways. Using a 'systems' perspective, a result may be defined on a continuum as (1) a product (the most basic result of an organization, eg. student achievement of a learning objective), (2) an output (an aggregation of products, eg. graduates that have earned diplomas) or (3) an outcome (the societal effect or impact, eg. graduates that become good citizens). According to the evaluation policy an expected outcome is defined in terms of district, school and individual goals. When these goals are analysed, however, one can find products, outputs and outcomes.

Conceptually, the term 'result' may also refer to either 'processes' or 'products'. The terms process and product are often used to define apparently separate components of a multi-dimensional systems model -- CIPP, or context, input, process, and product. In this model a process is an activity that yields specific, measurable products. For example, within the framework of this model, the act of teaching (the process) is expected to yield measurable student learnings (the product, or results). But a process can also be defined as a result -- that is, specific teaching behaviours, when combined with precision and artistry by the teacher, can yield an instructional lesson that may be regarded as an expected outcome -- good teaching. Ben, as he spoke about the desired objectives sought by teachers, often mentioned his observation of the closure skills of the teacher. These, and other skills, became the desired outcomes of teaching. It was assumed, it could be presumed, that student learning would inevitably result from these good teachings. Or, using a different example, student writing skills can be considered a process -- good writing skills are a means to accomplish certain results, such as effective communications, a well written report or story, etc. Good writing skills, however, may also be considered ends in themselves. If a student can spell, punctuate sentences, use appropriate tenses and identify

the parts of speech, etc., it may be assumed that the student writes well. These skills have often become the desired ends in themselves, regardless of how well a student can compose a letter, or write a report. It all depends on one's perspective which way the terms process and product are used. As an objective, the development of teaching behaviours or skills can be seen as both a process or a product (result).

The district had not sufficiently clarified the terms that were used in the policy, or ensured that the principals understood how the policy was going to achieve the purpose that it stated. The associate superintendent believed, and the principals suspected, that an expected outcome was intended to refer to student achievement/performance. Were teachers to be held accountable for how well their students achieved? Both Dan and Ben had reservations about the technical merits of this proposition. Dan alluded at one point to the desired 'outcomes' of schooling and how difficult and ridiculous it would be to hold any one teacher responsible for these outcomes. Could the same argument apply to the desired 'products' -- could a teacher be held responsible for student learning within their classroom? Or should a teacher be responsible for establishing appropriate learning conditions within their classroom and throughout the school that would facilitate individual student achievement of the desired products, outputs and outcomes? What does it mean to be held responsible? What is at stake? A response to these questions would depend on one's perspective of teaching and learning, or philosophical position, and one's understanding of the politics of the situation.

Senior district administration did not provide the principals with clarification of this critical concept, or an explanation of the philosophical perspective that underlay their thinking. Dan and Ben interpreted 'expected outcome' in a manner consistent with their own beliefs, namely that teachers should be evaluated on expectations of their behaviour -- their teaching skills.

Perhaps the ambiguous meaning for this term was intended. It may not matter how the concept of 'results/expected outcomes' is defined; what may be critical to the concept is the notion that individuals take more responsibility and become more accountable for what they do. There is a difference between accepting that one is the 'cause' of a particular outcome,

and accepting that one can have a significant impact on the outcome. Efficacious teachers believe that they can make a difference on student learning, and that they can provide conditions that facilitate this learning. Accepting responsibility for student outcomes may be more a matter of attitude -- a faith in one's ability to influence the learning of others and the self-confidence to accept responsibility -- than a belief in pure 'cause-effect' relationships.

The anxiety and the confusion that this concept created for Dan and Ben was not being acknowledged -- there was no evidence that central office administrators were interested in working with principals to clarify the issues. There was no evidence that senior administrators themselves were taking responsibility for creating conditions that would facilitate learning about the key concepts of the policy amongst school administrators.

If the real intent of the policy was "to maintain and improve the educational service provided to the students of the district" the central administration had a responsibilty to ensure that this purpose was being met, and that this policy was the most appropriate vehicle to accomplish the task. Education is often faced with problems to which there are no readily apparent solutions. Responses to these problems can be monitored and reviewed, 'reflected upon', to provide ongoing analysis and re-direction. Just as Dan reflected on what he was doing in his school, and modified his procedures to meet his demands, a school jurisdiction can alter its path, or clear the road it is on of obstacles. Dan and Ben were under the impression that the district policy was set, for now and for awhile to come, and thus if changes were needed to the policy, it was up to them to make them, through surreptitious or whatever means were available.

At one point in an interview Dan commented that the interviews themselves were helpful to him because it required him to reflect on what he was doing with regard to evaluation and his interpretation of the policy. The interviews were an unexpected intervention that became part of the implementation process. Dan thought out loud, which helped him to articulate his beliefs, values and direction. Dan was very open to self-reflection and, as he thought about what he was doing in the evaluation process, he was willing to make changes to the procedures that had already been established in the school.

For Ben, the interviews did not appear to have this same effect. Ben appeared more self-confident with the process of evaluation that he was engaged in and the concept of teaching with which he worked. He did, however, seek feedback from staff but it appeared that this was done to confirm what he was doing. He wanted to hear positive comments about the process, and that was largely what he got. Ben needed to feel 'in charge', and perhaps he felt uncomfortable questioning what he was doing. Whatever the reasons, Ben was not as reflective as Dan about what he was doing.

Dan's procedures evolved as he thought about the efficacy of evaluation, and listened to the comments of teachers. He questioned whether the time and energy required of him to monitor all teachers every year, and write a report on each one was really worthwhile. As a result, he began to modify his procedures, and to prepare in advance for the year to come.

Dan and Ben already had busy schedules as principals. The district emphasis on school-based decision making and budgeting meant that both principals had many responsibilities for 'managing the plant' as well as being instructional leaders. For Ben, teacher evaluation became a priority -- it was a satisfying activity that was in keeping with his sense of what it meant to be an instructional leader. For Dan, this procedure was another bureaucratic activity, meant to satisfy the Board's political need for accountability. Dan began to devise ways to keep paper work and classroom observations to a minimum Both Dan and Ben were committed in their own way to teacher evaluation, to the need to ensure that competent instruction was provided to students, but neither was entirely committed to the district policy.

Contextual experiences. Intertwined with the interpretation that Dan and Ben gave to the policy were many different influences that had varied effects on them. Some of these influences emanated from experiences within their schools, others from district phenomena. In most cases their responses to similar experiences were different.

The evaluation policy had been drafted by a team from central office. Although the district staff had been given an opportunity to react to the draft policy, the final version remained very similar to the original. The

overall reaction to the original policy had not been very receptive. When the policy was adopted by the Board, senior administration made no effort to explain the policy to staff, or to justify why they wanted the policy to read the way it did. As a result, Dan and Ben believed that their input had had minimal impact on the development of the policy. They felt little ownership of the policy, and had little interest in trying to understand why senior management had remained adamant about certain key elements of the policy.

Dan and Ben had been actively involved in the District Teacher Effectiveness program. As this was a district sponsored program it was perceived by both Dan and Ben as having official sanction and being the district precursor to evaluation. Ben found this activity very satisfying and rewarding. It provided him with a structure to better understand the process of teaching and enabled him to gain the confidence of staff by providing them with positive feedback. It also provided him with an opportunity to get to know what the teachers in his school were doing in the classroom, to 'be on top of things', and to offer them advice and direction. Ben seemed to need to be in control and to exert influence on the staff. But he also believed that he could not and should not be authoritarian; the staff had power in their own right through the annual district staff survey and Ben knew from experience that if he tried to directly impose something on the staff that they did not accept, they would object and grumble and make his work more difficult. Ben was sensitive to the politics of staff and wanted their support. His belief in collegiality appeared to stem more from pragmatic values than from values of principle, or a belief in democratic governance, however.

Dan's experience with the Teacher Effectiveness program had been less positive than Ben's. Although he and many of the staff had accepted the premise of the program, and had been willingly and actively involved, a carryover to the evaluation procedures was not pervasive. The staff admitted to Dan that they would prefer him to drop in on their teaching more frequently rather than pre-arrange a few formal visits. They believed that the formal visits did not give Dan an accurate picture of their everyday teaching, only a glimpse of their best performance. This process had not contributed to improving or even changing their classroom performance, according to the teachers. Few teachers selected any of the instructional skill

areas for objectives in the evaluation process, choosing instead such things as the development of writing skills in children, the integration of grade one and grade five students, improving communication with parents, or assessing students' needs. Most of the staff in Dan's school were fairly self-confident about their teaching, and did not feel threatened by Dan. What many suggested was that they were motivated to self-improvement out of professional pride and a sense of responsibility for their work. They accepted the formal process of evaluation as a necessary bureaucratic routine that Dan was obliged to participate in, and most were appreciative that Dan had not made the activity unduly burdensome. Dan's response to the policy was very much in keeping with these sentiments. But his response was also influenced by many other conditions.

