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"Study of Necessary Skill areas  
and  
Perceived Skill Deficits  
in  
Australian Educational Administrators."

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PREFACE:

This study was an idea that became a "happening" for many innocent bystanders who became involved, sometimes out of professional interest, but often out of helpfulness and kindness to the author. My gratitude goes to all of them for the parts they played, for without them the project could never have been finished.

To my family who patiently suffered paper strewn rooms; my A.C.E.A. friends, Roy Martin in particular, who provided support and encouragement; my long suffering supervisor, who managed an air of faith throughout the process, to Joan and her everlasting cheerful patience with corrections and alterations, go my thanks.

In the course of this Field Study the difficulties of shoestring budgeting and part-time research have been many and varied. My only hope is that it may stir others involved in the administration of education to gain funding to allow full-time field researchers to do the urgent inquiries needed to ensure the improvement in Australian education that our children deserve. That can only be possible through better training and selection of high calibre administrators in a time of contraction and recession.

In that hope, this study is for the educational faith of Bob Kelly and his grandsons practising his craft. It wasn't easy then, it isn't now but it is always worthwhile.

Thanks are also due to Doug Ogilvie for his permission to use the original survey.

ABSTRACT:

This field study is the result of observations of stress and disquiet among educational administrators. Two survey instruments, one to a population of A.C.E.A. members in five states and two territories of Australia, and a refined survey to administrators in two Metropolitan West Inspectorates in N.S.W. were employed.

An attempt was made to look at perceived deficits, in areas considered necessary skills for educational administrators, over variables of, state, sex, age, level of institution, government/nongovernment systems, status, tenure and educational administration qualifications.

From the outset it was realized that the nature of the study would have to be essentially to generate directions of future specific research since there was little Australian research in the areas being surveyed. This became more obvious as data was collected and possible causes for stress, perceived deficits, and the related poor morale multiplied with each set of comments received.

The only conclusion that could be unequivocal was that the areas of administrator morale, training, selection, support, style and role perception are urgently in need of in-depth research as are the

effects on educational institutions of policy processes, socio-political factors and community expectations.

Even with a wider literature search it becomes obvious that there is a need for researchers to rethink theory in terms of social realities and human and socio-political possibilities rather than continue building theories which have little or no effect on the education received by an Australian student in the 1980's.

It is equally evident that the solution for the obvious administrator malaise and powerlessness expressed by respondents is in their own hands via a quest for excellence in education, relevance to society and socio-political understanding.

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