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PROBLEMS FOR TEACHERS
IN THE PROCESSES OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

An application of Bernstein's theory of integrated and
collection codes to the case of a new open space high school.

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PREFACE

A number of people gave generously of their time, to talk to me and to provide documentation on the early period in the establishment of the A.C.T. Schools Authority and of open space high schools. They were all working in schools in the A.C.T. or in the schools office during the planning stages for the new Authority and for open space high schools. I would like to thank Dr. N.R. Edwards (Consultant, Catholic Education Office), Mr. F. Beck (Principal, retired, Duffy Primary School), Mr. Brian Dougherty (Building Section, A.C.T. Schools Authority), Mr. Cliff Burnett (Principal, Canberra High School), Mr. Ian Anlezark (Principal, Wanniassa High School), Mr. Brian Brown (Principal, Kaleen High School), Mr. Russ Ferrett (Assistant Principal, Erindale College), Mr. J.W.G. Ryan (Principal, retired, Kambah High School). In particular, I would like to thank "Mr. Mike Oxley", Principal of "Windy Hill High School", who gave me enormous encouragement and assistance, and treated my inroads into his leisure time with the patience of a saint.

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ABSTRACT

The context in which open space high schools were pioneered in the ACT is examined in the light of Basil Bernstein's (1971) theory of the reasons for changes in curricula and of the organisational conditions necessary for the changes which he considers to be taking place.

The context which is examined is derived from analyses of the perspectives and views of the Australian Schools Commission, of the planners of the new design high schools in the ACT, of the Campbell Committee, which provided the rationale for the restructuring of the ACT secondary school system, and of the Principal and teachers of one of the original open space high schools in the ACT.

From the analysis of the context of the establishment of a specific open space high school, "Windy Hill", a number of factors are seen to be significant in the process of educational change. In particular, it is claimed that any theoretical perspective on the reasons and conditions for educational change, if it is to have much influence on the change process, must take into account the perspectives of the practitioners in schools. It must also take into account the complexity of events which affect the process of educational change in systems and in schools.

The relationship between imposed organisational structures and the curricular goals of schools is examined. It is claimed that changes to administrative structures must emerge from the existing aims of the system and

the institution, rather than be imposed in order to effect curricular changes.

Assumptions about the nature of educational change, made by the planners for the open space high schools in the ACT, are identified and related to the problems perceived by the Principal and teachers at "Windy Hill". From this analysis is derived a set of features of school settings which need to be considered when innovations in education are being contemplated.

These features of the process of educational change are used to generate a number of recommendations which apply to the adoption and development of changes in education systems and schools.

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