The school context that he worked in and his sensitivity to the staff appeared to have a bearing on his actions. The staff, for the most part, were a very competent and committed group of teachers. Dan saw them this way, the teachers themselves commented on the competency of their fellow staff members, parents spoke highly of the staff on the annual school surveys, and from the investigator's observations as an experienced teacher and administrator, the staff ranked very high. Teacher evaluation in a school of this nature would appear to need its own form. Dan was also very sensitive toward the staff: as previously described he had had an uneasy experience with one young teacher and the staff had not quite understood what the problem was. Dan found it difficult to confront teachers with negative comments, and was slightly insecure about his stature with the staff. As a result of all of this Dan was less inclined to be more demanding or critical of the teachers at this time. The particular school context that Dan was in, and the manner that Dan interpreted this context provides some insight into how Dan was implementing the policy and conducting evaluation. But, as Dan had pointed out, the policy is connected to all the other phenomena going on, each one influencing and being influenced by the other.

The district context was perceived differently by Dan and Ben. The district's philosophy of school based decision-making (decentralization) was received with mixed feelings by Dan. While local autonomy had its benefits, there were also drawbacks. Dan found himself taking on more and more

management tasks and dealing less with students and teachers in a pedagogical manner. Dan was often uncomfortable with the freedom that he was given and prefered that the central administration would provide more concrete guidelines.

Ben, on the other hand, seemed to enjoy the autonomy and mentioned very little about any additional administrative tasks he might be taking on. He appeared to be in control of his agenda. He chose to engage himself in the Teacher Effectiveness program, and subsequently in an evaluation model that was based on this format. While the staff was not always able to see Ben sitting in classrooms, conferencing with individual teachers or writing reports, he did spend a considerable amount of his time at these endeavours. His sense of local control also extended to the way he interpreted the evaluation policy. The rather vague wording (at least by his account) being used in the policy allowed him to define these terms in his own way. Rather than guidance from central office, he wanted recognition for what he was doing in the school.

The district had offered little assistance to the principals. The Associate Superintendent had reviewed the school procedures soon after they were developed to ensure that the key policy elements were adhered to. A few suggestions had been made, but Dan and Ben were both astute enough to ensure that their procedures conformed to the obvious requirements. It was in the practice of evaluation where adaptations were made. Other than this input from the Associate, there had been virtually no support for the principals -- no inservice, little discussions at principals' meetings, no memoranda. It was assumed that the principals could and would implement the policy and carry out evaluation on their own. Although the Associate Superintendent was responsible for the results achieved by the principals, it appeared that the Associate had tremendous faith that the principals would be successful without his help.

Both Dan and Ben were involved in informal networks of fellow principals. During the year there had been exchanges of information regarding the policy and school procedures, but, overall, there was not a lot of interest or concern. Ben had shared his school procedures with the group and had aroused interest from at least one of the other principals. This kind of interaction Ben found very supportive. Dan, on the other hand, sought

information from his colleagues and appreciated hearing what they were doing. This allowed him to reflect on his own practice and determine if anything needed to change.

The contextual experiences -- the policy development process, the nature of the school staff, previous incidents in the district, the Teacher Effectiveness program, the school culture, school based decision making, support and interventions from central office (or the lack thereof), monitoring and supervision, and informal networking -- played a role in how Dan and Ben were implementing the policy. These experiences helped to shape how they interpreted the policy. And intertwined with these experiences and interpretations were the unique values, beliefs, and characteristics of Dan and Ben. While some of these characteristics appeared to remain constant over the six months of this study, some of the beliefs and values were taking shape as each principal experienced policy implementation in their own way.

Personal characteristics. As principals and as individuals, Dan's and Ben's needs were different. Where one wanted more structure, the other preferred less. One wanted recognition or acknowledgement, the other wanted to know what was expected of him by the central administration. One was more concerned about how to manage his time than the other. One was interested in collaborating with other principals, the other only in sharing what he was doing. One was more concerned about other school matters than the evaluation policy. One was reflective and open to change while the other had strong views about the nature of teaching and evaluation. They were both interested however in improving the policy as it was written.

Both Dan and Ben were sensitive towards their staffs, and preferred to avoid conflict and confrontation. Ben wanted the staff to have positive attitudes towards the evaluation process so that he could continue to work with them. He wanted their trust and their receptiveness to suggestions that he might make to improve their performance. He believed that his role was to direct the staff, to give guidance and positive feedback. He preferred to do this in a non-authoritarian manner, largely to avoid confrontation, not because he did not believe in authoritarianism. Several staff members sensed the contradiction in the way he operated.

Dan, on the other hand, preferred to work collaboratively with the staff. There were several teachers that he believed were so superior in their teaching that he had little to offer them. Dan was less concerned than Ben about the teachers attitudes towards the school procedures, but he did want the staff to have positive attitudes in general, and was particularly sensitive about staff talking negatively about him behind his back. He was portrayed by one teacher as being shy, and a little stand-offish with some staff. She thought Dan "sold himself short". This might suggest that he was a little insecure.

Dan and Ben accepted responsibility for conducting teacher evaluations, and to a certain extent for the performance of the teachers in their schools. They both believed they could have an impact on teacher behaviour. Dan qualified his responsibility to those teachers that came to the school with at least minimum competencies in basic pedagogical areas. And they both believed that teaching made a difference, that good teaching contributed to the success of students. But they were both reluctant to accept responsibility for student learning, to hold themselves or their teachers accountable for what students learned. A teachers' sense of efficacy, the extent to which teachers believe that they have the capacity to affect student performance, describes the degree of responsibility and the sense of control that teachers believe they have for student learning. It is a matter of attitude. Their reluctance to accept responsibility for student results might suggest that Dan and Ben were not high in personal teaching efficacy.

Dan and Ben were very complex individuals; a description of a few of their characteristics, values and beliefs cannot do justice to them in terms of understanding who they are. But it is their individuality that explains why the process of implementation can be so idiosyncratic. Just as students learn in their own way, and create their own understandings of what is taught to them, adults, too, come to understand policy from their own frameworks. If a policy's underlying philosophy is radically different than the well-formed beliefs of an adult, it is difficult for this policy to be appreciated, understood, or integrated into the adult's framework or world-view. Policy implementation, if the policy is a complex one, speaks to reframing an individual's concept of what is, and what should be. It speaks of a process that must integrate itself with the needs of an individual, and move that

individual to change that with which they may be only to comfortable. Implementation is a deeply personal activity.

Summary. The implementation of the district teacher evaluation policy by Dan and Ben was a complex process entwined with personal needs and proclivities, organizational structures and demands, vagueness of definitions and intents, and competing tasks and responsibilities. The personalities of Dan and Ben -- their needs, values and beliefs played a large role in how they implemented the policy and conducted teacher evaluations. Their personalities alone do not explain what they were doing, however, as their behaviour was informed by their experiences, by the normative culture of the school, district and profession, by the press of political and bureaucratic life within schools, and by the prevailing leadership ideology and role expectations. The policy -- its clarity, complexity, compatibility with existing practices and values, perceived efficacy, and its ranking in the district hierarchy of political priorities -- and the principals' motivations to comply with or modify specific procedural requirements as they understood them, also helps to explain how they were implementing the policy.

The implementation of district policies in schools can be studied by examining the characteristics of the principal (personality, leadership style, needs and ambitions, etc.), the policy (its intent, clarity and complexity, underlying philosophy, congruence with existing beliefs of stakeholders) and the context (school and external to the school [district, province, professional association], past and present experiences, governance structure, policy development process, relationships amongst stakeholder groups and significant individuals). But it is by looking at the process as a whole, by conceiving policy implementation as a complex, integrated process that, itself, needs to be viewed within a larger organizational perspective.

A better understanding of the school level implementation process may provide some provocation to district policy makers and senior policy implementers to seriously analyse approaches that are taken to implementation, particularly to complex policies and policies that propose radical departures from existing practices. The approach taken by senior policy implementers to the implementation process speaks loudly to the

sincerity of the policy adopters, and may be very revealing of the efficacy of leadership.

