An Investment in Being Human

EXPLORING

YEAR 9 STUDENT EXHIBITIONS

AN ACT CASE STUDY

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Abstract

The ACT Year 9 Exhibitions Program aligns curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in the design and implementation of rich learning tasks, which are focussed on trans-disciplinary, problem-based, community-centred issues. It provides an authentic assessment model through a panel assessment process of demonstrated student achievement.

This case study research examines the uptake of an Exhibitions approach in three ACT high schools. It discovers, through their own telling, what inspires commitment by participants to the program and the ways that they measure success. The study draws on a rich data set of narrative inquiry and semi-structured interviews with teachers and students from the case study schools.

Analysis of the 'lived experiences' of the participants indicates that how individuals profit by the program is determined by five critical factors which are realized differently for them. Further, for the *Year 9 Student Exhibitions Program* to succeed in meeting its goals of providing for teacher renewal and improved student learning outcomes, and of promoting high school reform, certain conditions must prevail. These conditions converge around the support afforded teachers to build their capacity for curriculum and pedagogical change, and the opportunities for engagement and agency of both teachers and students in the design of the Exhibition task and its implementation.

This study investigates the realities of implementing change in schools and its findings augment what theorists would predict for school change. It indicates that the extent to which *Exhibitions* can drive a wedge into the 'business-as-usual' approach of the ACT's more traditional high schools, and provide an alternative view of what it means to educate for the 21st century, depends ultimately upon the human and structural conditions created in the school, and the authenticity of the approach to uptake. This study contains important recommendations for government and education systems alike as they pursue school change.

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1. A New Direction for ACT High Schools

1:1. The Purpose of the Research

The challenge for educators is to find ways to provide the best learning opportunities and experiences for the members of their communities. New thinking about learning, the purposes of schooling, and the transformation of school practices, processes and structures have currency in a climate and time of rapid change and uncertainty. The pressure is on, to transform the learning and achievement of all our young people to better prepare them for living in the 21st century.

The area of this research is innovative curriculum development and the focus, the ACT Year 9 Student Exhibitions Program, first developed in 2001 by the now Australian Capital Territory Department of Education and Training (ACTDET). This system initiative represented not only a radical new approach for ACT government high schools but also a significant contribution to educational thinking at the time. Its aims were to provide a framework for curriculum renewal, to build the capacity of teachers for change and to improve learning outcomes for students. The innovation was situated within contemporary research about progressive school reform and concern for the relevance of schooling in meeting the needs of young people today and for the future.

This study offers insight into what happened at the interface between the implementation of these new ideas and the culture and apparatus of the school. In examining the uptake by teachers and students of this initiative, I analyse its impact on building the capacity of teachers for curriculum reform and pedagogical change, and on the process of improving student learning outcomes. From the interview responses of the participants, the research identifies the factors that prompted the commitment of teachers and students to the learning process that was their Exhibitions 'journey'.

I began this study as a result of my involvement in innovative school change at several levels. As a teacher in the late 1990s, I became concerned about the

transition of students from primary to secondary school and was aware of the associated drop in student resilience and achievement, and of the necessity for schools to better cater for the needs of emerging adolescents. Middle schooling philosophy challenged many conventions of high school organisation to overcome fragmentation of the curriculum, inflexible structures and a school climate which could often be dispassionate and uncompromising, and not suited to meeting the needs of young adolescents (Newmann et al, 1996:104).

My interest in the Middle Years of Schooling philosophy, resulted in my appointment to a brand new middle school in the ACT. As a teacher I experienced the intellectual stimulation of being part of a dynamic professional learning community, the stabilising influence on students of 'home room' structures, and the professional growth that came of contributing to the establishment of a progressive school culture. I witnessed the engagement and positive achievement of adolescents, representing the range of abilities, who thrived in this environment.

Alert to the need for change in the ACT's traditional high schools, I took the opportunity to participate as a Project Officer in the development team for the Year 9 Student Exhibitions Pilot Program with its promise for high school reform. The Exhibitions Pilot 'journey' was demanding and enriching, and confirmed my faith in the capacity of teachers to be instrumental in their own professional renewal and in making a positive difference to the learning and lives of students. Subsequent to this work on Exhibitions, as a School Leader B in a primary school, I have confronted the process and problems involved in school transformation, sourcing strategies provided by the Exhibitions approach to positive effect.

My positioning with regard to the innovation is an important incentive to do the research. This unique set of experiences, together with my practical and philosophical perspective on educational change, have been instrumental in the decision to investigate the implementation of this innovation, and in the framing of the research question.

How has an Exhibitions approach been applied in three ACT high schools and what has been its impact on student learning and teacher renewal?

The research documents how the approach was applied in three ACT high schools, chosen for their different philosophical, organisational and cultural perspectives, and located variously on a continuum of traditional, transitional and transformational educational development. It provides insight into the Exhibitions experience of students, teachers and leaders, and into the extent and authenticity of the uptake. It indicates those conditions that have supported or frustrated the initiative in each of the schools, focusing on teacher renewal and student learning.

By revealing the interface between praxis, and the school culture and apparatus, in three different educational settings, the record provides useful models for evaluation by prospective implementers of Exhibitions. Most significantly the analysis identifies the kinds of processes and conditions that have helped to progress innovative curriculum development and pedagogical reform in the case study schools. In so doing it contributes to the field of school reform, recognising that "for the reform to be successful, certain things have to happen, 'that the reform needs, but cannot cause' " (Fullan, 2001:101).

With the task facing schools of how to raise achievement levels, address student engagement and better prepare young people for a less certain future, Exhibitions is an approach which aims to provide a cohesive framework for reform. According to its proponents, if the uptake of Exhibitions is authentic, the program causes schools to examine their existing approaches to schooling - their philosophy, their structures and their underlying assumptions about the role of schooling. Teachers are challenged to examine authoritative pedagogy, school wide pedagogy (Crowther, 2002) and personal pedagogy, and to identify 'discrepancies' (Evans, 1996) between their commitment to authentic pedagogy and their own practice.

This research investigates the uptake of the Exhibitions initiative within three mainstream government high schools in the ACT. It considers the impact of this particular innovation on teacher renewal and improved student learning in the light of current thinking about curriculum and pedagogical change, and educating for the 21st century. It indicates the conditions within each of the case study schools that have supported or inhibited its successful implementation. It is focused on the reflections

and evaluations given the initiative by the stakeholders themselves, shedding light on the value of an Exhibitions approach and possible directions for its future.

The success of Exhibitions implementation in each of the three schools may also be regarded, using Fullan's benchmark for educational change, in terms of the degree and quality of change that occurs in practice (Fullan, 2001:39), demonstrated in this case by the extent to which the intended outcomes for Exhibitions have been realized - that of improved student learning and increased skill and understanding on the part of teachers.

Further, this study seeks to build upon previous knowledge and ideas in the area of curriculum innovation and pedagogical change, making use of previous research knowledge and ideas to analyse the results of the study. While it documents teacher and student perceptions of their involvement in this particular reform initiative, at the same time it illustrates more broadly, the confusion that exists in schools with respect to educational beliefs and perspectives that shape the purposes of schooling and on-the-ground practice in schools.

1:2. The significance of this ACT study

When the Exhibitions program was introduced in 2001, it provided a process for curriculum development that was topical, timely and cutting edge. It brought together the latest research and innovative practice to provide conditions for teacher learning about curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, and about teacher capacity for curriculum change in schools in the creation of worthwhile learning processes and outcomes for students. It represented a huge shift in thinking, embracing the concept of teachers as the *subjects* rather than as the *objects* of change.

The educational landscape continues to change in response to a new set of demands, where tension exists between highstakes academic core curriculum and the requirements of a new world of work and a globalised society, with a concomitant shift away from strict subject silos to essential learnings, underpinned by discipline-based knowledge, multi-literacies and process learning.

In an era nationally of top-down initiatives and centralised approaches to curriculum, reporting and assessment in most states, ACT Exhibitions provided a model of curriculum innovation that challenged traditional approaches and was designed to address the needs of learners in the 21st century.

The significance of my research is that through the voices of participants, it reveals just what the impact of the Exhibitions approach on teachers and students has been – in particular its effect on building the commitment and capacity of teachers for curriculum reform and pedagogical change, and on the process of improving student engagement and learning outcomes for the whole range of students.

Research analysis indicates the kinds of conditions conducive to the uptake of the program that have produced these outcomes in the case study schools. I examine how the investment made by participants was influenced by certain factors. In so doing I provide a critique of Exhibitions and a rich set of data from practitioners on the realities of this reform initiative. This offers feedback to ACT DET, including recommendations that will inform the usefulness and sustainability of the initiative in the longer term, as well as helping to address the school realities of any future ACT reform initiatives.

This research contributes to the broader educational landscape by providing insight into the paradigm shift reflected in greater teacher constructivism and growing student agency over their own learning; and indicates the value of the Exhibitions approach for teacher renewal and improved student learning outcomes. This research also integrates and elaborates on commentary about learning and educational change. Successful implementation of the Exhibitions program, as with any innovation, is supported by, and is a function of, the conditions operating systemically and in schools. Having examined what the theorists of school change would predict are the important factors, I offer fresh perspective on existing theories about the conditions necessary for successful implementation. The work offers insight into the conditions that have been necessary for a successful Exhibitions program, which others involved in implementing school reform may emulate and re-create.

The driving imperative behind the Year 9 Exhibitions program and the High Schools for the New Millennium Project was to promote reform in ACT government high schools so that they would more adequately prepare young people for the demands of living and working in the new century. If schools are to meet the needs of society in the 21st century, it is vital that transformation occurs. "Schools will need to transform themselves from organisations in which the core business is producing compliance and attendance to organisations in which the core business is nurturing commitment and attention" (Schlechty, 2005:18). The process will necessarily be a disruptive one. It will require fundamental changes in roles and relationships, in the technology of schooling, and in school systems, otherwise the innovations will be expelled or domesticated (Schlechty, 2005:19).

The experience of the Exhibitions program as a vehicle for reform was that it did challenge the status quo in ACT government high schools. While implementation exposed to scrutiny such elements as teacher pedagogy, school structures and the level of genuine influence by students in school governance, it also provided the opportunity and the means for developing new ways of approaching these issues. The innovation prompted shifts in these areas of varying quality and degree. When reforms like this one, face resistance or the threat of appropriation, the substantive response is to "identify more powerful and sensitive strategies to help instigate the learning and commitment that is necessary for actual implementation and sustained impact" (Fullan, 2001:100). The findings of this research and the recommendations coming out of it, provide such strategies to help build the learning and grow the commitment required for successful and sustainable reform.

1:3. Background to the Study

In 2001 the then ACT Department of Education, Youth and Family Services (ACT DEYFS) introduced high school reform measures under the umbrella of the High Schools for the New Millennium (HSNM) project, to improve student engagement and learning outcomes in government high schools. At the time there was growing

evidence of the residualisation[1] of public education in the ACT, exacerbated by reduced funding and the gravitation of enrolments to private schools. Together with indications of student alienation and growing numbers of students at risk of not completing their secondary schooling, this led to a suite of new initiatives.

The aim of the High Schools for the New Millennium Project was to promote high school reform, while the ACT Year 9 Student Exhibitions program became the flagship for curriculum and structural change in high schools. With the success of the pilot program in 2001, government secondary schools developed school-based models in 2002, after which further significant funding was provided by ACT DEYFS for the Exhibitions program to be implemented in the mainstream by 2003.

The overall strategy was to engage students in the high school years by investigating problems of significance to themselves and the community as a whole, culminating in the presentation of their learning in a public forum where they would engage in serious conversations about their work.

The Exhibitions program assisted teachers to design, in the context of their own schools, broad learning tasks, which were negotiated with students, and scaffolded and facilitated by teachers in preparation for students to present the process and products of their learning at Roundtable panels. The Exhibitions approach provided a model of authentic assessment which explicitly linked assessment to the curriculum experienced by students, and that allowed students to reflect on and articulate the learning process, demonstrate their achievement, and present evidence of their learning in a public forum. The Exhibition tasks were to be trans-disciplinary, problem-based and community focussed, and about significant ideas drawing from four priority areas of learning - Critical Literacies (*Reading the World*), Building Communities, Real Life Research and Futures Study, Access to Cultural, Ethical and Environmental Heritages.

[1] There is a perception that 'residualisation' occurs in this context with the movement of 'the best and brightest' students from the public education sector to private schools (or to the 'academic' government schools), resulting in 'residualised' cohorts of lower achieving students in government schools overall.

At the time they were introduced in 2001, Exhibitions were unique nationally in that they combined a rigorous curriculum focus, underpinned by 'productive pedagogy'[2], with authentic assessment. The assessment was authentic because it assessed what students could do and what they had genuinely achieved, informing their future learning, in contrast to assessment as a tool for the purposes of discrimination and external accountability. As a result of Exhibitions it was claimed that students could achieve a deep, enduring understanding in unique intellectual matters and build their reflective capacity.

The process of research and development for the Exhibitions focussed on curriculum, pedagogy and assessment innovation through the participation of teachers in a Research Circle[3]. The Research Circles followed principles for research partnership and group norms that respect and value the work of teachers. The processes of curriculum development through research in and on practice, the evaluation of Exhibitions tasks and the depth of teacher professional development all provided additional sources of professional renewal. The Research Circle construct provided a structured forum for teachers to 'filter'[4] and reflect on their understanding of an Exhibitions approach with colleagues from within their own schools and across the system. The 'space' was provided for professional dialogue among participants about the design and implementation of their Exhibition tasks, with input from practitioners of pedagogical innovation, to promote deep learning and to assist teachers in the metacognitive, reflexive process of monitoring their own professional learning. Teachers were able to access a repertoire of effective, belief-based pedagogies, *productive pedagogy* in particular, which would promote quality outcomes for students.

The process recognised the contribution of teachers to the production of knowledge about student learning. It aimed to foster teacher professional learning communities and provided a process for achieving curriculum innovation. The approach

[2] 'Productive pedagogy' is the term applied to classroom strategies that teachers can use to focus instruction and improve student outcomes (Ladwig, Lingard, Luke et al: QSRLS, 2001). Ideally when planning learning experiences, teachers review the pedagogies to see which are best suited to teaching particular knowledge, skills and understandings.
[3] 'Research Circles' were developed by the Australian National Schools Network (ANSN).
[4] Refers to the "filtration process" whereby teachers interpret and accommodate influences to transform their practice (Faulkner, 2002:188).

recognised that for innovation to succeed, the subjective reality of its implementers was crucial (Evans, 1996:16). The implementation process had to enable people to 'make it their own' and to build their capacity for change. In so doing the process acknowledged the vital importance to reform of taking into account the existing context and culture of the school.

The reform was informed by national and international research which indicated the necessity to better equip young people for a 21st century world by providing a more relevant, student-centred, futures-focussed education. The Exhibitions program drew strongly on two main sources of previous research:

- McDonald, J. P. et al. (1993) *Graduation by Exhibition, Assessing Genuine Achievement,* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Luke, A., Ladwig, J., Lingard, B., Hayes, D. and Mills, M. (1998) *School Reform Longitudinal Study* (SRLS). St. Lucia: University of Queensland.

The former was developed in the USA by members of the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES). *Graduation by Exhibition* was premised on the following principles: that good pedagogy and curriculum practice demonstrate strong links between assessment criteria and the process of learning, to create 'authentic' assessment. Performance indicators are logical to the task. Students articulate the learning process and demonstrate their learning by providing evidence of having achieved the criteria for assessment.

The Australian research on Productive Pedagogies was conducted for Education Queensland (EQ) by a University of Queensland research team, led by Professor Allan Luke. This major research project, co-directed by Dr James Ladwig and Dr Bob Lingard, confirmed the findings and built on the research conducted at the University of Wisconsin Centre for Organisational Restructuring of Schools (CORS) by Newmann et al (1995,1996).

The CORS study examined the connection between school restructuring and student achievement. The researchers have argued that there is a necessary priority for schools to focus their innovation efforts on curriculum and classroom pedagogical practice, and the cultural and structural conditions that support its improvement via

school organisation and external support. The research observations examined classroom instruction for emphasis on cognitive complexity (teaching for conceptual understanding) and value beyond school (teaching that helps students apply their understanding beyond school) (Newmann et al, 1996:301).

The Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (QSRLS) of classroom pedagogy and student outcomes, investigated the capacity for the reform of systemic support and school organisation, to generate pedagogical change and improved student outcomes. It built on the Newmann 'authentic' pedagogy work, adding the dimension of 'social support'. Dr James Ladwig provided consultancy support to Exhibitions leaders in 2002, demonstrating the use of the QSRLS *Classroom Observation Scoring Manual,* developed to score the dimensions of teacher pedagogy, based on evidence of identified criteria observed during a specific period in the context of the classroom.

The Education Queensland/University of Queensland New Basics Project, with which the QSRLS research was associated, held implications for the scope and direction of school reform nationally. It had the imperative of offering education programs that are diverse and flexible, but also relevant and powerful. Based on the futures premise, it recognised the need to improve students' life chances.

The curriculum framework built around the New Basics, began with clusters of practice, focussed on essential learnings, as displayed through a set of Rich Tasks, which were deemed essential for the individual's lifelong learning, social cohesion and economic well-being. These New Basics essential learnings were Life pathways and social futures, Multi-literacies and communications media, Active citizenship, Environments and technologies.

Students **were** able to display their understandings, knowledges and skills through performance on Rich Tasks, trans-disciplinary activities with explicit learning outcomes which have obvious connection to the wide world. Through Rich Tasks, curriculum organisers and support for teachers in Productive Pedagogies, the New Basics has aimed to empower and encourage teachers, de-clutter the curriculum, increase the intellectual status of schooling, deliver fewer alienated students, prepare

students for a future in an uncertain world and to position the classroom within the 'global village'.

1:3:1. Key Players

The system leaders for the Exhibitions program were first Jenny in 2001, followed by Angela in 2002, both of whom had previously held Deputy Principal positions in high schools. They were each responsible for the implementation of Exhibitions as a vehicle for high school reform. They were managers of the initiative while I, in 2001, and Sara, in 2002, were project officers for the program.

Viv White, of the Australian National Schools Network (ANSN), and Marie Brennan, Professor of Education at the University of Canberra (and also of ANSN), conceptualized the Exhibitions approach, combining productive pedagogy with authentic Roundtable assessment. In 2001 they shared with Jenny and me, its theoretical underpinnings and significance for education.

