

**Student, Teacher and Parent Perspectives of the Effectiveness of a
Developing New High School with a Middle School Program**

by

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The tears are useless, I know;
But somewhere, far back
In my mind, I cry anyway.

From **Untitled** by *Jeremy Patrick Murphy* (Year 8 Student)
Excerpted from 1989 RAINBOW COLLECTION: Stories and Poetry by Young
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ABSTRACT

This study looks at the developing culture in a brand new high school set up using middle schooling strategies and structures. The study takes place during the second year of the school's existence focusing on parents and students who made up the first intake, and the full complement of staff.

The literature review was bifold examining writing about middle schooling and about culture. The review of middle schooling looks at some major studies of education for young adolescents and then at various structural and strategic initiatives to better cater for the needs of those young people. The view of writings about culture looks at defining culture then organisational and corporate culture and the process of creating culture in a new school.

The three groups mentioned; parents, students and teachers were given questionnaires to complete and then a follow up questionnaire was completed by some. The first of these questionnaires asked about respondents' ideal school and then their perceptions of the reality at Lanyon High School using a Likert scale with directed response questions. Some open questions about values at the school were also included. The second questionnaire looked at the school culture with a series of open questions focusing on ceremonies, rituals, celebrations and metaphors about the school, the staff and the students.

Questions about the ideal school and perceptions at Lanyon focused around twenty themes relating to culture and to middle schooling. Percentage responses to these twenty sets of questions were calculated and then results tabulated and graphed. Appropriate responses from the open ended questions was also included under each of the twenty themes. These results were interpreted with reference to the literature review again focusing around the twenty themes.

The findings have implications for those establishing new schools to cater for the 9-13 age range and for those in existing schools who wish to better cater for this age of students and reduce the trauma of the primary to secondary school transition.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	i
Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Figures	vii
List of Appendices	viii
Chapter 1 Overview of the Study	1
Purpose of the Study	1
Setting of the Study	1
The Curriculum	2
Work Organisation	4
Information Technology	7
Significance of the Study	8
Research Questions	8
Assumptions	9
Limitations	9
Research Design	9
Organisation of the Thesis	10
Chapter 2 Review of the Literature	11
Middle Schooling	11
Coalition of Essential Schools	12
The National School's Network	14
South Australian Study - Junior Secondary Review	15
Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21 st Century	18
In the Middle: Schooling for Young Adolescents	20
From Alienation to Engagement - Opportunities for Reform in the Middle Years of Schooling	21
Features of Middle Schooling	27
Curriculum Integration	27
Student Generated Curriculum	31
Relevance	33
Authentic Assessment	34
Cooperative Group Work	37
Small Groupings	38
Recapping of Major Themes on Middle Schooling	39
Culture	40
Introduction	40
What is Culture?	40
Organisational Culture	44
Creating School Culture - New Schools	47
Assessing School Culture	52
Intangible Manifestations	56
Tangible Manifestations	56
Implications for Leading and Managing a School	60

	Conclusion.....	62
Chapter 3	Conceptual Framework	63
	Introduction.....	63
	Middle Schooling.....	63
	Model for Developing Culture in Middle Schooling.....	66
	Model for Establishing Middle School Effectiveness.....	68
	Research Questions.....	69
Chapter 4	Methodology.....	72
	Introduction.....	72
	Empirical Research.....	73
	Pilot Study.....	75
	Data Collection.....	76
	Data Analysis.....	81
	Data Analysis for this Investigation	82
	Reliability.....	82
	Reliability in this Investigation.....	83
	Validity.....	83
	Validity in this Investigation.....	86
Chapter 5	Presentation of Findings.....	90
	Introduction.....	90
	Information Technology.....	90
	Violence and Harassment.....	95
	Outcomes Based Assessment versus Criterion Referenced Assessment.....	100
	Student Focused Approach.....	103
	Teacher Teaming.....	109
	Cooperative Group Work/Table Teams for Students.....	112
	Relationships.....	116
	Extra-Curricular Activities.....	120
	Basic Skills in Literacy and Numeracy.....	126
	Block Time Tabling.....	129
	Integrated Curriculum.....	134
	Student/Teacher Relationships.....	137
	Content Centred/Student Centred Curriculum.....	144
	Streaming v Mixed Ability Classes.....	148
	Identifying Special Needs Students.....	151
	Uniform/Colour Code.....	155
	Outcomes Based Reporting or Criterion Referenced Reporting.....	159
	Learning Facts or Learning Information Retrieval Skills.....	163
	Dividing the Student Population into Smaller Groupings.....	166
	Student Generated Curriculum.....	169
Chapter 6	Interpretation of Findings.....	173
	Introduction.....	173
	Information Technology.....	173

Violence and Harassment	175
Outcomes Based Assessment versus Criterion Referenced Assessment	177
Student Focused Approach	179
Teacher Teaming	180
Cooperative Group Work/Table Teams for Students	182
Relationships	184
Extra-Curricular Activities	186
Basic Skills in Literacy and Numeracy	188
Block Time Tabling	189
Integrated Curriculum	192
Student/Teacher Relationships	194
Content Centred/Student Centred Curriculum	196
Streaming v Mixed Ability Classes	198
Identifying Special Needs Students	200
Uniform/Colour Code	202
Outcomes Based Reporting or Criterion Referenced Reporting	204
Learning Facts or Learning Information Retrieval Skills	206
Dividing the Student Population into Smaller Groupings	208
Student Generated Curriculum	210
Conclusion	212
Chapter 7 Summary, Conclusions and Implications for Practice and Further Research	215
Summary	215
Areas where Lanyon is most clearly seen as a model middle school which matches the community expectations of an ideal school	216
Areas where Lanyon is most clearly seen as a model middle school beyond the expectations for the community's ideal school	217
Areas where Lanyon is operating as a model middle school and the community has inconclusive opinions about an ideal school	217
Areas where the community was mixed in its opinion about how effectively Lanyon was operating as a model middle school	218
Areas where Lanyon is operating as a model middle school and sections of the community have other desires for their ideal school	219
Conclusions	220
Implications for Practice	220
Facilitating School Development	221
Fostering Community Understanding	222
Modelling for Other Schools	223
Further Research	223
Final Remarks	223

Bibliography	226
Appendices	231
Appendix 1 Pilot Study Questionnaires	232
Appendix 2 Pilot Study Results	242
Appendix 3 Main Study First Questionnaire	250
Appendix 4 Main Study Second Questionnaire	263
Appendix 5 Main Study Graphs of Results Questionnaire 1 Sections 1&2	269

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Title	Page
Figure 2.1	Key Directions for the Education of Young Adolescents	17
Figure 2.2	The Process of Student Generated Curriculum Advocated by Beane	33
Figure 2.3	Transmission and Ritual in School Culture	45
Figure 2.4	Conceptual Framework for Assessing and Developing School Culture..	55
Figure 3.1	Identified Themes Within a Structural Framework	67
Figure 3.2	Three Dimensional Grid. Framework for Establishing Effectiveness of a School Set up as a Middle School	70

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix	Title	Page
Appendix 1	Pilot Study Questionnaires.....	232
Appendix 2	Pilot Study Results.....	242
Appendix 3	Main Study First Questionnaire	250
Appendix 4	Main Study Second Questionnaire.....	263
Appendix 5	Main Study Graphs of Results Questionnaire 1 Sections 1&2.....	269