Propositions

Several propositions and questions can be drawn from this study that may assist the future practice of policy implementation, and provide a basis for further study. These propositions are presented as analytic generalizations and are theoretic in nature. The intent of this section is to present several propositions about the policy implementation process, as reported in this study, that may be used as analytic guides in future case studies, and may inform the practice of policy implementation. These propositions will also be shown to embody their own particular perspective of implementation, and will lead to recommendations being made for practice.

First, the process of policy implementation is complex, and may be better understood from an holistic perspective. It does not appear to be represented well by a reductionist perspective -- a perspective that attempts to describe the process as a model or series of factors, variables and inter-relationships. While it is necessary to provide some form of an organizing framework to convey a description and analysis of the process, the framework should also portray the process in its complexity and in an integrative manner. What may be more useful for the study and practice of policy implementation is a re-conceptualization of the process in more holistic terms -- as a microcosm of organizational phenomena and as a process deeply embedded in organizational life. Implementation may be better understood if it is expressed in terms of images and metaphors, as Morgan (1986) has proposed for the study of organizations. In the concluding chapter of his book, Images of Organization, Morgan writes:

> Organizations are many things at once!
> . . .I believe that some of the most fundamental problems that we face stem from the fact that the complexity and sophistication of our thinking do not match the complexity and sophistication of the realities with which we have to deal. This seems to be true in the world of organization as well as in social life more generally. The result is that our actions are often simplistic, and at times downright harmful. . . .My overall approach has been to

> foster a kind of critical thinking that encourages us to understand and grasp the multiple meanings of situations and to confront and manage contradiction and paradox, rather to pretend that they do not exist. I have chosen to do this through metaphor, which I believe is central to the way we organize and understand our world. But one does not have to accept this thesis. The much more general point is that our ways of seeing the world are always bounded ones, and that much can be learned by appreciating the partial nature of our understandings and how they can be broadened. I have used metaphors to show how we can frame and reframe our understanding of the same situation, in the belief that new kinds of understanding can emerge from the process. (Morgan, 1986: 339-340)

As one of the principals stated, implementation is a process connected to all the other things that go on in an organization. It does not stand easily alone as a process that can be separated, disected and analysed as if it were not part of a larger phenomenon. To understand this process, one must also understand the organization. To understand an organization one must look at it from many perspectives. An image that comes to mind is that of a sphere -- it can be sliced in an infinite number of ways, and each slice only presents one view.

A second proposition that emerges from an analysis of this case study, one specific perspective that appears to be quite powerful in both its descriptive strength and its implications for the practice of implementation (and organizational management) is that policy implementation, at least with complex policies, is a process of learning. It is a process in which the participants learn about the policy, and how to implement it, and it is a process in which the organization can learn about the problem it is addressing, and how to continue exploring new solutions. It is proposed that implementation as learning not only provides a perspective that may help us to understand how implementation takes place, it can provide some guidance for policy implementation and organizational operations.

Policy implementers may be very varied in terms of their understanding, skills and attitudes with respect to any particular policy. To expect all those who are implementing a policy to do so with great fidelity is about as reasonable as expecting all students in a class to have exactly the same understanding of a new concept at the same time.

As adult students, policy implementers approach new concepts and tasks from their own experiences and with their own learning styles. The implementation process of the teacher evaluation policy had many similarities for Dan and Ben, and yet the outcomes of this process had many differences. Their understanding and interpretations of the policy were in many respects quite different. Their concepts of what it meant to be a teacher, and thus what should teacher evaluation consist of, varied.

Both Dan and Ben were conducting evaluations with the primary intent to improve teaching instruction, and both operated under the assumption that this would lead to the improvement of student learning. More specifically, they both loosely adhered to a model of instruction that was guided by the District Teacher Effectiveness Program. Ben was more rigorous than Dan in pursuing skill development in various instructional areas with the teachers that he supervised. They were both uncomfortable with the notion of teachers being accountable for the learning outcomes of students. Dan was at a stage in his involvement with the policy and teacher evaluation where he questioned what he was doing and why he was doing it. Ben was very much involved with doing one particular thing as well as he could, and was not as interested in exploring the implications, such as, what image of teaching did his model of teacher effectiveness convey? What was the impact on students of the styles of teaching that he was coaching? Both principals were implementing the policy in their own unique ways, and were learning and making changes to what they were doing, according to their own needs and circumstances. Policy implementation from a learning perspective helps us to understand how differences occur in the practice and outcomes of policies.

Policy implementation can also be seen as a process of organizational learning. It is an opportunity for organizations to engage in on-going problem solving and research. Few complex policy problems ever have simple solutions. Policies are developed to attempt to resolve problems, but most policies are usually adapted at the 'street level' to meet the needs perceived by those working closest to the problems. 'Lip-service' is often paid to the formal policy to satisfy senior administrators that their ideas were 'good' ones. Under these conditions, policy implementation becomes more of a political process than a problem-solving one. Policies need to be

constantly explored for their efficacy, and acknowledgment given to the changing nature of messy problems. Organizations need to build into the implementation process a review and analysis process that will keep problem-solving current and on-going. Complex problems need complex solutions, and organizations need to be structured to ensure that learning is part of normal operating procedures -- part of the everyday worklives of staff.

A third proposition that can be drawn, and one that is closely related to the first and second but important enough to deal with separately, is that policies that address complex and significant issues and beliefs, in the minds of those affected, will have the greatest difficulty being implemented if the policy deviates substantially from deep-rooted values and beliefs. In this instance, the district teacher evaluation policy challenged principals and teachers on many fronts -- to define what expectations can be made of teachers, or, put in other words, what does it mean to be a teacher in this school jurisdiction; to determine whether uniformity or standarization should be applied to individuals in an evaluation process; to take more responsibility for student learning, as an outcome of teaching and the experience of schooling; and to manage one's time given increased responsibilities for school management. There was a deep-rooted belief that teacher evaluation consisted primarily of observing teachers' behaviours in the classroom, and that teachers should not, and could not, be held accountable for student learning. There was a belief that teacher evaluation did not need to occur every year. This policy challenged those beliefs. The principals in this study found the policy, in part, confusing, ambiguous, and supporting values that they did not adhere to. There was very little discussion between central administration and the school principals to clarify the policy, or to persuade staff of the policy's benefits. A policy, as complex and as different from the beliefs and values of the principals as this one appeared to be, needed more discussion between the principals and central office administrators. It needed an organizational environment that encouraged and supported sharing, dialogue, critique and learning.

The fourth proposition that can be drawn from this study is that the nature of the organization --how it is governed, the way it is structured, the manner in which its members are treated, the effectiveness of

communication, the 'culture' and 'climate' of the organization, etc. -- speaks to how policies are implemented. A corollary to this proposition, but one surmised, is that not all organizations are the same, therefore implementation would vary according to the nature of the organization.

The implementation process is in many ways a microcosm of the organization -- all the best and the worst of leadership/management practices, the implicit philosophy(ies) and assumptions of the organization, the real working lives of employees -- can be explored through an analysis of policy implementation. And, in turn, policy implementation is a leadership/management process that is imbedded in all that the organization is -- it is not a separate process that can be approached differently from the way the organization conducts all its business. If the organization is healthy, if the 'vital organs' are functioning well, implementation will unfold in similar fashion. If the organization is 'sick', policies will not be implemented well. Policy implementers and staff bring to the implementation process all their agendas, their histories, and their idiosyncrasies that are part of their lives in the organization. This 'baggage' cannot be left behind or forgotten in an analysis of one process.

> Organizations are more than instruments; they are themselves bundles of desires, for organizations encapsulate ways of life as well as modes of achievement. How, indeed, could people be persuaded to commit themselves to organizational life (omitting, of course, the dominated) unless the organizations themselves contain the ties that bind -- their values legitimating their desired practices.
>
> The different organizational life styles supply the missing link in the study of evaluation and implementation. The basic assumptions, so deep they are hardly ever challenged, are that all organizations are (a) basically the same, and (b) interested in evaluation and implementation, that is, in error detection and error correction. And so they are, except that the objectives of these laudable endeavors are markedly different. Once that is understood -- that evaluation and implementation may be desirable but are definitely different in various types of organizations -- the exasperation surrounding the subject (why can't evaluators and implementers do the right thing or,

> sometimes, do anything at all?) should give way to sustained social analysis. (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984:252-53)

That not all organizations are the same hardly needs to be repeated in that it would seem to be a truism, and yet its implications are profound. The way policies are implemented, given this assumption, would be more in keeping with the nature of the organization, as this proposition suggests.