During the pilot stage in 2001, it had been Jenny's job and mine, to apply the theory to ACT high schools, for the students and teachers in a minimum of two Year 9 classes. With regular input from Viv and Marie, it was our task was to make it practical, workable, achievable - to make it happen. As a consequence I am privileged with intimate knowledge of the Exhibitions program, the process of its implementation and the milieu of ACT government high schools into which the innovation was introduced. In 2002 it was Angela's role as the manager of the project, to build on the experience of the pilot and to apply the innovation to the mainstream, for all Year 9 students in all the ACT government high schools. It was Sara's role to provide support to teachers at that mainstream implementation phase.

Led by Marie and Viv, Jenny and I were intimately involved in the Research Circle process for developing teachers' understanding and contribution to the Exhibitions approach. While they were not directly involved in the implementation of the initiative, Marie and Viv were none-the-less theoretically passionate and personally invested. Jenny and I shared this with them – that we were theorising as we went, engaged in

a reflexive, action research approach. The teachers in the pilot were also engaged as co-researchers, so that we were all heavily invested in the process.

In 2002, a different model for teacher participation was in place. A minimum of two teachers per school from two different faculties, who were to be involved in the design and implementation of Exhibitions at their school, participated in system-provided professional development using McTighe's *Backwards by Design* model (McTighe & Wiggins, 1999)[5] as a blueprint for the design and implementation of their Exhibitions task. While in the 2002 iteration of Exhibitions, teachers continued to be agentive in the design of Exhibitions for their school, the focus of the Research Circles had shifted away from the co-researcher role which teachers had been engaged in during the pilot program.

The four day 'inservice' program in 2002 provided the background to the project. It shared the knowledge and experiences gained from the pilot program, and drew once again on the Queensland work, the work on essential learnings and authentic assessment, and the New Generation of High Schools for the ACT discussion paper (Brennan, 2000). In response to the findings from the pilot, more practical support was provided on 'big picture' planning, support materials including the Assessment by Exhibition Student Exhibition Teachers' Kit (ACT DEYFS, 2001:11), cooperative learning strategies, student negotiation, and scaffolding of self-directed learning.

1:4. The Vision for Exhibitions

> "An *Exhibition* is a term which summarises a particular approach to curriculum and assessment. It comprises a carefully designed, multi-dimensional task, carried out actively by students over a term or semester, culminating in their presentation of learnings and outcomes in a 'Roundtable' format, involving a public audience. The task is a trans-disciplinary, problem-based, community-focussed unit of work about significant ideas that are worth studying."
>
> (ACT DEYFS, 2001:11)

[5] Teacher feedback on the 2002 training indicated that while the McTighe *Backwards by Design* 'blueprint' cast teachers as 'technicians' (which some 'pilot' teachers resented having formerly taken a 'constructivist' role), many teachers appreciated the support it provided when they were moving so far out of their 'comfort zone'.

The departmental brief for Exhibitions teachers was to design a task within the scope of the essential learnings. It required teachers to develop student critical literacies as a lens through which they could read the world, to promote community building where students learned to live together and with others, to involve students in real life research and future studies, and to enable students to access a range of cultural, ethical and environmental heritages. The *format for mapping an Exhibitions task* is provided in the Assessment by Exhibition Student Exhibition Teachers' Kit (ACT DEYFS, 2001:37) and reproduced in Appendix A (Figure 1.1).

The 'ideal' Exhibitions process is one where students are involved in real-life research, on a topic or issue negotiated with them, to promote student-centred learning and increased student agency, as the *producers* of knowledge. Exhibitions students collect into a portfolio, oral, written and graphic evidence of the process and progress of their learning, across curriculum areas. Teachers assess student achievement in the areas of research, self-direction, reflection and presentation. For the Exhibitions assessment rubric, see Appendix A. The parameters for *an 'ideal' Exhibition task*, a model posed by teachers involved in the Pilot project, also appears in the Teachers' Kit (ACT DEYFS 2001:35) and Appendix A (Figure 1.2).

Students must present a selection of evidence of their achievement at a Roundtable, to a panel consisting of teachers, other students and community members. In preparation for this, students analyse and reflect upon their learning. At the Roundtable they explain the main ideas explored through their Exhibition and interpret their experience and understanding. The student, in the position of expert, then fields questions from panel members who provide feedback on the presentation and complete a *Roundtable assessment rubric* (Figure 1.3, Appendix B), informing the student's future learning. The intent of this public display of learning is to add significance to student achievement, and to provide for 'authentic' assessment by indicating what students know and understand, what they can do and what they have genuinely achieved. In this way the intent of Exhibitions was to support teachers in building more complex and engaging tasks with students, that spanned a significant period of time, made high expectations, required students to perform to a deadline, and offered public affirmation of students' achievements.

The learning and teaching strategies identified for the implementation of Exhibitions tasks derived from productive pedagogy[6] - 'intellectual quality', 'relevance', 'social support' and 'the recognition of difference'. 'Intellectual quality' is achieved through instruction that promotes higher-order thinking, deep knowledge and understanding, substantive conversation about significant ideas and the use of meta-language, and that also treats knowledge as problematic. The 'relevance' pedagogies promote a connection with the 'real-world' context, between knowledge disciplines, and to the prior knowledge and experience of the student. The 'social support' pedagogies contribute to the creation and strengthening of social capital, by establishing a student-centred classroom, where there are high expectations for all students within a climate of mutual support and respect. 'The recognition of difference' pedagogies assist students to access diverse cultural knowledges and to increase their participation, particularly students of different backgrounds.

The design framework for Exhibitions, set parameters for individual and group work, a trans-disciplinary approach, a high ICT component, a significant research element, local through to global content, a combination of teacher-designed and student-negotiated curriculum, and a common curriculum focus, differentiated to meet the individual needs, styles and interests of students (ACT DEYFS, 2001:30-40). Ongoing support for students was to be an important element of the program, with teachers providing students with training in how to work independently.

A description follows of the interpretation given to task design by the case study schools, using the approach taken to 2002 mainstream Exhibitions implementation.

[6] *Productive Pedagogy* is the art of teaching recognised as being productive in the realisation of student learning outcomes", *Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study* (*QSRLS*), Education Queensland

1:4:1. The Riverside Exhibitions Program

The Year 9 Exhibition task at Riverside, entitled *Walking in Someone Else's Shoes – Appreciating difference and valuing diversity,* was intended to progress the system priority of *inclusivity* by providing students with insight into the lives of other people, and empathic understanding of those 'different' from themselves. The task had a particular focus on 'the recognition of difference' dimension of productive pedagogy, so that its design was underpinned by strategies for teachers to positively recognise differences, employ narrative in teaching, build a sense of identity and community, and foster active citizenship among their students.

At Riverside teachers took a long-term view towards Exhibitions implementation, deciding that it would be necessary to support students by first scaffolding the area of learning, then facilitating the learning task itself. Students would then be assisted to prepare for their Roundtables with constructive criticism and positive feedback on portfolios and completed tasks, and the opportunity to rehearse presentations.

During the first six weeks of Term 2, 2002, the usual English and SOSE classes were used to familiarise students with the field of study of 'difference' and to explicitly ground them in the skills required for independent investigation. In the following four weeks a significant proportion of class time, eight hours per week, was devoted to the Exhibitions task itself. Roundtable panels provided the opportunity for students to demonstrate their achievement and to receive feedback against explicit assessment criteria to inform their future learning.

1:4:2. The Capital High School Exhibitions Program

The Capital High School model for Exhibitions, sought to address the priorities identified for the Exhibitions program of safety and health promotion, student participation in curriculum and governance, the development of a sustained culture of innovation, improved outcomes for underperforming students and an increase in their relative achievement. These priorities were reproduced in the Capital High School's *Model for Exhibitions 2002*.

It was intended that these priorities would be addressed through the Capital High Exhibitions topic 'Drug Education', chosen both to promote healthy decision-making and for its particular relevance and interest to young people. It would allow students to 'participate in the curriculum' through a choice of activities and opportunities to gather information related to the topic. This included a 'market day' to be held in the school hall, where students would have the opportunity to interrogate representatives of different government and community-based organisations devoted to counselling and rehabilitation services and to the dissemination of information about the harmful effects of drug abuse. The organisation of Exhibitions was 'innovative' in the short-term, during the three weeks set aside for it at Capital High School. Students would have sustained 'quality time' of two weeks for the Exhibitions task, permitting 'a continuation' instead of following the usual timetable 'disjointed' structure of 'a set lesson [with] seven days in between'. (Janet, Transcript, 2003:2) The final priority was to be addressed through a matrix of activities with different levels of intellectual demand and a variety of ways to express learning, designed to appeal to and cater for the whole range of students, and for which students would be allocated points on completion.

As outlined in the planning handout provided for teachers and the information booklet for students, the Exhibitions 'project' set for students was to involve them in individual and group work, in the use of information technology and would have a community connection. Through working on the project, students would develop and be assessed on their social skills, communication skills, decision-making skills, goal setting abilities, ability to work independently, self discipline and the ability to discuss their learning at 'the interview' (Capital High School Year 9 Exhibitions 2002 Student Information).

1:4:3. The Falls District High School Exhibitions Program

At Falls DHS, within the context of a strong, whole-school change agenda, a different approach to curriculum and pedagogical innovation was adopted in 2002. Uniquely,

an Exhibitions approach evolved and came to apply across all year levels within the parameters of what became the 'HOT electives' program.

In order to meet the departmental requirements of the *Year 9 Student Exhibitions Program* for Year 9 at Falls DHS, three important elements had to be addressed, the essential learnings, effective pedagogy and authentic assessment. While housed within the new HOT electives program, the Year 9 experience of an Exhibitions approach was distinct in the school because it featured Roundtable assessment. Unlike students in other year levels participating in the electives program, the Year 9 students at Falls DHS, would apply their learning from the electives program, to take up and present an independent research task. This was identified as their Exhibitions task, and would be subsequently presented by them at a public forum, as the individual demonstration of their achievement before a Roundtable panel.

1:5. Research Problem and Study Design

In both my current role as a Deputy Principal and in my former position as project officer in the Exhibitions pilot, I have a strong interest in the commitment to and carriage of reform promoted at the ACT system level. During the 1990s and early 2000s teachers have been confronted by a plethora of national and territory initiatives, many of which have not lasted, and, until more recently, have made limited impact on the status quo in ACT high schools. Other initiatives, because they were not embedded and integrated into the school's "existing fabric", have compounded the already 'crowded' curriculum (Overton, 2004:22).

There are many reasons identified in the research literature for the failure of educational innovation to make a difference to the quality of educational outcomes and the engagement of students in learning. The nature of the reform itself can negate success, such as reform that serves only a 'political' agenda or is founded on claims without basis in authentic research evidence; and initiatives that are poorly funded or misdirected. So too, the way the reform is received, can undermine its chances of success, including where there is teacher resistance to imposed, 'top-

down' reform, disempowerment, change fatigue, and a lack of alignment with existing programs, school needs or teachers' individual professional beliefs (Fullan, 1996:75-76).

Given my comprehensive understanding of the thinking behind the Year 9 Exhibitions Pilot Program, the flagship high school reform program of 2001, I was keen to discover how the initiative had translated to the mainstream, and with what impact on schools and their stakeholders. In her paper *A New Generation of High Schools for the ACT* (2000), Marie Brennan recognised the great value of existing sources of expertise and experience among ACT teachers for future directions. With the underpinning imperative of exploring "the connections among learnings from these initiatives for other dimensions of school change" (Brennan, 2000:2), the Exhibitions Program had the potential to embrace existing expertise & what was good about programs already in schools, yet take the experience of schooling in new and better directions.

Hence I am particularly interested to discover how the uptake of Exhibitions has played out in different mainstream settings, the form that the various iterations have taken, and what lessons they provide for prospective school reform efforts into the future.

Further, during the pilot program, I witnessed the richness and authenticity of learning demonstrated by teachers participating in teacher Research Circles; and by students presenting their Exhibitions tasks at Roundtables. With a 'voice' in change (Evans, 1996), their production of new knowledge had been encouraged, recognised and valued. This provided the incentive for me to want to gain true insight into the realities of school reform from the 'insider' and 'grass-roots' perspective (Bourdieu, 1983) of those closest to it and most responsible for it happening, the teachers and the students; and to really understand its potential for them, and impact on them, as individuals.

How education leaders and authorities conceptualise educational change compared with the perspectives of practitioners on the realities of this particular reform initiative

is also of interest, as are the implications of this for organisational culture and reform implementation more generally, particularly for the agents of reform.

1:6. Overview of Chapters

Chapter 2 sets the context for the research, presenting the theoretical framework that underpins the study and a review of relevant literature. It examines current thinking in the three key areas of organisational and educational change, curriculum and pedagogical innovation, and learning theory and the psychology of human motivation; and suggests how the ideas represented, frame the research.

The chapter examines the work of key research proponents and foregrounds the kinds of conditions that implementers of change could expect would engender and facilitate change, or frustrate and appropriate reform efforts. The literature considers the purpose and long term sustainability of reform from a variety of perspectives. Through the literature, the possibilities for innovation and their implications for learners are explored. The sources of motivation and the potential roles of 'players' involved the change process are illuminated by leading theorists.

Chapter 3 examines the issues associated with the selection of methodology and the conduct of the research. I describe my motivations in conducting the research and the privileged position that allowed me as a researcher, to get close to the 'stories' of Exhibitions participants and lend 'voice' to their perspectives. The use of *narrative enquiry* in the context of *case study research*, and the *triangulation* of cases, gave a sense of the contextual nature of participants' experiences through the Exhibitions program.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 go to the heart of the Exhibitions experience in the three case study schools. Drawing on the words of the participants themselves, these chapters provide an inside perspective to understand the very different models for Exhibitions developed and implemented in the three schools. They follow the process and progress of students' and teachers' Exhibitions journeys, detailing the kinds of support they received, the responses they made to the tasks, and the impact this

new approach had upon their learning and their experience of school. Participants critically reflect on the program to identify features of importance to them and making recommendations both for this change initiative, and for educational reform more broadly.

Chapter 7 takes stock, from the researcher-'insider' perspective, of how the vision for Exhibitions has been realised in the task of transforming schools. The findings of the study confirm many of the conditions and practices suggested by commentators and researchers of school reform, as significant in effecting change. Analysis of the data has allowed enough to be learned about each case as to permit understanding of the complex meanings present, and to make (qualified) generalisations from motifs presenting across the cases. The process has offered up key factors that influence the commitment of the 'subjects' of change, and thus the quality and extent of the reform. The key recommendation is for the continuance of the program, where the partners with direct responsibility for the change are both its advocates and beneficiaries. In this way, recommendations from this study inform both the implementation of Exhibitions in ACT high schools and future reform initiatives.

2. Review of the Literature

2:1. Introduction

This chapter builds on the previous chapter, by providing the theoretical and conceptual background to the Exhibitions approach and the way it was applied in schools. It frames both the uptake of Exhibitions and the factors influencing participants' experiences and views of the program, and the value they gained by their involvement in it. Within the broad context of school reform, the review of the literature explores the perspectives of educators, students and authorities on educational change, and examines the factors that they consider success, continuation or failure to be contingent upon. Borrowing terminology from Faulkner (2002),[7] this literature looks at the 'macro', 'meso' and 'micro' implications of school change, that is at the broad political, economic and social level, at the level of the school, and at the team, peer or individual level, for a realistic picture of the complexities of schools as organisations and of the demands that are placed on them.

The three main bodies of literature that inform this study include theory and research on:

(i) *Organisational and educational change* - examining the findings of research and theoretical perspectives on educational change. This includes investigating generally accepted assumptions made about innovation in schools, as well as the kinds of systemic and school-based conditions that support or frustrate it and influence the long term sustainability of reform. These suggest what might be expected from the uptake and implementation of the Exhibitions program in the three schools. The literature grants entree into the kinds of educational beliefs and perspectives that shape the purposes of schooling and on-the-ground practice in schools. An understanding of how educators and authorities conceptualise educational change

[7] The 'macro', 'meso', and 'micro' levels are the layers of the "interpretive filter" through which teachers accommodate influences on their practice. The model was developed by Val Faulkner in Chapter 4 of her doctoral thesis where she discusses teacher pedagogic choice within the professional knowledge landscape of an ACT middle school (Faulkner, 2002:188).

allows for comparison with the perspectives of practitioners on the realities of this particular reform initiative. In turn, the implications for organisational culture and reform implementation, particularly for the agents of reform, can be explored. Further, examining the school reform theory and research that informed this ACT innovation, provides different perspectives for the analysis of research results and to critique any challenges or changes that the Exhibitions initiative has exposed, especially any paradigmatic shifts that may have occurred. It also serves as a prelude to any new understandings about conditions that influence the successful implementation of school-based reform, derived from this study.

(ii) *Curriculum and pedagogical innovation* - exploring commentary on the nature of curriculum and pedagogical change required in educating for the 21st century. Importantly, an examination of the literature that defines quality pedagogy and its links to improved student outcomes, sheds light on the purpose and design of the Exhibitions framework for curriculum and pedagogical change, and on the impact of this framework for participants in schools. It also frames any new ideas that emerge from this study to build upon previous knowledge in the area of curriculum innovation.

(iii) *Learning theory and the psychology of human motivation* – Literature on learning theory and the psychology of human motivation foregrounds a combination of factors that have emerged from the data as being significant for participants in prompting their investment in this particular reform initiative. It also frames the participants' perceptions of the personal meaning they have derived from their Exhibitions experience and the value they ascribe to it.

2:2. Organisational and educational change

The research base that is most critical to this research and to the conceptualisation of the Year 9 Student Exhibitions program itself, focuses on the significant link between school reform, often referred to as school restructuring, and student achievement. Since the mid-1980's much of the school reform effort has been directed at addressing the failure of education to properly prepare young people, especially those from minority and low socio-economic groups, for successful work,

citizenship and personal life. More recent perspectives recognise that school reform efforts fail to bring about positive change because they do not fully appreciate or address the complexity of schools as organisations, or the increasing demands being placed on them. Traditional school structures and teaching practices persist in the face of significant societal and technological change.

2:2:1. Conceptualisation of school change - structural *and* cultural

The work of Evans on organisational change provides useful insight into the shifts in thinking about change from the traditional-structural paradigm, upon which decades of organisational and school reform have been based, toward a new strategic-systemic paradigm, which holds profoundly different implications for school reform efforts. He points to deficiencies in our knowledge about school innovation, firstly a gap in leadership training about organisational change, and secondly, "the implementation gap" (Evans, 1996:4), where "educators' needs and best leadership practice" are key to the implementation of school reform.