These four propositions can be brought together to form a particular perspective and framework for policy implementation. Woven through all these propositions is an organizational perspective of implementation that is based on a notion of learning. This perspective appears to provide a challenging avenue for building a theoretical dimension of policy implementation. In the final chapter this organizational perspective of policy implementation will be presented with recommendations for further study and practice.

Chapter 9

Review, Recommendations and Reflections

What has been learned about the implementation process from this study of how two principals went about implementing a district policy on teacher evaluation? In the previous chapter it was proposed that policy implementation was a complex process best understood holistically in a more comprehensive, organizational context; that implementation was a process of learning -- both at the individual and organizational levels; that implementation of radical policies required an overcoming of the inertia of deep-rooted values and beliefs; and that the nature of an organization is integral to the implementation process, given that not all organizations are the same. The purpose of this chapter is to further develop an organizational perspective about policy implementation from these propositions, and to provide a few concluding reflections on the study as a whole.

Situating implementation in an organizational perspective

The organizational context presented in this study provides an interesting dimension for further analysis. While the study of Dan and Ben presented so far has illuminated an implementation process from the perspective of a principal, an analysis of the organizational structure in which they were working can offer a broader perspective, and one that may add to our understanding of this complex phenomenon. To do this a brief description of organizational structure, or more specifically of control mechanisms and leadership behaviour, within an implementation perspective will be presented. This will be followed by a review of the organizational context that Dan and Ben worked in, and a recommendation for policy implementation.

McLaughlin (1987) has suggested that macro level system perspectives be integrated with micro level individual perspectives to develop complex, dynamic models of analysis:

> Macro analyses operate at the level of the system. They stress regularities of process and organizational structures as stable outlines of the policy process and frame individual action in terms of position in a relational network. Micro analyses, conversely, operate at the individual level. They interpret organizational action as the problematic and often unpredictable outcome of autonomous actors, motivated by self-interest. Macro-level analyses generally provide insufficient guidance to policy makers or practitioners interested in understanding program outcomes (positive or negative), evaluating alternatives, assessing internal work requirements, or developing models of how policies operate in practice. . . . Conversely, micro-level analyses ignore systemic attainments and unanticipated consequences for the institutional setting as a whole so cannot speak to the expected organizational consequences or system-wide effects of a policy. Micro-level analyses thus provide limited guidance to policymakers faced with system-wide decisions. (McLaughlin, 1987: 177)

In response to McLaughlin's last comment, it is proposed that 'micro' perspectives may contain rich information about 'macro' perspectives. Thick descriptions of individuals can provide a basis for reflection about organizational perspectives, and may help to develop an organizational approach to policy implementation that is grounded in a better understanding of and appreciation for individual behaviour.

One of the findings of this study has been that policy implementation is a complex process interwoven with all the other processes occurring in schools, and that the principals' behaviour is shaped by, and helps to shape, the district context -- the management philosophy in operation, the culture, the relationships between the principals and their supervisors, in short the organizational structure. An approach to implementation that considers only a 'micro' perspective, or only a 'macro' perspective, would not be complete. This dichotomy, in fact, may be doing a disservice to our understanding of implementation by suggesting that a conceptualization of the process be framed from a reductionist approach. While this may be useful to organize our thinking, just as in this study the process was divided into three themes, to gain insight into how the whole process works it is necessary to look at all the parts in operation together. For example, Pressman and Wildavsky (1984:233) have suggested that it may be

appropriate to look at all the changes being advocated from different programs at the same time to understand the process of implementation. It has become increasingly evident that implementation is a process of "multi-causal interactive patterns" and that many different but related perspectives must be considered together.

Policy implementation takes place within the formal and informal social structures of an organization. "Much of what passes for organizational structure are varying types of mechanisms for controlling the behaviour of participants" (Scott,1981:254). One typology of organizational structure distinguishes social structure by the type of authority exercised: traditional, rational-legal, and charismatic (Weber, in Scott, 1981:32-33). Educational organizations are often conceived of, and formally structured as hierarchical bureaucracies in which authority is legally-based (Meyer and Scott, 1983; Schon, 1983). Implicit in this form of organization is a view of implementation as an exercise in control: policies become mandates from the top levels of the organization that subordinates are expected, by virtue of the authority structure, to conform to. Implementation becomes a management issue - how to ensure that procedures are in fact adhered to, and goals are met. Implementation approached from this perspective, as will be discussed, is a matter of leadership/management behaviour. Assuming that organizational structures are not intractable, it seems appropriate to examine relationships between policy implementation and various structures.

Underlying the implementation process of any policy is the system of governance within the organization: how policies come into being, how authority and power are exercised, where control resides, the role of leaders and followers, the nature of employee relationships in the organization, how rules and regulations are enforced. In organizations governed hierarchically (and in education, most are) the role of implementer is one of interventionist or change agent (Havelock, 1973; Hall and Hord, 1984; Hall, Zigarmi, and Hord, 1979; Sergiovanni, 1987) and implementation is a process of control - - the imposition of one will on another, a deliberate attempt by superordinates to change the behaviour and/or attitudes of subordinates.

Pressman and Wildavsky (1984:246) reported on the work of Majone who suggested that the form of control used in an organization to bring about change is related to the type of organization and "two basic conditions: the availability of suitable output measures, and the knowledge of the production function."

> "Output control" is favoured in market transactions and for-profit firms; "input control" and "process/behaviour control" is utilized in public bureaucracies and bureaucratic components of private and nonprofit organizations; "collegial control" is useful in professional organizations. (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984:246)

Using this typology, schools are generally perceived as public bureaucracies, controlled by inputs (fiscal and human resources, provincial and district policies, regulations, programs, facilities, etc.) and by processes and behaviours (instruction, culture, leadership, etc.). Currently, there are attempts being made to quantify output measures for schools (Oakes, 1986) to balance the work being done to clarify the production function. Output measures are still considered to be in their infancy (and regarded by some as either impossible or inappropriate to achieve), and while the production function has a longer history of research (for example, Wittrock, 1986) it too remains controversial from a philosophical perspective (for example, Schon, 1983). That schools are not typically seen as professional organizations (Meyer and Rowan, 1983:87) is central to this discussion about implementation.

The types of control systems used in implementation may also be viewed from the perspective of leadership behaviour. Sergiovanni (1987:286) referred to change as a form of "social engineering" and raised a critical point: what is the distinction between leadership and manipulation? He argued that principals "have an obligation to provide leadership to the school, and this involves following a course of action leading to school improvement. The change agent role is therefore unavoidable." (1987:286) But is there an assumption in this argument that schools are, and must continue to be, hierarchical, bureaucratic organizations. And does it follow from this assumption that principal leadership must therefore be

'bureaucratic' or 'transactional'- based on hierarchical (positional) authority or exchange relationships between teacher and principal. And an assumption that providing leadership and being the leader (and change agent) are synonomous. How can principals provide leadership, while endowed with positional authority, and not be manipulative? What position do, or should teachers hold in providing leadership within a school? Does this assume that teachers are not responsible enough and are not desirous of change or improving schooling for children? Or that leadership will not, or should not come from any other source? Sergiovanni (1987) raised the point that principals cannot be expected to do it alone, and that 'leadership density' is critical to successful change processes. What does this mean for the way educational organizations are structured and governed? Are hierarchical bureaucracies in education anachronistic?

One approach to this line of analysis is to ask how leaders involved in implementation can conduct themselves ethically, without manipulating those with whom they work. Kenneth Benne (in Sergiovanni, 1987:286-7) has proposed a set of guidelines for principals to ensure ethical behaviour in change agent situations. The engineering of change must be:

- collaborative -- teachers and principals must be made aware of each others intentions;
- educational -- "principals will try to help teachers to become more familiar with the process of problem solving and changing so that they are less dependent on him or her";
- experimental -- changes are adopted tentatively until they work, or a better idea comes along; and
- task oriented -- "that is, controlled by the requirements of the problem and its effective solution rather than oriented to the maintenance or extension of prestige or power of the principal and others who are encouraging change."