The earlier models of organisational change advocated linear reform. Under their umbrella, innovations failed because they were directed at "first-order" change, whereby schools were trying to improve the effectiveness of what they were already doing. *Changing structures* alone did not penetrate the fundamental behaviour, norms and beliefs of practitioners. When these reforms were "grafted on" to existing practices, they became greatly modified, if not fully overcome by these practices (Evans, 1996:5). Evans, borrowing from systems thinking, maintains that "second-order" change is required, aimed at modifying "the very way an organisation is put together, altering its assumptions, goals, structures, roles and norms" (Evans, 1996:5). He argues that this approach to school reform requires *cultural change*, with a shift in people's beliefs and perceptions, for it to succeed.

His work contributes to the field by focussing on the needs of educators and best leadership practice, as key to the implementation of reform. Evans provides a conceptual framework for understanding change as a process, redirecting the focus of reform from school structures, to include the **"human dimension"** of schools. He

identifies the key sources of resistance to school reform, recognising that restructuring depends ultimately on teachers' (as agents of change) making the necessary changes in their own practice and beliefs**.** He maintains that innovations depend for their success "on the readiness of people, the organisational capacity of schools and, crucially the kind of leadership exerted" (Evans, 1996:xiv).

Evans' *Innovation Responsiveness Kontinuum* or *IRK Scale*, presents a schema for examining exceptional resistance to change, measuring two dimensions of responsiveness to innovation: "commitment (whether people are invested in the change)" and "fulfillment (whether they are actually implementing it)" (Evans, 1996:274). With the former response, where people are deeply committed to the innovation, they truly enact it, while with the latter, people neither accomplish the change nor care about it. People in the middle of the scale, the "unfreezables" are unintentionally resistant and usually respond to the case for reform after they have been "unfrozen", that is "when they are distressed because disconfirming data has caused them to acknowledge problems in their performance" (Evans, 1996:220). With 'authentic' leadership crucial to meeting such challenges, Evans suggests four key "strategic biases" (leadership predispositions) - 'clarity and focus', 'participation without paralysis', 'recognition' and 'confrontation' – that allow leaders to attend to the practicalities of innovation, and are necessary for them to lead and implement successful school change (Evans, 1996: Chapters 10-13).

Evans' perspective is useful in shifting the focus away from linear, 'top-down' models for organisational change, and acknowledges the crucial role of implementers in the success of reform initiatives. He is critical of many school reforms that call on teachers "to carry out experts' prescriptions" producing "brittle compliance" at best, rather than "seeking to make teachers into **co-developers"** (Evans, 1996:84-85). Evans argues that successful school reform relies upon motivating people to change, and helping them to develop ownership of an innovation. Based on mining their own experience, learning from others whose judgements they trust, and applying their own skills, teachers create new solutions, and **develop an investment in change** (Evans, 1996:84).

However, while Evans provides important recognition of the significance of the human side of school change, he makes the assumption that one of the "expectable problems" of school reform, is teacher resistance to change (Evans, 1996:4). He portrays teachers as oppositional, deliberately undermining of reform, and teacher resistance, as the underlying cause of innovation failure.

In contrast to this deficit model, Fullan interprets the "people-related problems" not as "dogmatic resistance" but as **a function of the complexity** of the social dimension in educational change, where the difficulties lie with "planning and coordinating a **multi-level process**" involving many people (Fullan, 2001:70). He defines the process of implementing educational change as "the process of putting into practice an idea, program, or set of activities and structures new to the people attempting or expected to change" (Fullan, 2001:69). As a result of implementation, aspects of classroom and school life would be changed including curriculum materials, teaching practices, beliefs or understandings about the curriculum and learning practices.

2:2:2. Conditions of change

Fullan identifies key interactive factors in the implementation process that affect whether or not changes happen, and measures the success (such as improved student learning or increased skills on the part of teachers) of change implementation in terms of the degree and quality of change in actual practice. The categories that frame these factors are 'characteristics of change', 'local characteristics', and 'external factors'.

The nine key factors affecting implementation that Fullan (2001) identifies, are a useful lens through which to view the Exhibitions implementation process and provide likely motifs that may be anticipated in an examination of this reform program. The first of the three categories, 'characteristics of change', identifies four factors (Fullan, 2001:75-87). Fullan maintains that, while it is not necessary that the *need* for an advocated change is understood by teachers in the early stage of implementation, it is essential that there is a '*fit*' between a new program and the needs of the system and/or school, and that the people involved perceive or feel "that

the needs being addressed are significant and they are at least making some progress towards them" (Fullan, 2001:76). Where there is *clarity* about the goals and means of a change initiative, teachers should be able to identify the essential features of the innovation, but it "depends on the *process*" as to whether or not this is accomplished. Ultimately, lack of clarity, "diffuse goals and unspecified means of implementation", is problematic and can be exacerbated by *complexity*, "the difficulty and extent of change required of the individuals responsible for implementation" (Fullan, 2001:78). However, while complex changes require more effort, they do promise to accomplish more. The *quality and practicability* of a change program are important if the goal of substantial reform is to be realised, while the way to achieve it is "by persistently working on multilevel meaning across the system over time" (Fullan, 2001:80).

The second category, 'local characteristics', focuses on the school context, and the opportunities it provides for effective change. The *School District* provides the first layer of "situational constraints and opportunities", and attitudes to system innovations in schools are shaped by the previous "track-record" of systemic change management. Fullan cites a litany of research that demonstrates that "support of central administrators is critical for change in district practice" (Fullan, 2001:81). *Board and Community Characteristics* acknowledge the influential but variable role of communities and school boards both in their relationship with the school and in the implementation of reform, "ranging from apathy to active involvement" depending upon demographic, historic, and relational features and changes (Fullan, 2001:82).

Consistent with other research on school innovation, Fullan maintains that *the Principal* strongly influences the likelihood of change. Like Evans, he points to a deficit in active change leadership by principals who do not interact enough to understand the dimensions of the change (beliefs, teaching behaviour, curriculum materials), and therefore fail to understand the concerns of teachers that arise (Fullan, 2001:83). They are key to shaping the organisational conditions necessary for success, including "the development of shared goals, collaborative work structures and climates, … procedures for monitoring results" and, most importantly, "**program coherence**" (Fullan, 2001:83).

Like Fullan (2001), Newmann (1996) also stresses the pivotal role of the Principal. S/he plays a vital role in placing student learning of high intellectual quality at the centre of school-wide, collective dialogue; and the nurturing of professional community, norms, values and vision focussed on high expectations for all students. He reminds principals of their instrumental role in making this happen by "creating" both time (for reflective enquiry, professional development and retreats), and links with sources of new ideas, knowledge and skills (such as learning networks and education coalitions), as well as negotiating support and extra sources of funding through relationships beyond the school (Newmann, 1996:291-2). Newmann places the principal at the centre, rather than at the top of the school organisation, sharing power with staff (and parents) and building consensus and collective effort.

The last of Fullan's 'local factors', *The Role of Teachers*, represents individual and collegial influences on implementation, including the psychological state and predispositions of individual teachers, such as of "change-oriented teachers". The quality of relationships, collegiality, morale contribute to the organisational culture, while the development of teacher talk about teaching practice, deriving shared language, mutual observation and planning, teaching each other, are features of **"interactive communities of practice"** (Fullan, 2001).

Fullan's factors iterate with the features captured by the Newmann (1996) research, described as **"school-wide professional community"** - a shared sense of purpose, collaborative activity, a collective focus on student learning, de-privatised practice, and reflective dialogue. It is agreed that these dimensions foster personal meaning for teachers, build their professional capacity, and comprise social conditions of change.

Fullan's findings on the benefits of teacher professional learning communities include that this is how teachers continually expand and refine their repertoire of practice; where they design programs to "reach all students", and improve classroom climate to be "fair and challenging", working on the problems of relevance and relationships; and how they develop their professionalism both as individuals and in relation to others (Fullan, 2001:159). He cites research that concludes that disadvantaged students do not perform well in "teacher-directed, sometimes impersonal classrooms"

and that teachers who were successful with students, taught in schools with a strong professional community "engaged in making innovations that support student and teacher learning and success" (McLaughlin & Talbert in Fullan, 2001:159).

In *Authentic Achievement - Restructuring Schools for Intellectual Quality,* Fred Newmann et al (1996), present the findings of a five-year, federally funded study that examined the connection between school restructuring and student achievement. They recognize that school organisational capacity and systemic support are key, and that innovation in a school's organisation is crucial to reform. The 'local characteristics' and 'external factors' which support the implementation of school change that Fullan (2001) identified, have built on the dimensions of 'school organisational capacity' and 'systemic support', respectively, that came out of the Centre for Organisational Research (CORS) research.

Newmann et al (1996) found that the school's organisational capacity to produce the facilitating human and structural conditions that result in the creation and maintenance of school-wide professional community, is the pre-requisite for producing 'authentic' teacher pedagogy and intellectual quality in student achievement. They found the interaction of school cultural and structural conditions that promote authentic student achievement to be complex.

The *human conditions* included a commitment to maintaining high expectations for all students, collective responsibility, support for innovation and continued professional growth; and an ethos of caring and mutuality between staff, and between staff and students, based on respect and trust. The *structural conditions* included time for working, learning, interacting and for sustained effort, interdependent work structures for staff, and opportunities for school-wide decision-making by staff at team and committee levels. Other structural features included school autonomy from regulatory constraints, and small-size schools and instructional units.

The third category represented by Fullan as crucial to the implementation process, 'external factors', takes in the context of the broader society, including educational institutions, external partners and "other forces that impinge on school personnel" (2001:86). State and national priorities for education are subject to political forces

and lobbying from interest groups, government bureaucracies and elected representatives, while new policy initiatives appear in response to public or employer concerns, out of social or economic considerations, and through incentive funding or pressure.

In their response to the Australia's Teachers, Australia's Future (DEST, 2003) report, educators have called for evidence-based policy and policy alignment to overcome the confusion in schooling that arises from multiple, often conflicting demands and ill-conceived, 'politically-motivated' reforms. In this way, factors in the wider context such as "uncoordinated state policies" not only affect the implementation but also the sustainability of reform (Fullan, 2001:89).

2:2:3. Continuation or failure

"Whether or not implementation occurs will depend on the congruence between the reforms and local needs, and how the changes are introduced and followed through" (Fullan, 2001:86). Indeed my research and the work of others such as Overton (2004) and Faulkner (2003) in ACT high schools, reveals that a lack of congruence between policy, strategic direction and purpose, lies at the heart of the teacher 'change fatigue', disillusion and disaffection often attributed to so-called 'change resistance'. For example, Overton (2004) reports that thirty-nine government initiatives had been implemented in ACT high schools immediately prior to 2000, and observes that "rather than embed and integrate these initiatives into the school's existing fabric, high schools readily added another layer to their already 'crowded curriculum', thereby inviting resistance from teachers and stimulating industrial democracy issues among teachers" (Overton, 2004:23).

The implications for longer-term sustainability of reform is addressed by Fullan's *Factors Affecting Continuation* in which he argues that many programs fail through lack of interest, inability to fund special projects, and a lack of money for professional development and for staff support of continuing and new teachers. Conversely continuation is sustained through active leadership, professional development, a shift from 'special' status to incorporation into the structure (ie embedded through policy,

budget, timetable, personnel, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment), a 'critical mass' of leaders and teachers who are skilled in and committed to the change, orientation and 'in-service' support for new members, and established procedures and partnerships for continued attention, assistance and 'political' support (eg curriculum consultants, external agencies) (Fullan, 2001:87-89).

An adequate model of school change requires that the role of teachers be re-defined, moving away from an instrumental towards a more constructivist approach, recasting teachers as 'constructivists' rather than as compliant 'technicians'. Schlechty has suggested that they be defined as "autonomous decision-makers" and "leaders and designers of engaging work for students" (2005:18). Similarly Evans has stressed that **collegiality <u>and</u> shared governance** are the "twin ideals" of any school improvement process. Participation, which is the "primary path to commitment", is essential to innovation, based on the premise that "people are much more likely to invest themselves in something they help shape" (Evans, 1996:232). He advocates, too, that the role of principals needs to change in support of the re-defined role of teachers (Evans, 1996:231). This support is especially important as studies of 'teaching for understanding' and constructivist teaching have shown, particularly when teachers face difficulties in shifting from an emphasis on knowledge transmission to complex thinking and in-depth inquiry (Ball, 1990). Teachers require support for new learning and pedagogy from both the school organisation, including teacher professional community, as well as system support, such as professional development, **during the transitional phase** of building professional capacity. As Hargreaves et al explain, "where collaborative cultures already exist because they support and encourage cooperation and risk-taking among teachers," curriculum reform and implementation plans are more likely to succeed (Hargreaves, Earl & Ryan, 1996:109).

My own experience of working with teachers during the Exhibitions pilot program, and of listening to the stories told by respondents in the case study, left me with an overwhelming sense of their 'liberation' on being granted 'permission' to take risks. In particular they were relieved at being given the imprimatur to experiment with approaches to negotiated, independent and self-directed student learning, that it would be 'okay' if it took time to 'get it right'. Described by Fullan (2001) as the

“implementation dip”, where “things get worse before they get better and clearer as they grapple with the meaning and skills of change” (Fullan, 2001:92), this transitional, ‘action research’ phase of teacher practice requires understanding and support from school leaders and community. In these ways “educational change is a *learning experience for the adults involved* (teachers, parents, administrators etc) as well as for children” (Fullan, 2001:70). Further, where teachers are empowered to participate in school decision-making, transfer from school practice to classroom practice leads them to empower students in the learning process, and as autonomous learners (Evans, 1996:232).

Lingard describes effective educational leadership as ‘productive leadership’ that focuses on “establishing the most pervasive practice of productive pedagogy” (Lingard, 2000:16). He maintains that such leadership practice is located within relationships with education departments, external agencies, school community and wider community, which are important points of leverage for change. He also exhorts educational leaders to participate in “political pressure around new systemic testing regimes” so that they may ensure **“conditions both internal and external to the school which allow teachers to be reflective professionals”** (Lingard, 2000:16).

As a result of their research, Crowther et al (2002) put their faith for successful school innovation and the revitalization of the profession, in *teacher* leadership that:

> “… facilitates principled action to achieve whole-school success. It applies the distinctive power of teaching to shape meaning for children, youth, and adults. And it contributes to long-term, enhanced quality of community life.”
>
> (Crowther et al, 2002:10)

With demands on school leadership increasing, “leaders must be able to build capacity in themselves and others to respond swiftly, knowledgeably, and responsibly, to the constant currents of uncertainty and change” (Hargreaves in Crowther et al, 2002:ix). Through **distributed leadership**, invoking the existing skills inherent in all teachers *as leaders,* teachers can “take charge of profound learning initiatives in their own schools and beyond” (Hargreaves in Crowther et al, 2002:xiii). A less emancipated version of this is Evan’s (1996) take on participatory leadership,

termed “binary leadership” which “enables ideas to move both up and down the organisation” (Evans,1996:242).

Braggett (1997), as a key figure in the Australian middle-schooling movement of the 1990’s, and a proponent of high school reform, believes that two important considerations need to be met to change schools that are based on a 19th century model. Firstly he maintains that a major step is required, not small steps, such as tinkering with the curriculum. “Somewhere on the agenda, the school is called upon to make a **sustained commitment to reform** and to effect **a major change to existing practice**” (Braggett, 1997:102). Secondly key partners need to be **convinced of the need for reform** and to be involved in the change. He identifies the factors of involvement as long term planning, the development of committees with teacher, administrator, parent and student representatives, detailed explanation over time, acceptance of the idea by the key players, continuing feedback during the implementation stage, and strong leadership combined with continuing consultation and negotiation.

Braggett’s conditions for successful change resonate with those of Newmann et al, who stress that “efforts toward systemic change are likely to succeed only to the extent that they **fortify the cultural and structural conditions** at the school level” (Newmann et al, 1996:298). Newmann describes one particular school from his school restructuring research as “a school of choice”. Led by the principal, the shared vision for change was founded on democratic ideals. Decision-making about the change process was genuinely shared by staff, students and parents, on the premise that, “You have to learn to work together. … **That’s how I keep the change going. I just work on the process**: identify issues and try to look at the reasonableness, timeliness of solutions” (Newmann et al, 1996:115). Students in Newmann’s case study school referred to aspects of autonomy as among the best things about their school eg they could select classes and a schedule that fitted their interests, and participated fully in school governance. Teachers were able to ‘teach to their passion’, shaping courses “to pique students’ curiosity” (Newmann et al, 1996:106). Connecting to subsequent discussion, they also believed a curriculum based on choice invigorated their practices, made the learning student-centred, increased the range of courses, and equalised access.

2:2:4. What do the children say?

Fullan (2001) quotes research indicating that the percentage of students who perceived that teachers' understood their point of view, declined as their year level increased. Students were not often asked by teachers for their opinions and ideas on what should be taught or how, nor did they feel that they were listened to by school leaders or have influence with them, and many considered class lessons to be boring.

Fullan acknowledges that since the 1980's research like this has demonstrated the need for active participation by students in their own learning, but further to this, students are yet to have a meaningful role in educational reform (Fullan, 2001:151). Fullan explores the potential role of students in the advancement of school change.

> "When adults think of students they think of them as the potential beneficiaries of change. They think of achievement results, attitudes, and jobs. *They rarely think of students as participants in a process of change and organisational life.*"
>
> (Fullan, 2001:152)

Citing Senge's research, *Children as Leaders*, on student activism aimed at improving the quality of life in communities affected by violence, Fullan argues that, "**children are vitally under-utilised resources**" whose "characteristics and needs are diverse" (Fullan, 2001:162). He contends that their ideas should be harnessed, they need to be treated as *people*, and "involving students in constructing their own meaning and learning, is fundamentally pedagogically essential – they learn more, and are motivated to go even further" (Fullan, 2001:162).