What Benne has suggested is leadership behaviour that has been labeled 'transformative' as compared to 'bureaucratic-managerial' or 'transactional' leadership. The distinctions between these types of leadership behaviours provides a basis for examining organizational

structure and control mechanisms. The 'bureaucratic-managerial' leadership model:

> contains a number of prime assumptions. Among them is the assumption that leadership is a function of organizational position; the 'leader' is the person of superior rank in an organization. This assumption is almost universally held among management writers and forms the basis for the various models of leadership which have been developed in the last thirty years. A related assumption is that leadership is goal-centered *and* that the goals are driven by organizational needs. Thus the reason for exerting leadership at all is not social change, or meeting followers' needs, but achieving certain organizational goals. . . .The idea of the 'leader'. . .depends on the *prior* context of an organization. Leaders can only exercise their powers within an environment bounded by certain task responsibilities, and the leader's role is assumed to be one of determining how these tasks can be accomplished most effectively and efficiently. The strong assumption here is that leadership *only* occurs as a result of position. Top executives control their organizations through the manipulation of power designed to make individuals perform (task) and feel good about performing (consideration) at their level of competency (maturity). . . .
>
> Leadership is not organizational management, and it is of no use to the concept of leadership continually to equate it with position or managerial effectiveness. It is crucial to understand that while leadership may occur in organizational settings, and may be exercised by positional holders, there is no necessary or logical link between the two concepts. (Foster, 1989:43-45.)

Bureaucratic-managerial leadership, according to Foster then, may not be leadership at all but just management, and management that is based on rational-legal authority. This style of behaviour is not necessarily conducive to collaboration, to an educational role for the 'leader', or to bringing about change other than to procedural norms when new ways are found to make the operation more efficient or effective. Control would be exercised through the use of rules, regulations, rewards and sanctions -- external mechanisms that ignore higher order motivations of individuals. It assumes a hierarchical authority structure that is paternalistic and is based on:

> inculcating inequalities (i.e., specialization and the division of labor) in order to achieve and maintain social order. Every substantive goal (say, reading improvement) is therefore, subordinate to the hierarchy's procedural goals. How things are done and who has the right to do them is at least as important as what is done because the overriding purpose of the organization is to maintain official differences among the members. (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984:249)

In contrast with this style, transactional leadership is:

> characterized by a form of exchange between leader and subordinates. In return for effort, productivity, loyalty and so on, leaders offer rewards of one kind or another to subordinates. These may be tangible payments, promotion or improved conditions, or may be in the form of less obvious but especially important matching of respective needs such that both leaders and followers get some satisfaction (or at least a reduction of antagonism) out of the exchange. While such transactions may lead to more harmonious and efficient workplaces, however, the efficiency is achieved in an environment that remains essentially static. (Angus, 1989:69)

Transactional leadership can be collaborative, but also manipulative, and assumes that employees need to be controlled and externally motivated in order for the work of the organization to be done.

Transformative leadership, on the other hand, is:

> first concerned with higher-order psychological needs for esteem, autonomy, and self-actualization and then, with moral questions of goodness, righteousness, duty, and obligation. . . . [L]eaders and followers are united in pursuit of higher-level goals common to both. . . . Both want to shape the school in a new direction. . . . Initially, transformative leadership takes the form of *leadership by building*. Here the focus is on arousing human potential, satisfying higher-order needs, and raising expectations of both the leader and the led in a manner that motivates both to higher levels of commitment and performance.
> . . . [E]ventually transformative leadership becomes moral because it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both the leader and the led. When this occurs,

> transformative leadership takes the form of *leadership by bonding*. Here the leader focusses on arousing awareness and consciousness that elevates school goals and purposes to the level of a shared covenant that bonds together leader and follower in a moral commitment. Leadership by bonding responds to such human needs as the desire for purpose, meaning, and significance in what one does. This stage is characterized by cultural and moral leadership.
>
> . . . [L]eadership by bonding helps people move from being subordinates to being followers. . . . [G]ood followers think for themselves, exercise self-control, and are able to accept responsibility and obligation, believe in and care about what they are doing, and are self-motivated, thus able to do what is right for the school, do it well, do it with persistence, and, most important, do it without close supervision.
>
> . . .Subordinates respond to authority; followers respond to ideas. Since followership is linked to ideas, it is not possible to transcend subordinateness for followership in schools without practicing leadership by bonding. The concept of followership proposes a paradox: effective followership is really a form of leadership. . . . Then a new kind of hierarchy emerges in the school- - one that places purposes, values, and commitments at the apex and teachers, principals, parents, and students below in service to these purposes. (Sergiovanni, 1990:23).

Schools in which transformative leadership was practiced would not resemble hierarchical bureaucracies. Authority would not be positional, or based on rational-legal notions of vested power. The exercise of control would be primarily a moral activity - - teachers and administrators would govern themselves according to shared, agreed upon goals, value systems and set of expectations. Paternalism is replaced with shared responsibility, and change becomes continuous and participative (Wiggenhorn, 1990). Most significantly for the purposes of this discussion, policy implementation and change would take on a whole new meaning.

Dan and Ben: revisiting the organizational context. In light of the above description of organizational structures, control mechanisms, and leadership behaviour, a brief review and analysis of the organizational structure that Dan and Ben worked in will be given to further prepare the background for a proposition on policy implementation.

Dan and Ben's worklife was intricately woven in the organizational structure of the district. The formal structure of the district provided them with visible guidelines- the formally adopted management principles of the district, the district purposes and annual goals, the organizational chart and lines of authority, the policy-making process, control systems, the role statements for supervisory positions. The informal structure was their conception of how this formal structure actually operated- which of the management principles were adhered to (and under what conditions), which goals were actively pursued and monitored, who had authority and who had power, how authority and control were really exercised, to what extent were the role and responsibility statements actually followed and enforced. While the formal structure can be determined from documents, the informal structure is a product of Dan's and Ben's perception. As the contextual experiences of Dan and Ben were presented in Chapter Five of this study only a few relevant descriptions will be reviewed.

The Principles of Organization (Appendix B) were formally adopted by the district to provide management guidelines for all staff. They stipulated such matters as lines of authority ("Every individual in the organization should have only one supervisor."), control mechanisms ("Every individual in the organization should know what kind of results he or she is responsible for. Insofar as possible, both objectives and evaluation should be focused upon these results.), and norms of behaviour ("Each member of the leadership team must promote and maintain a strong relationship of mutual trust, confidence, and respect among all members of the institution." and "Every individual in the organization must strive toward absolute integrity. . ."). These principles speak to a hierarchically structured organization with well defined lines of authority. The control mechanism suggested by these principles would be "output" oriented.

Policies of the district were developed with sensitivity to the 'zone of tolerance' of district staff by senior administration (primarily the Superintendent). Policy-making was considered the perogative of leadership, as the associate superintendent described:

> There are some elements of our organization who would prefer to make any change a negotiated change and it is a legitimate

> way. I do not see it as a preferred way. . . .The approach that we are using in this district is one that I call leadership, in a sense in which a leader is only as strong as the respect [he earns]. . . . I'm speaking of our superintendent probably more than anybody, he is that leader and able to effect changes without negotiating as long as people are willing to do that- as long as they believe he is in fact their leader and they are prepared to accept his decisions. . . .I think he has had a lot of acceptance from the staff. . . .This evaluation policy that we're talking about is the leadership example - it does not fit into a negotiated one. (Recorded interview with Associate Superintendent)

District staff were able to influence policy, and occasionally they managed to delay the implementation of a particular policy. One strategy that district administration employed, according to Dan, was to pilot a new initiative with volunteer schools, and once the initiative was demonstrated to be "successful" the whole district became involved. This strategy had been employed several times in the last few years, to the point where Dan believed it was often best to join at the beginning and take advantage of some of the incentives that were offered.

While district policies were developed 'top down', the district also practiced school-based decision-making and budgeting. This practice gave school principals and staff a fair degree of discretion and latitude to develop their own school policies and make their own budget decisions within the parameters of district policies or guidelines. Various formulas were used to distribute fiscal resources as equitably as possible to each school in the district. Within these broad allocations, school staff made decisions for materials, programs and staff manpower. While all staff members and parents were consulted in the development of school budgets, it was not uncommon in Dan's and Ben's schools for staff and parents to express only minimal interest in the process. While Dan and Ben both appreciated the control this gave them over many local decisions, in actual practice, given the restraints and parameters, there was a lot less discretionary ability than the concept might suggest. Staff salaries accounted for 75 to 80% of the total budget, and the margin for discretion, given restrictions on class sizes and instructional time, was minimal.

Formal mechanisms for control included the personnel evaluation policy, budget reports which required objectives, standards, measures and persons responsible to be listed, annual district wide surveys of student, parent and staff opinions, student achievement tests, diploma examinations for high school accreditation, and various other "output" data that were collected for information purposes. Dan and Ben believed that the annual surveys were used by central administration to evaluate their performance more than any other single tool. The potential use of student achievement data for school and teacher evaluation was perceived by Dan and Ben to be a hidden agenda of the central administration.