Tapping into young people's concern for justice and fairness, Hutchinson (1996) advocates investing in children as resources of hope for developing conflict-resolution skills and building cultures of peace. He advocates actively *listening* to young people's dreams and fears about the future, and addressing these "in more adequate and empowering ways" (Hutchinson,1996:89). He challenges determinist and reductionist studies of young people with their stereotypes of 'children as casualties of change'. He emphasises the importance of challenging taken-for-

granted ‘truths’ about the past, questioning cultural assumptions, metaphors and symbols, debunking powerful myths about what constitutes true ‘progress’ or ‘development’, and critiquing ways of thinking about the future as portrayed in comics and other media artefacts. He advocates *creative futures* work, which, begun as early in their lives as possible, builds young people’s skills of conflict resolution, their imagination about non-violent alternatives, and their images of preferable future worlds.

Hutchinson maintains that strategies, such as using broadened social and critical literacies, building vocabularies of hope, and educating for sustainable futures and cultures of peace, are needed in order to broaden our cultural lens, expand our ways of knowing, and develop new ways of thought. He suggests that personal responsibility needs to be accepted, by referring to Ghandi’s observation that whatever we choose to do or not do in the present as teachers, parents, and students cannot be without implications. Further, **personal agency** needs to be promoted, because, “infinitesimal as it may be, each individual action does change the balance of power. … Each thought shared and confirmed begins to multiply the potential. Here lies much hope” (Boomer & Torr quoted in (Hutchinson, 1996:199).

A South Australian study that investigates the underlying causes of alienation by the schooling experience also points to alternative ways of retaining students. In their paper, *What the boys are saying: An examination of the views of boys about declining rates of achievement and retention* (2000), Slade and Trent summarize the views of 1800 Year 9 to 11 students, the interviewees being mostly boys and some adolescent girls. The boys were clear and uniform in their perspective on schools as unsuitable, oppressive, culturally inconsistent learning environments that they felt powerless to change. They saw the **contradiction of schools** that expect adult behaviour but are dominated by authoritarian policies and practices, that espouse the virtues of fairness, justice and the celebration of difference, yet demand conformity, and that try to prepare young people for adult life while remaining detached from the real world and their lives out-of-school. They pointed to a range of interconnected factors that included “bad teachers”, who lacked interest in new ideas and defined achievement and success in narrow ways, an inflexible, out-of-date school culture, and an unchallenging, repetitive and irrelevant curriculum (Slade & Trent, 2000:13).

Ultimately the boys saw the issues of their retention and achievement problems "primarily in terms of their relationship with teachers" and the "ability and willingness [of teachers] to establish relationships of mutual respect and friendship with their students" (Slade & Trent, 2000:20). **"Good teaching"** was achieved by teachers who showed genuine commitment towards democratising and liberalising young people, by listening to them and giving them "sufficient reason to believe in themselves, in others, in the value of learning and of working toward long term goals; that what needs to be done in their lives can be done…" (Slade & Trent, 2000:22). Such teachers recognised the out-of-school achievements and responsibilities of their students, many of whom had extensive CVs. These teachers embraced their students' world, for example understanding that for young people, computing is more than a new technology but a way of life (Slade & Trent, 2000:27).

The interviewees believed that adults in schools had failed to appreciate contextual complexity in their attempt to 'make things simple', adopting strategies such as 'fixing up the boys' which missed the point, that it was *schools* which needed to respond effectively to the complexity of issues, to engage in self-criticism and, mirroring Eddie Braggett's "major step, not little steps", to **implement big changes.**

The authors of this research highlight the danger of concentrating resources on groups and individuals who present the strongest social problems, and instead advocate a more open, generic approach to investigating problems in schools. They make the point that assumptions made about the benefits of so-called 'issue-based' research needs to be more closely interrogated, otherwise it may simply serve to reinforce the status quo.

In the course of that research, the interviewees held that it was within the power of good teachers to make the necessary changes. Good teachers could make any subject interesting, and involve their students in interesting, active tasks, be they practical, theoretical or abstract. The boys pointed to adult learning environments, such as senior college, TAFE or vocational education within a 'real-world' work context, to provide alternative models of better learning environments. Among **the conditions** they featured were practice and theory together, flexibility, freedom and

responsibility. These adult learning environments offered "more interesting tasks, less pressure, more real learning opportunities, … an adult identity and immediate rewards", as well as teachers who established "mutual trust, respect and **a place 'with' their students in the process of learning"** (Slade & Trent, 2000:31).

2:2:5. Tracks for Change

On the national educational landscape, a 'futures' reality has increasingly impacted on curriculum development. In recognition of the exponential increase of knowledge in the 21st century, the new worlds of work and globalisation, new priorities in skills and attributes of future citizens are increasingly valued. Added to this the plethora and diversity of senior secondary academic subject-based and vocational education units of work, make it difficult to connect content. Consequently curriculum innovation has witnessed the emergence in SA, Victoria, Tasmania, Queensland and the ACT, of **frameworks of broad understanding** and **essential learnings**, which draw from fields of knowledge and demand higher order thinking and a greater degree of student investigation than a traditional, discrete disciplined, content-based approach following a prescriptive sylllabus.

These trends are not without their critics. A focus on generic, transportable skills and repertoires of practice, some consider, has been at the expense of the acquisition of thoroughgoing discipline knowledge and rigorous thinking. The compromise position is to insist on some essential knowledge to be considered in depth which will involve rigour and some didactic teaching (Barcan, 2004).

The historical solution to low retention rates in schools has been to create additional space in the curriculum through **curriculum differentiation**, so as to entice new populations to stay on at school, such as the wholly school-designed and school-assessed subjects or courses introduced in the late 70's. However reform efforts in Australian secondary education in recent years have been directed towards improving their management, teaching, curriculum, school structures and rationales for student learning, in an attempt to better address the needs of adolescents.

John Pitman, former Director of the Office of the Queensland Board of Senior Secondary Studies, quotes data in 2000, “that about 50% of the cohort [in their final year of compulsory secondary schooling] are well catered for by the present structures and curriculum”, leaving 50% at risk of not completing their secondary education, 30% of whom leave immediately and 20% who remain disaffected and eventually leave as well. Many of these are alienated by the schooling experience. He makes the point that in order to retain students beyond the compulsory years, “asking students to come back inside the school fence and sit in a classroom with a teacher and a piece of chalk won’t work” (Pitman, 2000).

The response to this has been more **flexible delivery**, achieved through offering different sites, part-time schooling, vocational education in secondary schools, and movement in and out of school, with the opportunity to complete the Senior School Certificate over more than two years. This has obvious implications for the transition from the compulsory years of schooling and for curriculum and pedagogical change, such as the Queensland New Basics in the primary and lower secondary areas.

Crowther et al (2002) maintain that teachers, as the core profession, the key agents, **“the midwives” of today’s knowledge society**, are required to embody the highest standards of professional practice. They advocate that, in order to improve teaching and learning school-wide, an analysis by teachers of the underlying assumptions guiding their work is needed. In the process of examining authoritative pedagogy, schoolwide pedagogy and personal pedagogy, and identifying ‘discrepancies’ (Evans, 1996) between their commitment to authentic pedagogy and their own practice, they build the school’s organisational learning capacity, and promote innovation by *teachers as leaders*.

The Quality Teaching Framework (Ladwig & Gore, 2007) which links qualities of pedagogy to improved student learning, encourages just such reflexivity. It offers “a coherent vision of pedagogy on a school-wide basis” and empowers teachers with the shared language and tools to reflect on and critically analyse their practice; to identify the ‘discrepancies’ and to bring the benefit of this learning to their future planning and assessment (Ladwig & Gore, 2007:5).

This forms the basis for the development of teacher professional learning community and recasts teachers in a 'transformational' role, to coin Hargreaves' (2003) term. It makes the connection between teachers' own personal learning and how the organisation learns collectively, "as being **the key to change and success"** (Hargreaves, 2003:127). Hargreaves emphasises three important components of **teacher professional learning community**: collaborative work and discussion among the school's professionals, a strong and consistent focus on teaching and learning within that collaborative framework, and gathering assessment and other data to inquire into and evaluate progress and problems over time", building capacity for change (Hargreaves, 2003:128).

Crowther et al, *The Teachers as Leaders Framework*, 2002, suggests the means for teacher leaders to achieve the following principles, to:

- convey convictions about a better world
- strive for authenticity in their teaching, learning and assessment practices
- facilitate communities of learning through organisation-wide processes
- confront barriers in the school's culture and structures
- translate ideas into sustainable systems of action
- nurture a culture of success

These ideas have direct implications for examining the impact of an Exhibitions approach in terms of recognizing what builds the capacity of teachers for curriculum and pedagogical change in the case study schools.

A report by the Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education, 2003, Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), provides a view on innovation in education from the perspective of a national government authority. Presented in Canberra at the *Teachers and Teaching for the Future Forum*, March 2004, by Dr Di Weddell, the report, *Australia's Teachers, Australia's Future*, identified strategies to attract increased numbers of talented people to teaching as a career, especially in the fields of science, technology and mathematics education, and to build a culture of continuous innovation at all levels of schooling in Australia. Key points were the need for high quality teaching and schooling as an essential

ingredient in the creation of the knowledge economy, that vital opportunities for innovation exist through partnerships between schools and external agencies, the recognition that excellence in education needs to be inclusive of all, and that quality teaching is the most important determinant of student achievement.

The implications of the report were discussed at the forum with representatives of professional associations, unions, tertiary institutions, research organisations, schoolteachers and other educators, who identified the following requirements:

- a systemic approach of evidence-based policy
- curriculum renewal that promotes continuous innovation
- reinvigoration of the profession driven by the profession
- teachers working smarter and together
- lightening the workload of beginning teachers, supporting them to establish their classroom practice and to develop their professional identity
- innovation embedded through improved resourcing (time, space, funding)
- educational leadership that inspires confidence and trust
- resourced mentoring (time for professional collaboration)
- addressing work intensification by working smarter, setting priorities, coalescing initiatives, and sharing across schools.

The ACT Department of Education, Youth and Family Services (ACT DEYFS) high school reform measures introduced in 2001 under the umbrella of the High Schools for the New Millennium (HSNM) project, were part of an overall strategy to improve student engagement and learning outcomes in the high school years. This was informed by the discussion paper, *A new generation of high schools for the ACT,* developed by Brennan (2000) for ACT DEYFS, which provided insight into the national and international context and indicated the nature of school reforms required. Research initiatives such as the *Students at Risk* Report (2001), a joint project between the ACT Branch of the Australian Education Union (AEU) and ACT DEYFS, added impetus for reform and informed policy. Policy initiatives including the *High Schools for the New Millennium Project* (2000-1), the *Within Reach of Us All*: *Services to Indigenous People* and *Student Support* Action Plans and the *ACT*

Government Schools Plan 2001 – 2004 progressed this raft of initiatives and, with substantial funding, reflected a serious effort to tackle the issues.

Brennan's paper built on departmental directions which were established through the policy document *Affirming the High School Years* (Chapman,1999), as well as existing innovative projects in ACT public high schools. The philosophical tenet for reform was that government high schools should work as an innovative system embracing diversity across and within schools, committed to providing "the best education possible to the full range of ACT students of high school age" (Brennan, 2000:ii). The high school years represent a four-year window of opportunity in which to provide students with a broad and general education which is **responsive to the changing contexts of our society**, a balance of the skills and knowledge required to participate effectively in citizenship, work and education and, most importantly, an ongoing interest in learning, an orientation to continued education and training.

Brennan (2000) reiterated two traditional, instrumental purposes for schooling, that is the preparation of citizens and workers for the society, equipped to make contributions to the community through decision-making, paid work etc. Brennan elevated a third purpose, that of education as a necessary social-cultural good, which recognises the importance of education as the means for building a social world in which young people learn together, come to understand one another and become connected to others - this not merely as a by-product of education, but rather an essential purpose of schooling (Brennan, 2000:9).

Brennan (2000) maintained that the pressure for school change emanates from changes in citizenship in a globalising era, changes in the structure and range of work, and from an altered rationale for the institution of schooling - that it must provide access to education, to an education which is "rich and challenging to all and in which all can succeed" (Brennan, 2000:10).

Phillip Hughes has elaborated on this perspective, in the inaugural Australian College of Educators (ACE) Phillip Hughes Oration, August 2003, 'Things That Last: Continuities and Discontinuities in Education'. Hughes quotes the 2003 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) research which tests the academic

performance of 15 year olds from OECD countries, noting the results from Finland which demonstrated that a high quality education with high equity is possible. Hughes asserts that while the benefit to society of achieving this is high, the cost of failing is higher.

In the light of the 'high quality, low equity' dichotomy of the Australian 2003 PISA results, he maintains that the new educational imperative is to provide a successful education for all. The personal cost for those cut off from the fundamental right to education is to face a lifetime of economic and social disadvantage, while the cost to the nation of 35,000 early school leavers is in the realm of $2.6 billion per year. Further to this, Teese & Polesal (2003) argue that high quality, low equity in Australian secondary education, reflects the increasing politicisation of education, and allude to "institutionalised social stratification and economic marginalisation through school" (Teese & Polesal, 2003:216).

Hughes (2003) maintains that the object of educational reform is to provide an **effective education for all**; the process being one of incremental, sometimes revolutionary reform, built systematically through the cooperation and not coercion, of teachers, students and the community, with engagement as the vital element delivering self-motivated, self-perpetuated learning.

Barry McGaw (2004) in his ACE Phillip Hughes Oration presentation, Evidence or Ideology: Developing Evidence-based Policy in Education, July 2004, also quoted PISA data which demonstrated that increased expenditure in Australia on education as a percentage of GDP over the preceding 15 years had yielded a 20% increase in achievement levels to 2002. Further that while there had been improvement in the quality of the outputs of Australian educational systems, achievement continued to correlate with the socio-economic background of students, so that advantaged students had been further advantaged while disadvantaged students had been further disadvantaged, resulting in Australia's high quality, low equity profile. McGaw (2004) maintains that in the era of the knowledge-based economy it is essential that efforts be made in Australian education to strengthen the policy base for judging what counts as credible evidence of effective practices that are producing higher levels of

achievement, and in line with this, he advocates the systematic evaluation of interventions in randomised trials.

Brennan (2000) has argued that global developments continue to impact on traditional conceptions of nation-states, populations, social organisation, communication, economy, power and political influence. The implications of this for schools in a 21st century world, is the need to provide students with experiences that help them to value democracy, to understand the impact of global processes on local communities and to develop the capacity to successfully engage with the level and speed of changes taking place. Hence her advocacy for the role of schooling in building resilience, cultural literacy and familiarity with difference, which she has maintained comes of the active and critical practice of democracy in the school community and necessitates that students "be recognised much more directly as equal partners in their own education". (Brennan, 2000:6). Further, young people need to have greater agency via curriculum, assessment and governance, in order to develop the skills and judgement necessary to navigate in a changing world.

Thus Brennan (2000) has argued for a significant commitment to innovation by way of content and processes, and that support from the wider community, be embraced to promote democracy and community-building. Changes in the nature and structure of work brought about by new technologies and more flexible work arrangements require of employees the capacity to adapt to new work opportunities and to learn new skills readily. Andy Hargreaves describes a different skill set, "basic ideals for a successful knowledge economy", of creativity, flexibility and collective intelligence (Hargreaves, 2003). Political commentator, Paul Kelly, maintains that for Australia to leverage its assets to succeed in the globalised age, it requires a flexible economy, a highly educated workforce and a sound system of governance.

The implications for the future of schooling if it is to serve the nation in the 21st century, focus on the education of the workforce and the participation of citizens in governance. There is broad recognition that schools as learning organisations and core social centres need to reflect **"new systems capable of continuously reconfiguring themselves to create new sources of public value"** (Bentley & Wilsdon in Caldwell & Spinks, 2007:38).

On the basis of research into the youth labour market conducted in 1999 by the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM), Brennan has argued that access to higher education and training and to job opportunities in 2000 became more limited, particularly for young people, because of the higher level of demand in terms of competence and credentials required of workers in competition for scarcer apprenticeships, training and jobs. The implications of this for schools pertained to the link between high school, further education and work. Brennan argues that the role of schooling in building the capacity of young people to engage in further education and training, and thus in society generally, is vital for their future prospects. Referring to the work of Richard Teese (1995) and Stephen Lamb (1997) in the Longitudinal Study of Australian Youth conducted by ACER, she argues that it is imperative that early pathways developed by students do not preclude them from accessing future options. "School achievement has become the dominant, indeed near-exclusive, source of social integration for young people" (Teese & Polesal, 2003:216).

The work of Teese and Polesal traces the history of the hierarchy of the curriculum. In the 70's certain kinds of knowledge were privileged - languages, mathematics, physical sciences, next the literary subjects over social sciences then vocational subjects, descending from the theoretical and abstract to the practical and concrete. Pre-eminence was given to the 'academic' subjects which are "contemplative" and "culturally demanding" and relied on cognitive abilities not easily taught in the classroom, disadvantaging students who lacked cultural capital and had a more practical, technical orientation. This parallelled the social order, with the former drawing up the most highly able students destined for tertiary education, and subsequently to management and the professions, while the latter, being academically weaker, were relegated to less prestigious, less economically-rewarding business and trades.

> "It was a translation of social structure. … The cognitive skills and the implicit cultural demands of the more academic subjects favoured the family educational background, the cultural capital, language abilities, social training and intellectual disposition found in the homes of university- educated professionals and managers.

(Teese & Polesal, 2003:29)

In the 1980's, reforms were introduced into public schools in "recognition of the need to serve a wider population" which segmented the curriculum into subjects for university preparation and "terminal subjects" (vocational and general subjects), for those destined for employment and other forms of education and training. However this served to reinforce the "prestige of the vertical link between school and university", with the result that "higher education would appear as the only economically viable pathway, and the terminal track would be seen as a dead-end" (Teese & Polesal, 2003:32). Research in the 1990's revealed how important it is for students not to develop early pathways which preclude them from taking up later options.

The introduction of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in the 1990's, has been an important reform to the senior secondary curriculum in Australia. It addresses the low retention of students who are not pursuing a tertiary pathway by offering expanded choice through multiple programs. Importantly Teese & Polesal (2003) make the point that, while the post-school relevance of VET builds greater economic interest in school programs and serves to motivate many to go on to academic studies, there remains the concern that "reforms leave untouched the quality of student learning in academic subjects and major inequalities in participation and achievement in these subjects" (Teese & Polesal, 2003:217). They advocate that implementation needs to be "accompanied by parallel reforms to the design, teaching and management of the academic curriculum" so that young people are less inclined to avoid the areas of 'valued' knowledge (Teese & Polesal, 2003: 209).