Although there had been formal role and responsibility statements written for principals, associate superintendents and the superintendent, in practice these statements were rarely referred to. The responsibilities of each position were quite comprehensive and perhaps because there were few limitations, the statements were not seen as having great influence on the worklife of the role incumbent.

In summary, this district was formally organized as a hierarchical bureaucracy. Leadership behaviour was generally of the bureaucratic/managerial type -- top down, with the superintendent regarded as the visionary leader. Within this organizational context Dan and Ben implemented the policy on personnel evaluation. A brief review of the implementation process from a structural perspective will be provided in order to develop a better description and further analysis.

District structure and the implementation process. There was little evidence that a systematic approach to policy implementation was taken by the district with the adoption of the personnel evaluation policy. There was an assumption that implementation was the responsibility of every employee in a supervisory capacity. In this particular situation, the Associate Superintendent believed that since the policy was a re-articulation of concepts that were fundamental to the district's management principles, there really was nothing new to be explained. He was under the impression that principals were already engaged in evaluations that were, for the most part, 'on track', and thus they did not need to be motivated or in-serviced. The entire staff of the district had been given an opportunity to discuss and react to a draft of the policy before it was adopted by the Board, and as the

final policy was not substantially different from the draft, there did not appear to be a need for further explanation. New procedures, such as the writing of annual reports, appeared rather obvious to follow and were not seen as necessitating in-service sessions.

In short, Dan and Ben had been presented with the policy and primarily left to their own devices to implement it in their schools. The Associate Superintendent asked them to develop school procedures in accordance with the policy which he then reviewed with them. The perception of the Associate Superintendent was that the most difficult element of the policy to implement would be attitude -- the basic principles of the policy were not ingrained in teachers as part of their teaching culture. According to the Associate it was the responsibility of every supervisor to communicate with those they supervised to ensure that the expectations within the policy were understood. The Associate, however, did not carry through with this for Dan and Ben. If the expectations of the policy were communicated to them, there was no follow-up to check if the message was understood. While Ben appeared to be quite content to interpret the policy the way he preferred, Dan wanted more direction and clarification. The associate superintendent, for whatever reasons, was not able to meet Dan's needs.

According to the Associate Superintendent, there were several outcomes expected of this policy that the district would be able to monitor in the future: there should be an increase in staff satisfaction as employees would know what is expected of them in their jobs -- at least they should know what results they are expected to achieve, within a set timeframe, what resources are available to them to achieve these results, and have the freedom to use whatever reasonable means they prefer to accomplish this; employees should perceive that they have more influence over their jobs; the personal goals and philosophies of every employee should be consistent with those of the district; and quality decisions regarding promotions (and dismissals) should be made as a result of better knowledge of the staff. The district's annual staff survey would be used to collect the information regarding staff satisfaction. The subsequent success of persons promoted to positions of responsibility could be monitored through the annual surveys

as well as through the evaluation policy itself. Dan and Ben did not appear to be fully aware of these intents.

The hierarchical structure of the district provided conditions that did not promote collaboration or sharing. The Associate Superintendent made assumptions about what the principals knew, and were doing, and was going to rely on existing control systems, primarily the staff survey, to ensure that the policy was meeting its goals. The principals, for a variety of reasons, including their previous experience in seeking assistance from the Associate and their desire to retain some autonomy in their evaluation practice, were unwilling to share openly with the Associate. There were no formal, overt interventions by the district administration to ensure that the policy would be implemented as intended, just an assumption that principals would follow policy procedures as they were written.

Ethical implementation? Using Benne's guidelines for ethical behaviour in change agent situations, was this particular process conducted ethically? There had been no collaboration either in the development of the policy or in its initial implementation at the school level. Ben and Dan were suspicious of what the real intent of the policy was, and were not even aware of the criteria the Associate had prepared to judge its success.

From the findings reported in this study, Dan's and Ben's understanding of the policy was not congruent with the Associate's understanding of the intent of the policy. The policy, according to the Associate, was meant to stress the individuality of teachers through the process of setting expected outcomes for each teacher. By extension, teachers were then expected to address the individuality and uniqueness of students in their evaluation. Standardization extended to the process of evaluation, not to the expectations made of each employee. The policy was not meant to provide a mechanism for the comparison of teachers from school to school. The supervisor was to be held responsible for the results of those supervised (and by extension, teachers were to be responsible for the achievement of their students). Expected results were to be 'products', and not processes. These were not the understandings of Dan and Ben.

Control of the implementation process was based on legal, hierarchical authority and exercised through both "process" and "output" measures. While Dan and Ben were not aware of how the policy would be monitored

through output measures, they were conscious of the direct, if only minimal, supervision of the Associate Superintendent. Neither principal was prepared to overtly ignore or disobey a directive from their supervisor, but they were not inclined to share all of their intentions with the Associate either.

Had the Associate played an educational role in the process? He had apparently assumed that there was little to explain and that the principals were capable of solving their own problems. His style, according to Dan, had been to explain issues in very theoretical ways which left Dan still wondering what he should be doing. Ben had not found this Associate to be very helpful either. The principals were not very dependent on the Associate, and were attempting to solve their own problems, but it was difficult to tell whether they were truly learning from this process. Dan had reflected on what he was doing in discussions with the investigator, and had made decisions to change some of his practices. Ben had sought feedback from his staff in order to evaluate his efforts, but there appeared to be more self-justification than reflection and learning. Had the Associate played an educational role? In a sense he had, but perhaps more by omission than commission. If an educational role includes the sharing of intent, explaining the meaning of concepts, assisting principals to develop problem-solving skills, and establishing conditions that promote participation, self-motivation, and responsibility, then the Associate was remiss to a degree. He certainly had not made the principals dependent on him, or patronized them. He had expected the principals to exercise their own judgment in what they did, but he had not shared with them the criteria he had planned to use to judge their performance with respect to the policy.

From the comments that both Dan and Ben had made, there was a feeling that the policy was in place and there was little likelihood of it changing. The policy was not experimental, or tentative. It was not being piloted. Given that the district's Principles of Organization were not being considered for revision, there did not appear to be much chance of making adjustments to the policy in the near future.

The policy was consistent with the 'problem' it was trying to solve, at least from the perspective of the district management philosophy. The

Superintendent was being consistent with this policy and the espoused results orientation. It was not a policy that, by itself, would bring power or prestige to central administration, or specifically to the Superintendent, although it might be argued that the Superintendent had much riding on the overall success of his management philosophy. Using Benne's criteria of task orientation, the implementation process could be considered ethical.

By all of Benne's criteria, as previously described, the implementation process was not entirely ethical. The policy had not been developed cooperatively, or in such a way that a common understanding was established. Leadership behaviour was authoritarian, although the Associate Superintendent believed that the Superintendent led the district by virtue of his ability to inspire followership.

The policy was imposed on staff -- the authority structure of the organization provided the grounds for this to happen. The Associate Superintendent believed that followership was the result of the faith that employees had in the Superintendent to do the 'right' thing. While Dan expressed overall satisfaction with the system, he was beginning to question the direction that was being taken. He accepted authority, but not blindly, and not totally. He feared reprisals to overt noncompliance. Ben was not as satisfied as Dan was with the district leadership and he preferred to follow his own path where he could. He too accepted authority and believed in loyalty to one's employer, but only to a point.

The organizational response to ensure compliance was to use both direct supervision (at least in a minimal fashion) and 'output' controls. An inference from this is that principals are not to be trusted. Management of the process under these conditions can take on an adversarial role. The description provided in this study of the process that Dan and Ben went through to implement the policy demonstrates that they were capable of modifying the policy to meet their own needs, of paying lip-service to key elements of the policy, and of not accepting full responsibility for the achievement of the policy intent. But are they guilty of poor performance, or are they 'victims' of a management approach that does not accord them sufficient professional discretion to make adjustments openly to the policy. Is an organizational structure that is characterized by hierarchical authority, paternalism (at least on the part of the Superintendent), lack of trust, and

external control perhaps more to blame for discrepancies in implementation? Given the findings of this study and this analysis of the organizational context, a recommendation for future policy implementation is presented.