Brennan (2000) argues that as access to further education and training, credentials and hence jobs, is critical in determining adult identity, independence, and economic reward from employment, all people do have the right to participate. Further, to remain relevant, schools need to change in order to prepare young people for a world that is different from the one we were and are living in now. For example, the role of technology and the pace of technological change alone are forcing schools to change the curriculum, while the so-called 'knowledge explosion' makes it impossible to

anticipate what knowledge and skills will be either relevant or useful in the future. Meanwhile, the different modes of learning that young people experience outside of school, far exceed the capacity of schools to match the technological innovation required. The ramifications for teacher pedagogy are obvious, so that while students may be being taught using traditional approaches, it does not mean that they are learning.

As a result Brennan (2000) suggested a focus for re-organising high schools through four essential areas of learning, and the use of more appropriate, authentic approaches to pedagogy and assessment. She also identified the nature of change processes required to progress reform as the central issue.

Thus was created the leading high school reform project in 2001 in the ACT, the *Year 9 Student Exhibitions Program,* developed to bring the strands of curriculum reform, 'productive pedagogy' and authentic assessment together. Resulting from the partnership between the University of Canberra, the Australian National Schools Network (ANSN) and ACTDECS, this developmental pilot program, as previously mentioned, grew out of the DECS response to Brennan's position paper and drew on much of the literature discussed.

This school reform innovation provided a Research Circle process, based on the ANSN protocols framework, to foster teacher professional renewal.[8] The construct was designed to promote teacher agency by using teachers as co-researchers, with the support of ongoing and strategic professional development. The work of Evans, around the notion of reflective practice, was used to critique the teacher renewal process in the subject schools. The use made by case study schools of productive pedagogies, an intrinsic component of Exhibitions task design and teacher development, also provided an indication of improved teacher capacity for curriculum reform and pedagogical change.

Meanwhile, the work of Hutchinson (1996) provided a useful yardstick to compare the scope of the Exhibitions tasks (the 'curriculum' of Exhibitions) developed by the case

[8] As described in Chapt.1 of this dissertation.

study schools. As discussed previously, Francis Hutchinson, in *Educating Beyond Violent Futures* (1996), has challenged determinist assumptions about worsening trends in society and offered an alternative view about choice and engagement and learning for non-violent citizenship. Such innovative approaches to futures teaching, and broadened notions of literacy, were a tenet which underpinned Exhibitions curriculum and provided for possibilities that would impact positively on student learning and also prepare children for living constructively in this century.

The Exhibitions initiative attempted to take a balanced approach between being 'top-down' and system-driven, but also 'bottom-up', with responsibility for implementation resting with schools, framed by their particular context. As such it was a logical corollary to the ACT government school system's long-standing support for school-based curriculum development, a feature which has distinguished the ACT system nationally since its inception under the ACT Schools Authority in the mid-70's. This feature reflected the values of the Karmel Report (Interim Schools Commission, May 1973) which signalled a major departure from convention in arguing for the devolution of authority from central bureaucracies to schools, a 'social-democratic' form of devolution. ACT schools were conceived of as locally autonomous and community oriented, and as a consequence, significant diversity of schools has been a hallmark of the ACT government school system.[7]

Research of significance which has focussed on school self-management, includes, as previously cited, the Newmann (1996) research. This identified school autonomy as one of the structural features responsible for the creation and maintenance of school-wide professional community and, ultimately, 'authentic' teacher pedagogy and intellectual quality in student achievement. In the ACT, with the advent of the new ACT Curriculum Framework, *Every Chance to Learn* (ACTDECS, 2007), which incorporates the National Statements of Learning, school-based curriculum decision-making is confirmed within a broad framework of essential learning achievements applied consistently, from Pre-school to Year 10, in all government and non-government schools across the territory.

[7] The case study schools selected for this research reflect this diversity, giving rise to marked differences in the context and interpretations given to Exhibitions between the schools.

Caldwell and Spinks (1998) have identified self-managing schools as one of three 'tracks for change' in educational reform occurring internationally. The second track is a focus on learning outcomes, and the third, the design or re-design of schools for the knowledge society. They have defined a self-managing school in the following way:

> "A self-managing school is a school in a system of education to which there has been decentralised a significant amount of authority and responsibility to make decisions related to the allocation of resources within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, standards and accountabilities."
>
> (Caldwell & Spinks 1998:4-5)

They stress the importance of self-management for school transformation, maintaining that it allows the school to respond through local decision-making to the needs, interests, aptitudes and aspirations of its unique mix of students, focusing on the individual student. Through their Australian school effectiveness and school improvement research for the Australian Schools Commission (ASC) conducted in 1983, and since, Caldwell and Spinks have mapped the links between the capacities that came with school self-management and learning outcomes for students. By contrast, the QSRLS research in 1998 to 2000, did not find a strong link between school-based management and enhanced student outcomes, but rather that the quality of student learning outcomes was specific to some schools, principals, teachers and approaches to teaching.

Caldwell and Spinks (2007) consider the challenge to the status quo to be securing success for all students in all settings. They have an agenda for school transformation, based on the premise that "all students can achieve success, even under the most challenging circumstances, if all the resources that are required to support the effort are made available to schools", provided that schools are self-managing and "that their leaders be allowed to lead" (Caldwell & Spinks, 2007:xviii). For example personalised learning would mean that education services are designed around the needs of each child, with the expectation that all learners would achieve high standards.

Defining school transformation as “significant, systematic and sustained change that secures success for all students in all settings, thus contributing to the wellbeing of each and every student and of society”, Caldwell and Spinks (2007) argue that it is time to “raise the stakes” in the transformation of schools because, while governments subscribe to success for all students, they fail to deliver. They maintain that there needs to be increased resourcing of public education, where resources are considered to be forms of capital, financial, intellectual, social and spiritual capital, which are aligned through the formal decision-making processes of the school. They also consider that the success of schools is an issue for every individual, organisation and institution. Finally they point to the necessity to communicate knowledge about how transformation can be achieved.

Lingard, Cox and others, consider that the *growth in inequality* in the context of global politics, the hegemony of neo-liberal market ideology and the global educational policy on human capital, has resulted in “the demise of the social democratic dream for education” (Lingard, 2000:16). However, Lingard identifies that consciousness of the growing inequalities within and across nations has given rise to a renewed focus on issues of *social capital*. He suggests that “schools are probably the central institutional resource for the creation of social capital” and that teacher professional learning communities and productive pedagogies are the mechanism for producing the human and social capital necessary for Australia’s future, “ensuring a fair, pluralistic and open, yet cohesive society” (Lingard, 2000:17).

2:3. Curriculum and pedagogical innovation

Sociologists have argued that inequity is embedded in cultures and society, including schools, where a hierarchical status quo is reproduced that increases the gap between those who are well off in the first place and the disadvantaged (Oakes et al, 1999). Bourdieu provides a theoretical model for understanding aspects of schooling and social control, where he highlights the politicisation of school knowledge, culture and practices that embed ideology both in the formal and the ‘hidden’ curriculum, and reproduce hierarchies between the sexes, social classes, generations etc (Bourdieu, 1983). Giroux points to “political factors that lead to State interventionist policies that

serve to structure and shape the reproductive functions of education", as one of "the underlying structural determinants of inequality" (Giroux, 2006:19). Cognitive scientists claim that the focus on academic achievement, serves to further alienate disengaged, underachieving students. Relational teaching, curriculum relevance and developing *emotional intelligence* address these problems in the school context, while better preparing students as citizens who can function well in a complex and stressful world (Goleman, 1998).

However, it may be argued that school culture is a dynamic process that both structures and transforms, where shifts between domination and resistance occur, and stakeholders have the ability to influence the conditions under which they work and learn. As the education theorist, Michael Apple, asks, "… do [schools] also embody contradictory tendencies and provide sites where ideological struggles within and among classes, races, and sexes can and do occur?" (Apple in Giroux, 2006:20)

The link between these ideas and the need for curriculum reform is born out in the Teese & Polesal research. They argue that it is "the design, teaching and management of the academic curriculum on which the quality of mass secondary education depends", yet "the curriculum itself raises barriers to achievement … . These are responsible for a continuing pattern of early leaving" (Teese & Polesal, 2003:209-10). Further, policy towards improving retention rates in schools must be "supported by strategies to raise achievement and to make the curriculum of schools more genuinely inclusive" (Teese & Polesal, 2003:216).

Hughes (2003) is critical of the hierarchy of the curriculum, emanating from the positional power of the universities, which has been served by the hierarchy of schools, kept in place by regressive funding models. Hughes argues that incremental inequalities persist and calls for changes to the curriculum to make programs more relevant and accessible, and to provide an equal and quality education. Thus the case is made for more effective pedagogical cultures and for reforms to the curriculum to limit social impact and provide important learning benefits.

The QSRLS findings informed not only pedagogical reform but also underpinned Education Queensland's New Basics Rich Tasks which were created to provide

models of how authentic learning could be achieved. Addressing many of the concerns about curriculum relevance and inclusivity, the New Basics approach to curriculum reform utilised the traditional disciplines and fields of knowledge to underpin student inquiry. Student work involved producing texts and solving complex, real-world problems in the context of cross-discipline partnerships, such as organising conferences, examining an environmental problem, managing transport in our cities etc. Its purpose was to provide a broad education, including in the basic areas, so as to prepare young people for working life, as citizens and as members of society, and to address the issue of students being alienated by a lack of a connection between schooling and what happens in real life beyond school (Luke, Lateline 2002).

A report by the Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education, 2003, Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), provides a view on innovation in education from the perspective of a national government authority. Presented in Canberra at the *Teachers and Teaching for the Future Forum*, March 2004, by Dr Di Weddell, the report, *Australia's Teachers, Australia's Future*, identified strategies to attract increased numbers of talented people to teaching as a career, especially in the fields of science, technology and mathematics education, and to build a culture of continuous innovation at all levels of schooling in Australia. Key points were the need for high quality teaching and schooling as an essential ingredient in the creation of the knowledge economy, that vital opportunities for innovation exist through partnerships between schools and external agencies, the recognition that excellence in education needs to be inclusive of all, and that quality teaching is the most important determinant of student achievement.

The implications of the report were discussed at the forum with representatives of professional associations, unions, tertiary institutions, research organisations, schoolteachers and other educators, who identified the following requirements:

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- reinvigoration of the profession driven by the profession
- teachers working smarter and together

- lightening the workload of beginning teachers, supporting them to establish their classroom practice and to develop their professional identity
- innovation embedded through improved resourcing (time, space, funding)
- educational leadership that inspires confidence and trust
- resourced mentoring (time for professional collaboration)
- addressing work intensification by working smarter, setting priorities, coalescing initiatives, and sharing across schools.

What Fullan (2001) calls "the second wave" of the school restructuring movement, has broadened our understanding to know that a focus on redesigning curriculum and instruction is not enough to "unleash teachers' energy … and enhance their professional cooperation and support" for school change. The importance of realigning roles and relationships through participatory leadership is crucial to successful innovation (Evans, 1996:229). To know what successful implementation looks like, Fullan applies the 25/75% rule – 25% having the right ideas, and 75% establishing effective processes "that themselves are no guarantee since each situation is unique" (Fullan, 2001:90).

The redesign of curriculum must also employ quality pedagogy as the means to improve learning. As discussed previously, the significance of teacher pedagogy for student learning was fore grounded at the University of Wisconsin's Centre for Organisational Restructuring Study (CORS) by the research of Fred Newmann and Associates (1996) which linked 'authentic achievement' to 'authentic pedagogy'. This was substantively developed in Australia through the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (QSRLS) conducted by Luke, Lingard, Ladwig, Hayes & Mills (2001) on 'productive pedagogy', which added the social dimension to previous work. The evidence from the QSRLS was consistent with the US research, with insights about 'authentic achievement' having "convergent validity" in Queensland Government schools (Lingard et al, 2001:4).

Inherent in the most recent iteration of pedagogy by Ladwig & Gore, is the keen perspective and the continuity that comes of Ladwig's direct involvement in the development of the three bodies of research. Ladwig & Gore (2007) have further

distilled and fine-tuned previous iterations to identify 'quality pedagogy'. Their work brings into sharp focus the intellectual quality dimension, finesses the notion of "connectedness", now cast as "significance", and adds the imperative of demand in student achievement, with "high expectations" made explicit. I have represented these different iterations of theory on pedagogy in Table 1 (Appendix C). This allows for detailed scrutiny and comparison of the evolving parameters and elements of pedagogy, so that the pedigree of this contemporary pedagogy research and analysis may be traced.

A closer examination of the CORS research is warranted to assist our understanding of its significance. In the international educational arena, the research of Fred Newmann, of the Centre for (CORS), University of Wisconsin, was formative for subsequent research and theorization, as well as locally for the conceptualisation of the Year 9 Exhibitions Program and for my case study research methodology. 24 significantly restructured schools, were each studied intensively for a year. From this research the dimensions of external support, professional community and 'authentic' pedagogy were isolated as the features that combine to create higher, more equitable student achievement.

'Authentic pedagogy' refers to certain teacher classroom practices (focusing on high intellectual quality) that promote high quality learning and increased achievement for all students (including those of disadvantaged backgrounds). They discovered that some schools offered students much higher levels of authentic pedagogy than others and that these schools maintained a constant focus on intellectual quality and nurturing professional community in the school.

The intellectual capacities that Newmann et al consider to be "worthwhile, significant and meaningful" are referred to as "authentic achievement", and meet three critical criteria – *construction of knowledge* (rather than its reproduction), *disciplined inquiry* (with in-depth understanding, built on prior knowledge, communicated in elaborated form), and *value beyond school* (beyond simple competence) (Newmann, 1996: 23-4). This is not to say that all classroom activities would be expected to meet these criteria all the time, as there is a place for "unauthentic" work, such as repetitive

practice or the memorization of facts. Rather, authentic achievement should be kept "clearly in view as the ideal valued end" (Newmann, 1996: 27).

The three criteria provide standards against which the quality of instruction and assessment (which combined make up teacher 'pedagogy'), and of student performance may be judged. Essentially, authentic achievement requires that students are taught for understanding and meaning, using material that connects to their experiences; and suggests high standards for selecting teaching techniques and curriculum content, and for assessing intellectual accomplishment.

Ground-breaking Australian research on 'productive pedagogy', the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (QSRLS, 2000) was conducted for Education Queensland (EQ) by Professor Allan Luke, Dr Bob Lingard and Dr James Ladwig et al, University of Queensland, realigning the focus of educational reform. On the premise that "systemic and school structural reforms alone will not necessarily enhance student outcomes" (Caldwell, 1998; Elmore et. al 1992; Newmann, 1993; Newmann and Associates, 1996; Lee and Smith, 2001), and based on their own research findings, Lingard et al (2001) have argued that "it is classroom practices, including pedagogy and assessment practices, which are central to student learning", and that "the enhancement of learning outcomes thus requires changes to pedagogical and assessment practices" (Lingard et al, 2001: 3).

Their research was conducted to ascertain "what classroom practices (pedagogies) contributed to better outcomes, and what sort of supports within the school (leadership and culture), and within the district and system contributed to such pedagogies" (Lingard, 2000:4).

'Productive pedagogy' provides a multi-dimensional model of classroom practice to improve student social and academic performance and to improve the equity performances of schooling, within the context of systemic school reform. The QSRLS work recontextualised the concept of 'authentic pedagogy' and added the social dimension (Newmann et al, 1996; QSRLS, 2001). Table 1 (Appendix C) illustrates the parallels and the shifts in focus between the Newmann and the QSRLS research.

The productive pedagogies are teaching practices used to improve student learning outcomes based on the four dimensions of *intellectual quality, connectedness, supportive classroom environment* and *the recognition (and valuing) of difference*. In examining numerous classrooms around the state, the QSRLS identified the correlation between the presence of productive pedagogies and strong student outcomes. The study defined quality student achievement not in terms of student performance in standardised testing, but rather "in terms of sustained and disciplined inquiry focused on powerful, important ideas and concepts … connected to students' experiences and the world in which they live" (QSRLS, 2001:4).

Like the CORS research, the QSRLS demonstrated that high levels of classroom pedagogy and assessment, enhanced school organisational capacity, and high quality external support, worked together to produce improved social and academic outcomes for students. In the 24 Queensland schools that participated in the three year study, researchers found that students in secondary schools in low socio-economic areas were exposed to lower levels of productive pedagogy than other students. Ratings on the socially supportive environment dimension were higher in most schools than for the other three dimensions, while the recognition of difference dimension scored low (other than in one school with a totally indigenous student cohort). Inequitable distribution of high quality pedagogy was related to school size, with small schools scoring better. Lingard suggests that larger schools demand a more managerialist approach from school leaders, while smaller schools make it easier for principals to focus on pedagogy (Lingard, 2000:12). Evidence from the QSRLS of assessment practices generally revealed a low level of demand for intellectual quality. Data also suggested that effective behaviour management was inherent in productive pedagogy, so that student engagement with learning, and student self-regulation, were associated with intellectual quality, connectedness and recognition of difference.

The key finding of the study was that "levels of intellectual demand and social support both have significant links with improved productive performance and, hence, with improved student outcomes" (QSRLS, 2001:15). Overall recommendations from the study were that "high intellectual demand", needed to be the focus of innovative change to improve and align pedagogy, curriculum implementation and assessment,

reflecting a change in teacher attitude from minimum to high expectations for student learning, and a shift in emphasis away from basic skills policy and practice associated with "counterproductive effects in generating productive student performance" (QSRLS, 2001:16).

Evidence from the QSRLS also suggested that the development of professional learning communities within schools was associated with greater use of productive pedagogy by teachers, specifically where there was acceptance by teachers of collective responsibility for student learning, a robust professional learning community, and a strong leadership focus on pedagogy. The data also revealed that both in-school and external professional development were needed to enhance teacher capabilities. The findings also challenged the adequacy and focus of systemic support available to schools and teachers. The list of focus questions attached to each of the dimensions of the QSRLS has subsequently provided a basis for professional dialogue and helped teachers to identify areas for future development and training.

Thus enhancing *teacher capital* through professional development and providing effective leadership within schools, would improve schools' organisational capacity to deliver improved student outcomes. These include a focus on expanding the pedagogic repertoires of mainstream teachers for dealing with diversity, to address the low levels of pedagogy in support of the recognition of difference. Similarly, the low level of demand from assessment tasks and their misalignment with pedagogy indicates the need to build teacher 'assessment literacy'. The work of Lingard (2000) also points to structural reasons for the apparent lack of productive pedagogies in many of the classrooms observed; hence the need for modifications to school and systemic structures, such as different internal structures and responsibilities in different size schools, as well as measures to support pedagogical change.