A Recommendation for Policy Implementation. To first reiterate a few key points of the previous discussion, it appears that the manner in which policies are formally implemented in an organization is characterized by the social structure- the control systems, leadership behaviour, and the overall system of governance. The findings from this study suggest that implementation in a school setting is a complex activity that is guided by characteristics of the principal, the policy and the overall organizational context. The principal's interpretation of the policy, and his understanding of the context in which he works illuminates the implementation process.

It is proposed that policy implementation be conceived as an activity that translates intent into action, and for this to happen the intent of a policy must be well understood and agreed upon by all parties affected. Implementation therefore becomes an educative experience: those involved must have a sense of themselves as learners. They must engage in critical inquiry and self-reflection. They must accept that the process involves a sharing of responsibility. In this process, leadership would not emanate from position, but from initiative to engage others in action and thought.

It is assumed that the world is not static, and that change becomes a constant in our lives. As events around us change, so do we. We do not remain the same person over time; our understanding of the world matures as we do. Schools and school systems, as organizations of people, need to constantly examine purposes, goals, values, and the practices followed to reach these ends. Policy making is a formalized process of inquiry, re-examination, and re-direction. Policy implementation is a translation of this new intent into the everyday activities of those involved, and a continuous evaluation of its efficacy.

Bringing about change may be no more nor less than creating conditions for productive learning. In schools, principals and teachers bring a wealth of experience and an established mental framework for learning to their work situations. Their understanding of the needs of students, their values and beliefs, and their own needs are varied. A district or school

policy is struck to bring a common understanding to this diverse group on an issue of importance. This understanding is primarily of an intent, not necessarily of procedures. The implementation process must include the development of a shared understanding of the intent, and a commitment to accept collective and individual responsibility for its achievement. Changes to current practices that are suggested by the policy need to be thoughtfully reviewed for their implications for other policies. Conditions to support changes, and the learning that is required, must be carefully woven into the worklife of those involved.

For this conception of implementation to be put into practice, leadership behaviour and organizational structures would need to be consistent with the underlying values. It is proposed that for a policy to be implemented in the manner described, individuals in supervisory positions would be required to reflect the values of transformative and democratic leadership. That is, relationships between individuals would not be based on hierarchical authority, but on mutual respect and on a commonality of purpose and values for the organization. Organizational vision would be derived from synergetic discussion and debate, not from imposed authority. Policy ideas could come from any individual or group within, or outside the organization. Power would be seated in ideas not individuals, and the persuasion of these ideas on those involved. Apathy would be the greatest threat to leadership in this type of organization. Leadership has a critical responsibility to ensure the growth and development of all members of the organization as it is the collective intelligence that will determine the success of the organization. Organizational structure would be based on participatory management and decision-making. Differentiated roles would be based on function rather than authority. Control would be both individually and collectively imposed -- through well defined expectations and goals, and through sharing of information.

Implementation, it is suggested, needs to become more 'educative'- an opportunity for sharing and learning, for discussion and argument, for growth and maturing. It needs to become more ethical, and less manipulative. It needs to become a part of the currency of the everyday worklife of people in schools. Change must be perceived as a constant rather than as an episode.

There are organizations that exhibit many of the characteristics described above. There is a need to share these experiences with others so that they see possibilities become realities. There is a need to provide research that illuminates these realities so that more can be encouraged to critically reflect on their circumstances and to explore the possibilities available.

Pressman and Wildavsky have, in a similar fashion to the preceding, described implementation as 'exploration', as a process of organizational learning. They ask:

> What organizational structure would we prefer and in what proportion if we wanted high degrees of search and change, that is, if we wanted to detect and correct mistakes, changing our preferences as well as the means of implementing them? . . .Evidently, then, some combination of different organizational structures -- hierarchies, collegiums, and markets -- facilitates evaluation and implementation.
>
> Toward this end, a "multiorganizational analytical perspective," such as that suggested by Benny Hjern and David Porter, makes sense.
>
> . . .
>
> Policy implementation is hypothesis-testing: it is exploration. Any political body that argues otherwise mistakenly regards itself as omniscient and omnipotent. Its territory has been conquered and mapped: all unknowns have been banished from its kingdom. With the unquestioned assurance that the central plan is ethically, politically, and practically error-free, implementation can proceed without the expectation that learning will ensue.
>
> Yet there is no amount of statutory specificity and top-down control that will prevent an implementation process from becoming a test of its own efficacy. Where coercion may subdue political obstructions to the implementation process, rarely can it compensate for a misshapen plan of action, for a misdiagnosis of the problem to be treated, or for lack of foresight. Implementation failure, then, does not only affect democratically organized systems. It is common to all policy formulating and implementing processes. (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984: 253-54)

In reflecting on Pressman and Wildavsky's comments on organizational structures, it is not enough to desire a democratic organization, led by transformational leaders, as the saviour to the problems of implementation. It is also necessary to ensure that problem sensing and problem solving skills are developed in organizations.

A Few Reflections, in Conclusion

This study of how two principals went about implementing a district policy on teacher evaluation has been more of an odyssey than an inquiry for the investigator. Case studies, for the neophyte researcher, can be both exciting and horrifying. Exciting because of the adventure, not being sure at the outset just what might ensue, what ideas will prevail, what will be learned and what transformations the investigator may go through. But also horrifying because of the nature and enormity of the task- - the mass of data to sort through, the need to establish a focus, the drive to make conceptual sense of ordinary talk and everyday events, the responsibility to report on what was found in a trustworthy manner, the uncertainty and confusion that prevails during the process.

For the author, the duration of this study from development, through data collection, to analysis and writing, a task spread over a period of five years, has been a significant learning experience and a major event in my life. The process of this study has contributed to a transformation of beliefs of the author - - about the nature of knowledge, about administrative practice, about personnel evaluation, and about policy implementation. The immersion into the lives of Dan and Ben, although it may have been only a superficial exploration, has been truly an 'educative' experience.

There is much still to do. Research in educational administration has been accused of lacking substantive theories and constructs. Perhaps we have been looking in the wrong direction. Aoki (1983) has written of implementation as situational praxis, deriding the more common understanding of implementation as instrumental action. Aoki speaks of the false dichotomy that exists between theory and practice, and the disservice that this mode of thinking has contributed to both teachers and students when curriculum implementation is practiced instrumentally, that

is, when the teacher and student are seen as 'object'. The point of this review of Aoki's writing is to suggest that there is a body of thought that provides powerful constructs for deliberations about administrative practice. This body of thought is slowly beginning to permeate educational research. Interestingly, the underlying assumptions of qualitative inquiry about how the world operates appear to be embedded in much 'scientific' research -- knowledge as a tentative entity, waiting to be disproved. The problem may lie in the difficulty of transforming the views of a population that finds too much comfort in holding on to entrenched and maladaptive beliefs, that seeks the one best answer.

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Appendix A

March 13, 1985

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Performance Evaluation

ORIGINATOR: Associate Superintendent
School Support Services

RESOURCE PERSON: Assistant Superintendent Personnel Services

RECOMMENDATION

That the following policy statement on the performance evaluation of staff be approved:

> The performance of each staff member will be evaluated by the immediate supervisor to maintain and improve the educational service provided to the students of the district. A written performance evaluation report based on how well the expected outcomes have been achieved will be provided to the staff member at least once a year.

* * * * *

The proposed policy statement and the guidelines and procedures that follow reflect certain beliefs and rely on the use of the terms as defined in the attached glossary (APPENDIX I). Further, the effectiveness of performance evaluation will be enhanced with the provision of in-services to all staff and the fair and reasonable application of the procedures.

While the policy applies to all staff members, provision is made in the guidelines and procedures for the recognition of individual differences of the members of the various employee groups.

All staff members must know what outcomes are expected of them and how well those outcomes are being achieved in order to maintain or improve their performance. It is our belief that staff members want to be evaluated in a fair and reasonable manner and desire to grow professionally.

Judgments made about how well the expected outcomes have been achieved are based on information that has been gathered over a period of time. A written document is provided to summarize the process and justify the judgment. Decisions regarding recognition of growth, staff assignments, retention or promotion are not a part of the performance evaluation process; however the performance evaluation should provide the major basis for such decisions.

Purposes of Performance Evaluation

The performance evaluation is conducted to:

1. Enhance or maintain the performance of staff members and the District.
2. Indicate the extent to which expected outcomes have been achieved.
3. Provide information for making decisions.

Guidelines

1. The immediate supervisor is responsible for the performance evaluation of each staff member.

2. The immediate supervisor, in consultation with staff, is responsible for developing, adopting and updating written procedures consistent with the district performance evaluation policy, guidelines and procedures.