The most recent iteration of this research has been the *Quality Teaching in NSW public schools* framework, which builds on and substantially revises the earlier elaborations of "authentic" and "productive" pedagogy (Ladwig & Gore, 2007). The 18 elements of quality pedagogy are organised into the three dimensions of *intellectual quality, quality learning environment* and *significance*. The NSW model of pedagogy

synthesises previous research, linking these qualities of pedagogy to improved student learning. This work picks up on the findings of the QSRLS, adding the element of *high expectations* to the learning environment dimension (see Table 1.), with the underlying assumption that all students can learn, provided they are given the necessary support, and that if the intellectual quality is not high, student learning will be compromised and existing inequalities will be reproduced.

The authors locate a strength of the model in the *school-wide* nature of the pedagogy, whereby the characteristics are sufficiently generalised to be applicable across key learning areas (KLAs), subjects and years of schooling. They believe that this model addresses a deficit of professional development on pedagogy, offering schools a coherent vision of pedagogy, a focus for school leader and teacher dialogue, and a stimulus for teacher professional community, considered an investment. It supports teacher professional learning and practice through reflection and analysis, and guides the planning, improvement and redesign of activities with the purpose of maximizing the learning benefits of learning experiences for students.

In line with the pedagogical reforms mentioned, cognitive scientists argue for a shift in the focus of instruction away from the memorization of information. They advocate the teaching of critical thinking, conceptual understanding and in-depth knowledge of subject matter so that learners can achieve deep understanding, where they transfer their understanding to new situations and critically apply what they know to comprehending and addressing new problems (Gardner, 1999).

In Australia many of the responses to emerging priorities have come out of the national middle-years-of-schooling movement. The Australian National Schools Network (ANSN) has informed this process, translating work on 'authentic assessment' (Macdonald et al, *Graduation by Exhibition: Assessing Genuine Achievement,* VA 1993), to an Australian educational context. *Graduation by Exhibition* has provided a model of formative assessment which links explicit assessment criteria directly to the process of learning, and gives students the opportunity to provide primary evidence of their learning (rather than secondary evidence such as a score on a test), to actively demonstrate their achievement to a critical audience and to receive feedback not only on the product but also the process

of their learning. Associated literature indicates that involving students in communicating with others about their learning provides this important real-world connection (Davies, 2001; Washor and Littky, 2001). This work on the demonstration of achievement ties also to the role of assessment in developing motivation for learning, the focus of the final review of literature relevant to this research study.

2:4. Learning theory and the psychology of motivation

Learning theory and human motivation literature informs this study of the uptake of Exhibitions, with a focus on the areas of student and teacher engagement and of the value they have placed in the Exhibitions experience. Learning theory assists me with identifying factors that may have motivated participants to invest their time and effort in the program, and provides perspective to understand the interactions between students and teachers in the Exhibitions context, thus informing the interpretation and analysis of participant data. As Fullan (2001) points out, where cognitive psychology and sociology find common ground in the area of motivation and relationships, there are significant implications for student learning. For, as he says, "… it is only when schooling operates in a way that connects students relationally in a relevant, engaging, and worthwhile experience that substantial learning will occur" (Fullan, 2001:152).

There are obvious implications also for school reform that seeks to improve student engagement and retention. As the following Australian research demonstrates, "The main problem with disengaged students is that they lack a meaningful personal connection with teachers and others in the school; … they lack the motivational capacity to become engaged in learning", hence emotional development is as important in teaching and learning as cognitive development (Fullan, 2001:152).

Drawing on the QSRLS research, Lingard & Mills (2003) confirm the centrality of teachers' classroom practices to student learning. They re-state the premise for the research, "that school reform needs to be concerned with achieving more equitable opportunities and better academic and social outcomes for all students" (Lingard & Mills, 2003:1). Where 'top-down' reform policy focuses on structures, treating

teachers as the *objects* of change, the effects are de-profressionalising and their work is undervalued. Good classroom practices, where the three message systems of schooling (Bernstein, 1971) of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment are in alignment, have the most impact on student learning, so that "it is good teachers who make the greatest difference to student outcomes from schooling" (Lingard & Mills, 2003:1).

Slade & Trent (2000) point to the effects on young people of their inability to avoid or control the impact that school can have on their lives and are critical of "the difficulty that the adult world is having in making the cultural transition from fragmentation and certainty to interconnectedness and relativity" (Slade & Trent, 2000:11). Interestingly it was by the middle of Year 9, that many of the boys interviewed in the South Australian study, had developed a negative association between formal learning and what they saw as "an institutionalised, unpleasant waste of time" (Slade & Trent, 2000: Abstract).

Grounded in the psychology of human motivation and in educational research on learning, 'flow theory' identifies contextual variables and learner characteristics that influence an individual's psychological state, and affect their performance and success (Czikszentmihalyi, 1990). Czikszentmihalyi identifies five major characteristics of flow experiences - when an activity is challenging, physically or intellectually, yet meets a person's skill level, when the individual becomes completely engrossed in the activity, unaware of self and giving their full attention to it, when they find it intrinsically interesting or authentic, and they have a sense of control over what they are doing. Features of intriguing content, interest and enjoyment, of personal control and achievable challenge, are all considerations in creating learning environments to facilitate optimal flow experiences.

I take from this work that these task features (intriguing content, interest and enjoyment, of personal control and achievable challenge), are a useful benchmark for considering both the design framework offered in 'The Ideal Exhibition' and for appreciating the level of uptake of Exhibitions by students and teachers. 'Flow theory' also adds meaning to Schlechty's call for schools to re-define the role of students as *volunteers* rather than as *conscripts*, and his point that a change in teaching

strategies is required to foster the “commitment and attention” of students over mere “compliance and attendance” (Schlechty, 2005:19).

Schlechty (2005) discusses the significance of six critical systems in schools and examines the conditions under which schools can achieve change in these systems. These social systems, which are critical to the operation of schools and reflect the school culture, are its recruitment and induction systems, knowledge transmission systems, power and authority systems, evaluation systems, directional systems, and boundary systems. He proposes the means by which schools can interrupt these systems and install innovations that would allow schools and teachers to focus on the “business of schools”, that of designing engaging work for students. He suggests a “working on the work” framework for doing this. (Schlechty, 2005:218)

He argues that for schools to meet the needs of society in the 21st Century, they must ensure that most students achieve “academic” learning “at high levels”. In order to do so, schools will need to transform themselves from organisations where compliance is the core business “to organisations in which the core business is nurturing commitment and attention”, with student engagement the central focus (Schlechty, 2005:18). Without changes in the social systems of schools, he maintains that innovations will be “expelled” or “domesticated” (Schlechty 2005:17-19).

The premise of the working on the work design framework, is that teachers need to learn how to engage students in studying subjects about which they do not care and have no interest. He proposes that they do this firstly by capitalising on students’ preferred styles of learning, and then by helping them to develop additional styles. Schlechty’s framework identifies ten attributes of school tasks that are relevant to the motives students bring to tasks. Teachers need to take these qualities of school tasks into account when they design schoolwork for students so as increase the rate and frequency of student engagement in the classroom. The attributes for task design are categorised as *contextual qualities* (content and substance, organisation of knowledge, protection from negative consequences for initial failures, clear and compelling standards) and *qualities of choice* (product focus, affiliation with peers, affirmation of performance, novelty and variety, choice, authenticity), (Schlechty,

2005:218). This framework, also, is of relevance to a comparison with the design parameters for Exhibitions tasks.

Barone (2001) provides an interesting counterpoint to this with his work, *Touching Eternity,* a narrative analysis that explores the life stories of former school students and their art teacher. The book explores "qualities in teacher-student relationships and educational outcomes that are not specific to subject matters or content areas", but which emanate from the teacher's personal educational vision (Barone, 2001:4).

Barone delves into what motivates a teacher, the aspirations they have for their students, and teachers' long-term influence on their students beyond schooling. The teacher had sought out the "backward, bright and rebellious" students in particular, and made it his "intense mission … to enhance the lives of his students through art", achieved this through his "unswerving dedication" and "shrewd intelligence" (Barone, 2001:29). The stories of his former students provide evidence that Forrister was a good listener, accessible, trusted, non-judgemental, affirming, and his classes "open-ended and individualised". He promoted a critical spirit, which in their lives, made him "a source of their courageous decisions, a person who helped them make certain independent moves on their own initiative" (Barone, 2001:131). From their perspective, Forrester had managed in some way to "touch eternity".

He appealed to his students' lineage in the county's time-honoured crafting tradition and selectively entered their work into competitions, engendering personal pride in their accomplishments. His former students reported feelings of "pride in creating things of excellence", as well as vanity, from the accolades and "privileged status" among their peers which they received in response to their work (Barone, 2001:20-21). This worked like an 'elixir' to provide momentum for subsequent projects.

Barone suggests alternative interpretations for the students' motivation of intrinsic satisfaction, aesthetic pleasure, and expressivism, promoting insight into the 'inner realm'. Significantly, Barone heralds "the *freedom* of the student to work hard at portraying his own distinctive ideas, feelings, values, and end-in-view", and the effects of this creative process that "celebrates individual growth, as the student wrestles with the materials in order *to create meaning*, to make sense of his or her

life" (Barone, 2001:25). Barone makes the point that, from the students' perspective, the motivational factors were "a thirst for self-esteem" and "a need for self-expression". These outcomes, while ancillary to the official vocational purpose of the program, were of central importance to the students.

In trying to determine what was transferred to Forrister's ex-students, Barone also wonders whether the teacher's influence could have been greater "had he been concerned about broader structural issues in society" (Barone, 2001:x). He challenges taken-for-granted beliefs about the fundamental purposes of education, and methods for studying teaching. Barone strengthens teachers' beliefs about the value of their mission and its worth to society, described as "the miracle of worthy and influential teaching" (Berliner in Barone, 2001:vii), and the about the hope that it offers for the "heroic transfer of value systems" (Barone, 2001:vii). Yet he also observes that "critical dispositions" are missing from the teacher, whose style has been to deliver formal and vocationally oriented curriculum, rather than actively resisting "general cultural oppression" through his arts teaching.

The teacher, Forrister, as a generous mentor and a model of personal integrity, had taught his students 'to be their own person'. Barone challenges Forrester's 'living values' approach, whereby he passed on 'good' values to his students tacitly, through a kind of "moral osmosis" (Barone, 2001:119). He confronts Forrister's failure to "intervene in the larger forces of domination that may ultimately determine the nature of [the individual] self" (Barone, 2001:146).

"Radical determinists" would argue that this illustrates how teachers, "enmeshed as they are in the technocratic superstructure of the school", are ineffective as change agents (Barone, 2001:27). Contrast this with Forrester's "deepened sense of educational possibilities" (Barone, 2001:180). Thus Barone raises the issue of how teachers 'keep the faith', demanding an examination of teacher influence from a critical perspective, to "confront and resolve doubts" (Barone, 2001).

Fullan makes the point that the best 'technical' ideas do not go very far "in the absence of passion and commitment" (Fullan, 2001:91) and, quoting Oakes (1999), "unless [teachers] were bound together by a moral commitment to growth, empathy and

shared responsibility, [they] were as likely to replicate the prevailing school culture as to change it" (Oakes, 1999:825).

> "… working through the difficulties of connecting with disaffected students is the route to both cognitive and affective attainment with students."
>
> (Fullan, 2001:163)

2:4:1. Meaning making to commitment building

People finding meaning in their life and work, and it is an important role of the school in providing that meaning, for teachers and students equally.

> "…the crux of change involves the development of meaning in relation to a new Idea, program, reform, or set of activities. But it is *individuals* who have to develop new meaning."
>
> (Fullan, 2001:92)

When people try something new they often suffer " 'the implementation dip' ... Things get worse before they get better and clearer as people grapple with the meaning and skills of change" (Fullan, 2001:92). Teachers find meaning through interacting as part of a professional learning community (Fullan, 2001:163). Meanwhile, Newmann describes the kind of achievement that is required for scoring well in tests etc as "trivial" and "meaningless", and that this "absence of meaning breeds low student engagement in school work" (Newman, 1996:23).

Arising from recognition for the need to improve assessment practices. One of the recommendations arising from the QSRLS (2001), recognised that, in order to improve assessment practices, beyond improving assessment techniques and diversifying types of assessment tasks, was the need to develop and expand teachers' understandings of how students learn.

Drawing on international sources of research evidence, Harlen (2006) argues that assessment plays an important part in developing motivation to learn, that some summative assessment practices, particularly high stakes tests, impact negatively on learners, and that *assessment for learning,* or formative assessment, can ameliorate these effects by developing and sustaining learner motivation.

Motivation may be defined as "the conditions and processes that account for the arousal, direction, magnitude, and maintenance of effort", and *motivation for learning* as "the engine that drives teaching and learning" (Katzell & Thompson, 1990; Stiggins, 2001, in Harlen, 2006:61). As motivation is what impels learners to expend time and effort on learning and solving problems, it clearly is central to learning. Harlen makes the case that motivation is both an essential *input* into education and an essential *outcome* of education, enabling students "to adapt to changing conditions and problems in their lives beyond formal schooling" (Harlen, 2006:61). Developing a strong motivation towards learning new skills and enjoying the challenge, is an important outcome of education in the 21st century that requires teachers to be aware of the factors that affect motivation.

Black and Wiliam (2006) put a convincing argument about the potential for the development of formative assessment "to open up a broad range of desirable changes in classroom learning," as the quality of interactive feedback that it produces "is a critical feature in determining the quality of learning activity, and is therefore a central feature of pedagogy" (Black & Wiliam, 2006:100). They have formulated a theory of *formative assessment* where four key elements are identified to examine the classroom as 'an activity system', a "complex formation in which equilibrium is an exception and tensions, disturbances and local innovations are the rule and the engine of change" (Salomon,1993:8-9).

The first element is changes in the relationship between the teacher's role and the nature of the subject discipline, where "the teacher's capacity to explore and reinterpret the subject matter is important for effective pedagogy" (Black & Wiliam, 2006:86). Second, changes in the teachers' beliefs about their role in the regulation of the learning process, involve "interactive regulation", including gradual withdrawal of the teacher from the role of mediator, and the transfer to the students of responsibility for their learning. This requires more emphasis being given to cognitive and meta-cognitive skills and strategies. The third element is the student-teacher interaction, focussed specifically on the role of feedback in the regulation of learning. The effect of employing Vygotsky's 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD), "the area of immature, but maturing, processes makes up the child's zone of proximal development' (Vygotsky, 1998), *scaffolding* or *guided*

participation as forms of intervention, comes down to "the capacity of a teacher to handle differentiation at a rather subtle level of understanding of each learner" (Black & Wiliam, 2006:91). The fourth element is the role of the student, where the students can change role "from being passive recipients to being active learners who can take responsibility for and manage their own learning" (Black & Wiliam, 2006:91). They can reflect about their learning, embrace constructivism and become more autonomous learners.

This theory is of considerable interest to my study, as the elements represented here may be experienced by participants in the Exhibitions program, and challenge the roles and relationships usually played by teachers and their students. Black and Wiliam also cite the *patterns of influence* triangle, which includes *subjects* (the roles of the teacher and individual students or groups of students), *tools* (discipline knowledge, pedagogy, the interaction methods, learning analysis) and *objects* or *outcomes* (teacher expectations, and changes in teacher and student views of learning), with arrows representing the interactivity between these elements (Black & Wiliam, 2006:95). This offers a useful perspective for examining the interactions between teachers and students in the Exhibitions context.

2:5. Conclusion

An examination of the literature has revealed that while it seems there will always be disagreement about "the key problems of schools and how to fix them, and about what students need to learn and how they need to learn it", there is consensus on at least some important points (Evans, 1996:xii). There is universal agreement that school change is required to more adequately prepare young people in their lives, for both now and the future. Research on innovation and school change that focuses on implementation, including that of Calwell, Crowther, Evans, Fullan, Hargreaves, Newmann, Schlechty and Spinks also concurs that the teacher's role is central and that one leading strategy of reform is the creation of teacher professional learning community. This shared finding by key researchers of school reform turned out to be crucial to my own study, as will be seen. The creation of functioning and supportive professional learning communities in schools is significant among the school conditions that have supported the uptake of Exhibitions.

3. Methodology, Research Design and Data Analysis

3:1. Introduction

In Chapter 1 I have detailed the background to the development of the Year 9 Student Exhibitions Program in which I was involved at the pilot stage, and its significance as an ACT government high school reform project. Chapter 2 looked at the literature of school reform, much of which informed the Exhibitions project. It explored the purpose of school change and identified the conditions that theorists consider will support or frustrate innovation. This alerts us to the challenges that may arise at the interface between the implementation of new ideas, and the culture and apparatus of the school. Following the genealogy of research into pedagogy and approaches to curriculum design, and examining recent thinking on learning and motivation, is also useful in providing perspective on the uptake by participants of an Exhibitions agenda in schools, to inform my research.

This chapter turns to the actual research. It builds on the previous chapters by describing how my role in the pilot Exhibitions program prompted my interest in the fate of this school reform project following its application to the mainstream, and details the process of my research. It presents the strategies of enquiry used in the study, and the rationale guiding the choice of methodology. It explains the research design, including the protocols observed to identify and involve participants. The origins of the framework for analysis are outlined and its evolution, as it accommodated emerging themes, is also described.

My study explores the experiences of a small group of students, teachers and system leaders who were involved in and positioned by the Year 9 Student Exhibitions program in 2002. It relies upon the perceptions and understandings developed by these students, teachers and system leaders of personal, school and systemic change effected through the Exhibitions program, to provide insight into the research question and inform an emergent theory of contingent factors that have influenced

their commitment to change. Underpinning the research are the challenges that stakeholder groups faced in the uptake of this initiative, as it confronted existing structures and practices, and impacted on their personal experience of schooling.

3:2. The research field

The research field is both the immediate setting of the school and the broader educational landscape of the ACT system. Entering the research field is revisiting territory familiar to me. It draws on my own previous knowledges about how the teachers and system perceive the Exhibitions initiative, and allows my double involvement in both insider and outsider roles.

Through my involvement in the Exhibitions pilot program, my professional credibility was high in the secondary sector, while the networks that I had formed during that period, which were mutually rewarding and solid, gave me insight and entrée into the schools. This 'inside knowledge' was very helpful in setting up the research and informed my selection of case study schools.

I have enjoyed open, honest and collaborative relations with teaching colleagues in the high schools, having worked as an advisor and mentor, guiding the Exhibitions process in 2001 and early 2002, and as a community representative on student Roundtable assessment panels in 2001, 2002 and 2003. Because of this, teachers were comfortable in recommending to their Principals and colleagues that I have access to the schools' Exhibitions program for my research. The 'risk' of developing familiarity in the relationship between researcher and participants has not presented an 'ethical dilemma'. If anything, the research has been enhanced by the connection of both interviewer and respondent to the context, where we share common "frameworks of meaning" (Mishler, 1991:23) and familiarity with the culture of schools. Further, the mutuality of relationships between researcher and respondents, has enhanced meaning-making and allowed shared understandings to emerge.

Thus my entry to the field was secure as a former Exhibitions leader, as a colleague to teachers in the ACT school system and also as an ACT Fellowship holder,

pursuing research on a system initiative. My extensive network afforded me access to people, literature and documentation invaluable to the research, for which I secured all the appropriate ethical approvals.

In the research design, I take a post-structuralist 'stance', exploring meaning-making, with no clear boundary between researcher and participant. In Chapter 1, I described my role in making the pilot Exhibitions program happen, privileging me with intimate knowledge of the Exhibitions process and a preview of its implementation into ACT government high schools. As a player early on in the initiative, apprised of previous knowledge that I bring to the study, I am already a subject in it. Being conscious that it is neither possible nor desirable "to suspend our sense of belonging" (May, 2001:9), I make no claim to be operating within the arena of the so-called 'objective' which ignores context and positionality (Lather, 1991:39).

The hybrid role of my 'outsider' research stance, together with my 'insider' perspective, grants me access to insights that have helped me to design the study, and to maximize its potential for exploring what the initiative really meant to Exhibitions participants. Because of my previous involvement, I also have the opportunity to follow up on intuitions gleaned from the pilot, (noting that the source of these are observations by teachers in the pilot program, as well as my own). These included an impression that Exhibitions meant more to teachers than to the system leaders involved, and that the demands Exhibitions place on teachers may not be sustainable in the long term.

I come to the study with a strong personal and professional belief, expressed eloquently by Allan Luke, that "schools are the mechanism for creating a just society" (Luke, Lateline 2002). My early interest in Exhibitions was piqued by its promise for high school reform, designed as it was with the express purpose of engaging disaffected young people in schooling and raising achievement for the whole range of students. Having experienced what happened at the interface between the pilot program and schools, I saw the advent of ACT Teacher Fellowships in support of teachers engaging in education research, as the ideal opportunity to apply academic scrutiny to the initiative in its mainstream application. Mindful of the good work by Deidre Overton on teacher responses to educational change, and Val Faulkner's on

curriculum and pedagogy in relation to adolescent literacy, I believed that my research would complement their's. I believed also that, given the unique origins and nature of the ACT government school system, my work could add usefully to 'local' educational knowledge about school restructuring, and provide ACT-specific understanding of the lessons that might be learned of benefit to the existing Exhibitions program and to future educational innovation.

3:3. Research Methodology

This research sits within the qualitative research paradigm, where I chose multiple methods and research practices, put together to enable the study of subjects in their "natural settings", and in order "to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:1).

While acknowledging that "it is never just one thing", Denzin and Lincoln (1994) identify essential features of *qualitative research* - that it takes a "naturalistic, interpretive approach to its subject matter", and that it involves "ongoing critique of the politics and methods of positivism" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:4). Positivism in the social sciences assumes that 'truth' can transcend opinion and bias, that research can take place within a 'value-free' framework, that the researcher can remain detached, and that human behaviour can be explained in terms of cause and effect, and is therefore predictable (May, 2001:10). Critical social researchers, in particular, doubt that general laws apply, reject the assumptions and methods of positivist science which "silences too many voices", and prefer approaches that take account of context and individual free-will (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:4-5).

I have used case study research within the interpretive hermeneutic paradigm as the primary research methodology, to provide rich insights into the Exhibitions experience, revealed through interviews conducted with participants in the Year 9 Student Exhibitions Program from three case study schools.

Case study research is not a methodology but a form of research where the choice is made to study a particular case - "a choice of object to be studied" (Stake,

2000:236). It follows that a case study is both the “set of procedures” (Scott & Usher, 2000:87) used to learn about the case, and the product of the learning. While not all case studies are qualitative, they are often used “to study particular segments of social life that are naturally occurring and that seem to have clearly defined boundaries” and employ methods of data-collection that “attempt to capture the lived reality of … settings”, such as schools (Scott & Usher, 2000:87).

This case study research is conducted within the hermeneutic paradigm, where hermeneutics is taken to mean “an approach to the analysis of texts, that stresses how prior understandings and prejudices shape the interpretive process” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:15). The *interpretive/ hermeneutic* framework used for interpreting these case studies is guided by a set of beliefs, viewed as taken-for-granted, that frame “the questions that are asked and the interpretations that are brought to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:13). In social and educational research, hermeneutic/interpretive epistemology rejects the “universal logic” of scientific research as inappropriate, because in social and educational research, knowledge is concerned “with interpretation, meaning and illumination” and “not with generalisation, prediction and control” (Usher, 1994:18).

The assumption is that “all human action is meaningful and hence has to be interpreted and understood within the context of social practices” (Usher, 1994:18). Usher (1994) describes both the subject of research (the researcher) and the object (other people) as “interpreters or sense-seekers” (Usher, 1994:19). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) recognise that in social interactions between the researcher and participants, “the knower and the known interact and shape one another” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:16). Further, people seeking to understand social interactions and to make sense of their experience, develop interpretive frameworks. These “pre-understandings” are historically and culturally situated (Usher, 1994:19). It follows that meanings are constructed, and that all knowledge is “perspective-bound and partial”. Usher maintains that because of the “hermeneutic circularity of interpretation”, it would be impossible for a researcher to “stand outside the world in order to understand it properly” (Usher, 1994:19-21).

This study draws on *narrative enquiry* focused on interviewing, initially with unstructured interviews which allow space for stories to be told by the participants in three schools of their Exhibitions experiences, followed by semi-structured interviews with a question schedule and dialogue. A *narrative* is a "sustained account" that takes the notion of interview responses out of the realm of "traditional question-answer exchanges" (Mishler, 1991:67); and has "a cultural or racial basis" in terms of "who is permitted to define what a story [or story-telling] is" (Scheurich, 1997:68).

The method used in this case study relies on interviewing, observing, artefact and document analysis, and personal experience. Mishler (1991) defines *interviews* as "speech events or activities", and "discourse between speakers" that is "jointly constructed", rejecting the "stimulus-response" model (Mishler, 1991:66). He identifies the essential features of "interviews as discourse" as "taking speech seriously" (Mishler, 1991:36), where meaning is "specific and contextually grounded … through the discourse as it develops and is shaped by speakers" (Mishler, 1991:64), and that it is only through knowing what is actually said by both the interviewer and the interviewee "that we can begin to address the question of what they mean" (Mishler, 1991:51). He is critical of the mainstream approach, where the documented interview schedule and "the interviewer's highly selective version" of responses, fail to adequately represent both what the interviewer asked and what the respondent said, and, citing Freire (1972), takes from respondents "their right to name their world" (Mishler, 1991:36).

Mishler (1991) contends that interviews develop through a "circular process" of "mutual reformulation and specification of questions", where respondents actively participate "in the construction of the meaning of questions" (Mishler, 1991:53-54). Respondents are also sensitive to the cues of the interviewer so that "their 'answers' are as responsive to his assessments as to the original questions" (Mishler, 1991:57), while the meanings of questions and answers are in the "process of negotiation" (Mishler, 1991:59).

Mishler's claim that "ambiguities are resolved through the discourse itself" (Mishler, 1991:47) is challenged by Scheurich (1997), who maintains that the "joint construction of meaning" is an ideal which is often resisted by participants, and that

“instead, interactions and meaning are a shifting carnival of ambiguous complexity” (Scheurich, 1997:66), and quoting Spivak (1988), “a wild profusion”. He also disputes Mishler’s assumption “that there is a ‘reality’ out there that the researcher can accurately capture or represent, given the use of improved research methods” (Scheurich, 1997:66).

The issue of power in the interview relationship warrants attention, particularly as in the mainstream tradition of interviewing, the context, form and content of the interview are so firmly controlled by the interviewer, as well as the structuring of meaning where respondents have no opportunity to comment on the researcher’s interpretations of what they have said. Mishler poses alternatives to empower respondents, granted *by* the researcher. Scheurich contends that both the interviewer and the interviewee variously control each other, while other motivations (such as their social or emotional needs) in the dimension of “chaos/freedom,” mean that “many aspects of the interview interaction simply exceed either the dominance of the researcher … or the resistance of the interviewee to that dominance” (Scheurich, 1997:73).

The implications of these perspectives are that care needs to be taken over what occurs in the interview and how results are reported, that heed needs to be taken of the “conscious and unconscious baggage” that the researcher brings to “the interpretive moment” (Scheurich, 1997:73). This is achieved firstly through highlighting the positioning of the researcher, and naming “their epistemological orientation”; by illustrating the shifting “open indeterminacy” within the interview interaction; and by finding new ways to imagine interviewing (Scheurich, 1997:75).

The three interpretive, *triangulated* case studies used in this research, are subject to *comparative analysis*, so as to yield common themes and unique motifs that both cohere and distinguish the experience and legacy of Exhibitions across the three schools. Theory is generated through this process, and having evolved during the actual research, is ‘grounded’ in the data. *Grounded theory*, referred to by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as ‘constant comparative method’, is an interpretive procedure used in social research, where a researcher will formulate a theory about the phenomena they are studying that can be evaluated, rather than the traditional model of research,

where the researcher chooses a theoretical framework, and then applies the model to what is being examined. Where there is no hypothesis to be 'tested', the comparative process generates an hypothesis of itself, allowing an heuristic model (a method to help solve a problem), to be constructed (Mishler, 1991:28).

Triangulation, where multiple methods and sources of data are used, "reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:2). Sarantakos (1998) refers to two types of triangulation, *inter-method triangulation,* where two or more methods "of different methodological origin and nature" are used, and *intra-method triangulation* which employs two or more techniques of the same method (Sarantakos, 998:168). According to Stake (2000), "the process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning", is also useful for "verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation" (Stake, 2000: 241).

3:3:1. A rationale for case study research

In the *qualitative research* tradition I interpret the Exhibitions experience in terms of the meanings students, teachers and system leaders bring to it. I recognise the partiality and situated nature of knowledge and that "the experiences of those researched should not be separated from the researcher's. An exchange based on consultation and participation should take place in which each learns from the other" (May, 2001:26). Through interpretive study I am able to seek out the emic[2] meanings held by people within each case, derived from accounts given in terms meaningful to them, with respect to their role in Exhibitions.

Case study is the appropriate methodology in this research for its potential to "yield rich insights into people's biographies, experiences, opinions, values aspirations, attitudes and feelings", and so to provide valuable insight into the experience of Exhibitions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2001). This case study research focuses on

[2] An "emic" account is a description of behavior or a belief that is culture-specific ie in terms meaningful (consciously or unconsciously) to a person; to be distinguished from an "etic" account which is a description of a behavior or belief that is culturally 'neutral' ie to an observer, in terms that can be applied to other cultures. Pike (1967).

interviewing as the primary source of data so that the process of Exhibitions as it is expressed through the stakeholders involved, may be reported and interpreted.

Case study addresses my intrinsic interest in understanding intimately the experience of Exhibitions in individual schools. The study of the three schools was undertaken to better understand each particular case, and involved temporarily subordinating other interests "so that the case may reveal its story" (Stake, 2000:237).

I chose what Stake (2000) calls the *intrinsic case study* method because it drew me toward understanding "what is important about that case within its own world … its issues, contexts and interpretations", rather than it providing an illustration of how my concerns as a researcher and/or theorist were manifest in the case (Stake, 2000:242). What it might yield promises to highlight the differences between the sites, not trying to suppress them but recognising and honouring what is unique, allowing the specificities of each context to shine through.

Intrinsic case study has allowed me to learn enough about each case to be able to comprehend the complex meanings present, and then to generalise from motifs presenting across cases. Each of the cases was chosen, firstly, because it had a school context and Exhibitions model quite different from the other cases, and, secondly, in the belief that "understanding them will lead to better understanding, perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases" (Stake, 2000:237).

Mine is at once a study of *the particular*, as well as of *what is common* about the cases. This entails an heuristic (discovering) process to provide a 'thick' description of the case. This has involved exploring not only the unique character of each case (including its historical background, physical setting, socio-economic context etc), but also the other cases through which this case can be recognised, as well as the informants through whom the case can be known.

I chose *narrative enquiry* because it gave me purchase on two important themes, agency and engagement, arising out of participants' particular context and experience, to grant emic understanding, and present their perspective on Exhibitions. In this way it provides respondents with a forum to reflect on and validate perspectives, raise

questions and construct meaning from their own experience of Exhibitions, where formal opportunities previously afforded them had been limited.

Narrative analysis is appropriate because it deals with the "fundamental problem of the way that meaning is expressed in and through discourse" (Mishler, 1991:66). The merit of treating interviews as stories, as Mishler argues, is for the "empowerment" they provide respondents and the respect they give to their way of constructing meaning (Mishler, 1991:143).

Through *triangulation*, multiple methods secure in-depth understanding and corroborate participants' responses, adding rigor, breadth and depth to the study. The main value of *triangulation* is to reduce the likelihood of misinterpreting the meanings. In this study, interpretation is based on multiple perceptions of Exhibitions implementation - by the three different stakeholder groups (students, teachers and system leaders) in each case; by each stakeholder group across the three cases; or between interviews, documents, and researcher observations - allowing a check on the voracity of my interpretations, conscious as I am that the "situated, relational and textual structures of … experience" mean that there is no one way to interpret 'reality' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2001:15).

3:3:2. Interview methodology

As the Exhibitions I examined were 'past events' (focussed on the 2002 Exhibitions program), and I could not be present throughout the process, the interviews conducted in 2003 served the purpose of providing attitudinal and informational data. There were methodological considerations about the degree of structure that should be imposed on the interview process, its content and context, and the underlying rules and the epistemological assumptions that would be observed.

May (2001) suggests three conditions for the successful completion of interviews. Interviewees need to have the information sought by the interviewer (referred to as *accessibility*), understanding of the information (referred to as *cognition*), and *motivation* so that they feel their participation and answers are valued. It is also most

important that there is “mutual trust” (May, 2001:230) between the interviewer and interviewee to allow information to flow freely, otherwise ‘official’ responses, stock answers or ‘what they think you want to hear’ may result, preventing a true picture of the interviewee’s perspectives emerging.

I acquainted myself with interviewing methods and process, understood as “methods of maintaining and generating conversations with people on a specific topic or range of topics and the interpretations which social researchers make of the resultant data” (May, 2001:120-121).

I selected *semi-structured interviews* preceded by *unstructured interviews,* both for their strength “for producing social knowledge” (May, 2001:121). I chose unstructured (or *focused*) interviews because they offered “*flexibility* and the discovery of *meaning*” (May 2001:124), and gave rise to narrative. Being open-ended, unstructured interviews also provide the ability for the interview to “challenge the pre-conceptions of the researcher” (May, 2001:124). They permit the interviewee to “talk about the subject within their own frames of reference” and to draw on “ideas and meanings with which they are familiar”, allowing them to reflect more deeply and the researcher to better understand their perspective (May, 2001:124).

Citing Merton, Fiske and Kendall (1956), Mishler claims that the chief benefits of focused (unstructured) interviews are “*depth*”, where they “should help interviewees to describe the affective, cognitive and evaluative meanings of the situation”, and “*personal context*”, where “the attributes and prior experience of interviewees” are brought out to “endow the situation with these distinctive meanings” (Mishler, 1991:99).

In semi-structured interviews, while questions are ‘specified’, there is latitude to “probe beyond the answers and thus enter into a dialogue with the interviewee” (May, 2001:123). Unlike structured interviews, they are expansive, allowing people to respond “more on their own terms … but still provide a greater structure for comparability over that of the focused interview” (May, 2001:123).

I rejected the use of *structured interviews*, as the standardization required for conducting such interviews precludes the researcher from deviating from the questions in the interview schedule, while interviewees, as May (2001) describes it, "must fit into boxes or categories" predetermined by the researcher (May, 2001: 125). Conscious that Exhibitions students in particular would require support for their unfamiliar role as interviewees, the focus on a 'neutral' interviewer stance, would have prevented any elaboration or discussion intended to produce understanding or engagement, suppressing the discourse. *Asking each person the same question in the same way* would not only constrain the conversation, but would also disallow rephrasing of questions, making it difficult to establish the meaning of the interviewee's account and to explore more deeply any singular motifs arising from the dialogue.

Thus, having investigated the dynamics of interviewing, different methods of conducting interviews and analysing data, and the strengths and limitations of different methods for "producing social knowledge", I decided that a mixture of interview types would be appropriate, as "a pragmatic diversity of methods" (Scott & Usher, 2000:13).

3:4. Research design

The research design, in focusing on the purposes of the study, identifies which information will most appropriately answer the research question and which strategies can be applied most effectively to obtain that information (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:14). As argued in 3:2:1, case study research based on interviews with Exhibitions participants in schools, was chosen as the most appropriate methodology to explore the direct experience of those who were the 'on-the-ground' implementers of the Year 9 Exhibitions program. This information was necessary to establish what the uptake was of an Exhibitions approach in the three ACT high schools, what that uptake was dependent upon, and what its impact has been on student learning and engagement, and teacher renewal.

Despite not knowing at the outset what the issues, perceptions and understandings would be that influenced the uptake, outcomes and value of Exhibitions at each case study school, the findings from previous research informed the design of my research.

Originally my research design had focused on the conduct of classroom observations during the 2002 Exhibitions program, using research instruments including a simplified observation schedule, based on the QSRLS Classroom Observation Manual, with a three point scoring scale and fewer dimensions (than 20). This was also to provide criteria for the analysis of Exhibitions tasks, implementation plans and pedagogy. However factors intervened to vary the course of my research. Complexities and delays involving the ethical approval process caused me to abandon this aspect of data collection and to focus on document analysis and interview data that was collected in 2003.