3. Performance evaluation may occur at any point in time and will utilize a variety of indicators and measures. A written performance evaluation shall be completed at least once a year based on data gathered over an evaluation period.

4. Each set of procedures for performance evaluation should:
   (a) provide for the setting of expected outcomes, timelines and the manner in which data will be collected;
   (b) provide a process to gather information which will indicate the extent to which expected outcomes have been achieved;
   (c) outline the manner in which assistance and support for improved performance will occur;
   (d) be applicable to all personnel;
   (e) be administered fairly and reasonably for each staff member.

Procedures

Performance evaluation may occur at different times. In the development of evaluation procedures, the immediate supervisor and staff should consider the following three phases of the process:

Identification of Expected Outcomes

The immediate supervisor, in consultation with the staff member, identifies expected outcomes based on district, school and personal goals. Characteristics of students, staff and the physical environment are taken into account when the expected outcomes are determined. Outcomes are clearly stated and their indicators are specified.

Expected outcomes should indicate what is to be achieved and are to be considered in the broad context of district, school or unit, personal and classroom goals. In establishing expected outcomes all aspects of student and employee growth and development should be considered. The expected outcomes should be commensurate with the responsibilities assigned to the staff member.

2. Supervision

Supervision of the staff member involves assisting and guiding the staff member on an ongoing basis towards attaining expected outcomes. The supervision phase allows for the modification, extension or deletion of expected outcomes.

Conferencing and coaching are integral components of the supervision phase. Additional resources other than the immediate supervisor can be utilized in the support, guidance and assistance to the staff member. Decisions related to program, resource deployment and professional development may be made as a result of the supervision process.

In the event the expected outcomes are considered reasonable and the staff member is experiencing difficulty in achieving the expected outcomes, the staff member shall enter into a period of remediation. The staff member shall meet with the immediate supervisor and receive a statement of the outcomes not achieved, the corrective action to be taken, the kind and amount of assistance to be provided, the time frame provided for corrective action to occur, and the manner by which progress shall be determined.

3. Evaluation

The immediate supervisor collects data using previously identified methods and reviews the information within the context of the expected outcomes. The immediate supervisor determines the degree to which expected outcomes have been achieved. It is recognized that performance evaluation may occur at differing times, but at least once each year a written performance evaluation report is presented to, and discussed with the staff member.

A copy of the written report will be provided to the staff member and the original retained by the evaluator. The staff member may add written comments to the document and either party may request a copy be placed on the staff member's personnel file.

In the event a staff member's performance is judged unacceptable and all reasonable efforts in the supervision phase have failed in having the staff member reach and maintain an acceptable level of performance, the evaluator shall notify the staff member in writing.

Staff members have the right to appeal any judgments contained in their written performance evaluation report. The staff member may submit a written statement of concerns to the evaluator's immediate supervisor. The evaluator has similar rights. Upon receipt of an appeal, that supervisor will acknowledge the appeal, investigate the circumstances and respond to both parties. That supervisor may involve resource personnel in the review of the appeal.

Accessibility to Report

Access to a staff member's file is governed by collective agreements and district practice.

Decisions

The performance evaluation may be used in part in making decisions related to such matters as the assignment of staff, retention and promotion.

A staff member has the right to appeal a decision through to the Superintendent of Schools. Decisions of the Superintendent of Schools may be appealed to the Board of Trustees.

SCHOOL BUDGETING MANUAL

1. PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

1c. PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION

Propositions:

A. There are generally multiple criteria, which are frequently conflicting, that need to be considered when making and carrying decisions.

   For this school district, major criteria that should always be considered are the Purposes of the

B. Every individual in the organization should know what kind of results he or she is responsible for.

   Insofar as possible, both objectives and evaluation should be focused upon these results.

C. Every individual in the organization should have only one supervisor.

   There should be many places and persons from which an individual can seek advice and assistance, but no-one other than his/her direct supervisor should normally have the authority to set objectives, allocate resources, and direct, veto or evaluate his or her performance.

   Channels of communication should be kept as free and open as possible: any person in any part and at any level of the organization should be encouraged to go directly to any other part or person in the organization for information or assistance needed to perform his or her job: "Going through channels", in the restrictive sense, is applicable only to situations involving directions, approvals or vetoes.

D. Authority can be delegated; responsibility cannot.

   Expressed in another way - delegation does not diminish the responsibility the delegator had prior to the delegation in any way.

E. No-one should have the authority to direct or veto any decisions or actions where he or she is not accountable for the results.

   The proposition should not be interpreted to mean a person responsible for results cannot be directed or vetoed. His or her supervisor (or the supervisor's supervisor, or the ...) are also accountable for the results, and therefore not barred from directing or vetoing.

1c. PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION (Cont.)

Propositions:(Cont.)

F. The organization should avoid uniform rules, practices, policies or regulations which are designed to protect the organization against "mistakes". Such rules . . . tend to be designed with the least competent individuals in mind and their uniform application will tend to force all individuals to perform uniformly at the lowest common level of competence.

Individuals with similar positions need not have similar degrees of authority. Delegation of authority can be individualized to match differing abilities to handle responsibilities.

G. Each member of the leadership team must promote and maintain a strong relationship of mutual trust, confidence and respect among all members of the institution.

Each member of the leadership team has an obligation to actively pursue the foregoing objective with respect to all employees under his or her supervision.

Either unwillingness or inability to do so should be sufficient cause for removal from the leadership team.

H. Every individual in the organization must strive toward absolute integrity in his or her relationships with all others, both within and outside the organization. We must not knowingly or carelessly, by omission or commission, misinform or mislead, withhold information which should be disclosed, or do anything else to cast doubts upon the honesty, integrity or motives of the organization or any of its individual members.

Issued: FEBRUARY, 1985
Revised:

Evaluation Policies

Teacher Evaluation

BACKGROUND

To ensure effective instruction of students, Alberta Education is ultimately responsible for making certain that school authorities implement their teacher evaluation policy and procedures appropriately . The responsibility for the evaluation of individual teacher performance and for the quality of teaching practice in schools, however, lies with each school authority.

POLICY

To assist in the provision of effective instruction to students, and to facilitate the professional growth and development of teachers, Alberta Education believes that the performance of individual teachers should be evaluated.

DEFINITION

In this policy,

"school authority" means school boards, accredited private schools, and early childhood services (ECS) private operators and may include federal and band operated schools.

LEGISLATION

School Act

15 A principal of a school must...

(b) ensure that the instruction provided by the teachers employed in the school is consistent with the courses of study and education programs prescribed, approved or authorized pursuant to this Act...

(h) evaluate or provide for the evaluation of the teachers employed in the school;....

Department of Education Act

6(1) The Minister may make regulations

(a) concerning the certification of teachers and the cancellation and suspension of certificates...

and the **Regulations Act** applies to any regulation made under this section.

PROCEDURES

1 Each school board, private school, and early childhood services (ECS) operator shall develop, keep current, and implement written policy and procedures consistent with provincial policy and procedures. These shall be a matter of public record, available upon request. Alberta Education shall assist school authorities in their development.

2 Evaluation policy and procedures:

(a) shall be applicable to all teachers;
(b) shall be fair and consistent in application;
(c) should encourage consultation with teachers in the development of the policy and procedures;
(d) shall ensure that the evaluation reports are made available to the teacher in question upon completion;
(e) shall be consistent with the principles of fundamental justice and provide an appeal mechanism; and,
(f) shall be approved by Alberta Education's Regional Office of Education.

3 The results of evaluations conducted by school authorities should be utilized to:

(a) assist the professional development of teachers;
(b) develop improved measures of teacher performance;
(c) take appropriate action with respect to teachers whose performance is unacceptable; and
(d) recommend teachers for permanent certification.

4 Alberta Education shall not inquire into or report upon any disputes arising from individual teachers who are dissatisfied with evaluation reports from school authorities whose policies are consistent with the principles of fundamental justice and that provide an appeal mechanism. Alberta Education may consider appeals from teachers employed by school authorities whose policies do not contain such provisions.

5 Alberta Education may investigate specific incidents involving professional staff in the employ of school authorities.

6 Alberta Education shall conduct teacher evaluations in private schools and privately operated early childhood services centres, and may conduct teacher evaluations in federal or band operated schools, for the purpose of recommending permanent certification.

7 A teacher who desires to appeal any matter relating to the issuance, withholding, or recommendation for cancellation of a certificate may appeal to the Certification Appeal Committee of Alberta Education, under the Department of Education Act, Certification of Teachers Regulation (Alta. Reg. 117/77).