The CORS research, which informed the QSRLS, Quality Teaching research and the original conception of the pilot Exhibitions program, was formative in my own study. The 'guidelines' that connected theory to the approach for collecting data adopted in my research, focused on dimensions from the CORS theoretical model for successful school restructuring (Newmann et al, 1995). The dimensions became the organisers for the interview questions that I composed and asked of respondents in the semi-structured interview (Attachments 3 & 4, Appendix E), grouped under *external support, school conditions, teacher community (and pedagogy)* and *student learning* as a starting point. These also guided the search for recurring 'motifs' from the interview data during analysis. While I was concerned to derive richness and depth of meaning, "preserving a feel of the exchange between interviewer and interviewee" (May, 2001:124), I was also anxious to achieve some uniformity in the focus of discussion, provided through these dimensions, so as to achieve some comparability between the responses of participants.

Having been well grounded in the research field on curriculum reform and school change, both practically and theoretically, I was interested to see if themes from the literature would emerge in this study. Fullan (2001) identified nine interactive factors (characteristics of the change itself, plus local and external factors) that affect the

implementation of reform. I looked for evidence of these motifs in a broad sweep of the data for each school and across schools.

From my reading of the literature it was also clear, for example, that the culture of the school (Evans, 1996:vii) would have significance for the uptake of the Exhibitions program, the involvement of participants in it and the value of its outcomes.

In preparing the research design I needed to consider my access to participants. This was facilitated by my participation in existing teacher networks. I was situated in the research context through my multiple roles as a former Exhibitions officer, a system colleague and a teacher, placing me in a position of trust, and connecting me, as researcher, to the site, subjects and documentation.

While locations for interviews were readily accessed in schools, the timing of interviews was more problematic, requiring a great deal of flexibility to arrange mutually convenient times within the dynamic of busy school timetables. In some cases I needed to reschedule interviews because students were absent with illness, while in others I had to abbreviate interviews because students were distracted, or to extend interview sessions to allow respondents extra time to tell their story. Given my awareness of the complexities that can intervene when working in schools, contingent planning and a flexible approach were integral elements of the research design.

The overall design of the project was to interview student, teacher and leader participants so as to gain an understanding of their experience of Exhibitions and the value they placed in it. Their narrative from the unstructured interview, their answers to the questions in the semi-structured interviews and the free-flowing exchange between respondents and me, would combine to indicate their grasp of the Exhibitions concept, their engagement with the task and process, and the impact that the Exhibitions ‘journey’ had on their personal growth and learning. These exchanges also would reveal participants’ perspective on the value of the task itself, on the teaching practice and on the assessment regime within the context of Exhibitions. These responses became my ‘field text’.

While a plethora of research exists on school organisational culture, focussed particularly on observations of teacher pedagogy and the educational outcomes of reform, little of the research relies directly on reporting, let alone privileging, the experiences, perceptions and commentary of teachers and students. Thus the research design and the choice of narrative interview methodology, was in part influenced by a desire to redress this. The text presents the career knowledge and the personal, practical and tacit knowingness of teachers, together with the voices and insights of students as partners with teachers in innovation and as *subjects* of change (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2001), where their perspectives are the equal of the researcher's.

My design sets up the situation so that the meanings around Exhibitions are a joint construction. "The experiences of those researched should not be separated from the researcher's. An exchange based on consultation and participation should take place in which each learns from the other" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2001: 4). The primacy given to the mutuality of our learning was implicit in the trust that grew between us.

The *framing* of the *semi-structured interview* included the use of a schedule to guide questioning, to be circulated to the teacher and leader interviewees beforehand, affording them the opportunity for prior reflection. The context or 'frame' of the interview is also influenced by the use of a tape-recorder. While recording the interview may intrude on the 'privacy' experienced by the interviewee (Scott & Usher, 2000:110), it may also allow a more 'natural' exchange, where the flow of conversation is uninterrupted by note-taking. Although transcription does not convey "the non-linguistic features of the speech situation," recording does provide the opportunity for repeated listenings which can alert the researcher to changes in meaning (Mishler, 1991:48).

The *unstructured or focused interview* was incorporated into the design to encourage respondents to respond "without constraint" and "in their own terms", so as to yield rich insights into their experience and understanding of Exhibitions and schooling, and to free them to create their own meanings.

The *unstructured interview* was intended to provide a flexible approach and to elicit open-ended responses from interviewees. They would be encouraged to use a chronological format to reflect on their experiences and would have the freedom to talk about Exhibitions within their own frame of reference. They would also be invited to 'reflect back', with the option to return to a previous point and to elaborate. This would provide me, as the interviewer, with a deeper understanding of the subject's point of view and allow me to confirm my interpretation of their subsequent responses to the *semi-structured* interview.

Commencing the exchange with narrative interviewing was intended to be emancipating for teachers and students, and to give credence to their status as the agents of education innovation and producers of knowledge about it. They would be free to tell how it was for them, giving rise to the most compelling motifs from their point of view, before they were 'channelled' by the questions and their foci.

The use of *semi-structured interview*, using a common interview schedule would provide a focus for discussion, and allow each interviewee to be asked the same specific questions. Yet it would also give me as the interviewer "more latitude to probe beyond the answers and thus enter into a dialogue with the interviewee" (May, 2001:123).

Some questions were pre-set, most were open-ended, while others would be developed at the time in relation to participant responses. While questions were often specific the role of participants in Exhibitions (as a student, teacher or leader), some questions were generic across the groups, and others were parallel but worded more appropriately to the group. For example, I asked of students, "*Were there any surprises for you?"* and of teachers, *"Were there any unanticipated outcomes?"* This would prove useful in the analysis, making it possible to correlate responses not only within but also between groups.

The relationship between the different questions also provides "inter-textual focus", framing discussion (Scott & Usher, 2000:110), but still offering scope for respondents to tell their story, for clarification and for exchange. This would allow the respective "dual roles" of interviewees and interviewer to shift, the interviewee between roles as

respondent and narrator, producing 'story', and the interviewer between roles of interviewer and listener, the audience for story (Mishler, 1991:102). Attending to the more "discursive nature of the interview process" in this way, according to Mishler (1991), allows the researcher to come to "a more adequate understanding of what respondents mean", as well as the possibility of developing "stronger theories" and "more valid generalizations" (Mishler, 1991:65).

The decision to use a mixture of interview methods which would encourage narrative discourse, was based on the capacity of this methodology to capture students' and teachers' insights into the 'lived experience' of Exhibitions, their views of the program and to explore their unique perspectives. The methodology has the potential to foster mutuality in the relationship with me, the researcher. It encourages interviewees to reflect critically on Exhibitions implementation in terms of the personal commitment they have given to the program, and as a function of the processes and structures in place in the school.

3:4:1. Site selection - the case study schools

The case study examined the *Exhibitions* experience of Year 9 students and their teachers in three ACT high schools. The three schools varied in a number of ways including the length of time in operation, their organisational structures and the demographic backgrounds of their student cohort. The schools were selected for both the distinctive way in which they normally 'do school' and for their approach to this initiative. They represent three very different high school models positioned variously on a continuum from traditional through transitional to transformational, for their philosophical underpinnings, and their approach to planning, programming, curriculum development, timetabling, classroom practice, pedagogy, assessment and reporting.

These 'models' of outcomes-based education are typified in the following way: the *traditional* is teacher-centred, with didactic teaching, a high focus on content, subject 'silos' and grade-related, summative assessment; the *transitional* has elements of both teacher transmission and facilitation, with a focus on competencies and process

skills, integrated and/or negotiated curriculum and assessment, and criterion-referenced formative assessment; and the *transformational* has teacher facilitation, with student exploration, future-driven exit outcomes, multi-level tasks that explore substantive ideas and important issues, and authentic assessment.

Included in this thesis, prior to each 'school' chapter, is a profile of the school. These look at the context which the schools provide for the implementation of Exhibitions, detailing the usual activities and illuminating the Exhibitions process. In Table 2, I provide a profile summary to illustrate the differences between the three sites.

Table 2.

Capital High	**Riverside**	**Falls District**
◆ mid-range s-e-s ◆ traditional structure ◆ academic reputation ◆ curriculum syllabus ◆ 'subject silos' ◆ cyclical timetable ◆ private teacher practice ◆ three week program ◆ Roundtable 'interview' ◆ "*Drug-free youth in Canberra" … is this achievable?*	◆ high to low s-e-s ◆ non-traditional structure, K to Year 10, middle school ◆ homerooms ◆ 'hub' documents ◆ innovative programs ◆ change culture ◆ trans-disciplinary approach ◆ flexible timetable ◆ teacher teams ◆ strong TPLC ◆ scaffolding, task, RT ◆ ten week program ◆ *Walking in Someone Else's Shoes*	◆ low s-e-s ◆ declining enrolments ◆ small school flexibility ◆ students-at-risk ◆ support for special needs ◆ inclusive philosophy ◆ vocational education ◆ flexible timetable ◆ teacher collaboration ◆ strong TPLC ◆ open to change ◆ negotiated selection of task for RT presentation

As the profiles indicate, the schools chosen for the study vary widely in demographics, culture, organisation and approach. Because they vary so widely, they may be typical of a range of other cases. Case study research helps to build understanding of the complexities of each case. The research also provides insights that contribute to the refinement of a 'theory' of Exhibitions as a vehicle for school reform.

3:4:2. Researcher positioning

My positioning with regard to the innovation has been an important incentive to do the research. As an ACT DET Project Officer for the Pilot Year 9 Student Exhibitions Program, together with DECS, UC and ANSN partners, I was responsible for researching, designing, documenting and implementing the Exhibitions program in 2001. I have therefore been positioned previously as an advocate for this important reform initiative, with an intimate background knowledge of its processes and purposes. This aspect of my *insider* perspective, has yielded a rich set of archival material including field notes, meeting notes, anecdote and a record of 'the journey' of the pilot research project, as well as a 'manual' which I wrote to scaffold the process for future participants. As one of the pilot 'drivers', I am, therefore, a professional and theoretical insider with a strong grasp of the key principles behind the Exhibitions initiative.

My insider perspective on the Exhibitions program is variously inflected by the roles that I have fulfilled as a teacher, an Exhibitions project officer and mentor, and subsequently, as a school leader. This is juxtaposed with my *outsider*, research perspective and my documentation of the Exhibitions experience in terms of the meanings leader, teacher and student participants bring to it. I have not been privy to the 'politics' of the case schools, nor have I 'experienced' Exhibitions as a teacher in a school, implementing the program. This has meant that any perceptions I have of 'on-the-ground' implementation, are through the conduit of other people and our dialogue together.

I remain faithful to the perspectives of respondents, even where they are contradictory, and have provided for different voices to be heard. In so doing every effort has been made to address ethical and methodological concerns. I have acknowledged the situated nature of research knowledge and the subjectivity of my

role as an educator and 'insider'. This has granted me access and understanding during interviews and data interpretation, counterbalanced by the more 'objective' researcher stance.

Again from the **insider** perspective, with the teachers as partners in the endeavour, I negotiated clear and agreed understandings about the form of the research project. As **educators**, we shared enthusiasm at the prospect of learning more about the dynamics of the teaching and learning process exhibited through the program. The students were willing to speak with me, knowing that I was a **teacher** who was interested in their Exhibitions work, while years of experience in working with young adolescents, enabled me to converse readily with them and to put them at ease.

At the same time I have fulfilled an **outsider** role, positioned as a **researcher** whose purpose is to examine the conditions which have affected the uptake of an Exhibitions approach in high schools, and to explore its impact on teacher renewal and student learning from the point of view of participants.

I believe that any influence my roles may have had on interviewees' responses and on the data collected to be minimal. I did acknowledge 'up front' with them my view that, conducted authentically, Exhibitions has the potential to be a positive and productive approach to school reform. However, I also made the point clearly that only through genuine, critical, 'warts and all' feedback from those directly involved, and a realistic assessment of the program's deficiencies and successes, can the usefulness and viability of the program, and the reform 'lessons' it provides, be understood.

In this way, my work contributes to knowledge generally of the conditions and impact of reform in the ACT context. Having been awarded an ACTDET Teacher Fellowship, there is the expectation that I will provide feedback to the ACT system and teaching fraternity on my findings. One aspect of the research of particular relevance to ACTDET is to understand how the pilot Exhibitions model developed by the research circle team and participants, translated to the broader, mainstream application of 2002; and to discover how achievable an Exhibitions approach really is for those who implement it and under what circumstances.

3:4:3. Participant selection

The informants in each of the three schools, were two teachers and two students who had participated in the mainstream Exhibitions program in 2002. The students were selected on advice from Exhibitions teachers. They were chosen from the Year 9 cohort, most of whom had successfully participated in the Exhibitions program. The first student nominated by teachers, was considered to be a motivated, high-achieving, 'academic' student, and had participated successfully in the Exhibitions process. The second student selected was perceived, under 'normal' circumstances, as low-achieving and disinterested, neither 'academic' nor successful, but had also participated successfully in the Exhibitions program.

Of the teachers, one was a driver of the Exhibitions process in the school and the other a minor player. The criteria for selecting teachers were that one should be an experienced teacher who had a well-developed understanding of the principles behind Exhibitions, while the other was a novice who had come fresh to the initiative. The former had a constructive role, while the latter had a more technical or peripheral role. The purpose of selecting these particular subjects was to offer different perspectives on the Exhibitions experience. The casual observations of other teacher and student participants also provided further insight into the Exhibitions implementation process.

I spoke at length with the key informants about their participation in the Exhibitions program, both informally and in accordance with the interview 'schedule'. These interviews were conducted individually with key informants during three or four visits to each site.

I also interviewed three system leaders, two of whom were managers for the project. One leader was a visionary at the pilot stage in 2001 and another was responsible for mainstream implementation of the initiative in 2002. The third system leader was a

project officer for the mainstream implementation of Exhibitions in 2002, a role that equated with my own during the pilot program. As project officers we had been responsible for supporting 'on-the-ground' implementation of Exhibitions in the high schools and were engaged in a close mentoring relationship with teachers and students. Thus I offer my own perspective to parallel Sara's. Given that the study examines the uptake of Exhibitions *in schools*, the leader perspectives play a secondary role in the research, while the teacher and student interviews provide the main source of data, interest and focus.

The criteria for selection placed school participants in contrasting positions within each site, and at the same time, in parallel positions across sites. The criteria for selecting interviewees had the potential to identify Exhibitions participants representative of a range of uptake by teachers and of responses by students to the initiative; and to indicate the impact of the Exhibitions program on building the capacity of teachers for curriculum reform and pedagogical change, and on improving learning outcomes for the whole range of students.

3:4.4. Ethical considerations

Approval was secured in 2003. The primary ethical considerations were that participants needed to be provided with an introductory *letter* (see Attachment 1(c), Appendix D) and *information* (see Attachment 1(b), Appendix D) about the nature and purpose of the research, and that I needed to receive the informed consent of subjects, attained through the use of *consent forms* (see Attachment 1(a), Appendix D). The process of negotiating access and establishing protocols in schools with principals was important, while my position as an 'outsider', not as an immediate colleague of teachers at the schools, yet an 'insider' and fellow professional, assisted me to gain the support of participants.

Teachers approached students on my behalf to participate in the research and assisted me in getting parental consent with the forms I had provided. The information made it clear that transcripts would be available for scrutiny by interviewees, who would be free to veto any information that they did not wish to be

made public. I was available by mobile phone to answer any queries prior to a participant (or their agent) giving consent, as well as following the interview, should participants require clarification or further information.

Having gained written consent from ACTDET, the school principal, teacher interviewees, as well as written parental consent for students, I arranged interview times and locations. The interviews were conducted in public view, such as in a library office partitioned with glass. In the interviews I made it clear that the interview was being audio-taped and that interviewees had the opportunity to withdraw at any stage if they so wished.

Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed through the use of pseudonyms for participants and schools, and through my discretion as a researcher. Prior to public scrutiny any identifying information was removed from existing documents that had been collected, such as from assessment rubrics and school Exhibition tasks, and all records were kept secure. Participants gave permission to use their transcribed material, and were offered the opportunity to view the final thesis. In this way I was sensitive to ethical considerations.

3:5. Data collection

I constructed the process for interviewing participants in the case study schools and addressed its facilitation in the following ways. I established with the teacher and student interviewees that they had in fact been participants in the Exhibitions program at their school in 2002 and had completed the process from the initial prior learning and task phase through to the Roundtable presentation and evaluation. I also ensured that the interviewees had a clear understanding of the Exhibitions process and the purpose of my research, supported by ethical approval documentation and preliminary conversations with their colleagues or teachers and parents. I declared my interest as a researcher, teacher and colleague, personally familiar with the landscape of schools, and respectful of the valuable and unique insights that they could provide as participants in the implementation of the Exhibitions program in their school. I reassured them that I was not acting in a

surveillance role nor as an 'agent' of the Department of Education. This allayed their concerns, encouraged them to participate in the interview process and helped to build trust between us.

I sought approval from Principals to conduct research in their schools. The Exhibitions coordinator invited Exhibitions teachers and students to volunteer to participate in the research and assisted me to identify those who met the participant criteria. The Exhibitions teachers arranged the necessary approvals and documentation with the parents of the students. The anonymity of all informants was protected and the interviews were arranged and conducted in accordance with the protocols for ethical approval (see Appendix). System leaders were approached through the Manager of the High School Development Project.

The unstructured interview that preceded the semi-structured interview, was intended to provide the opportunity for narrative, capturing the flavour and ambience of the journey, and any unanticipated insights that might be revealed. During the semi-structured interview that followed, I posed the more 'formal' questions.

Teachers also provided me with documentation created by them and their students in preparation for and during the course of the Exhibitions program. These documents included Exhibitions task outlines, student information booklets, and Roundtable assessment rubrics, all of which provided other sources for triangulating data and corroborating my understanding of the Exhibitions design and process at each site.

The interviews were conducted with a small group of students and teachers from three ACT high schools, as well as system leaders, who had been involved in the design and/or implementation of the Year 9 Student Exhibitions Program in 2003. The collection and analysis of data captured and investigated the impressions related by participants of their involvement in this change initiative, with reference to the research question. I also examined samples of Exhibitions work and the task itself as evidence of student achievement and teacher professional learning.

3:5:1. Interviewing

I selected an unstructured interview as the introductory phase of the interview session, to provide the opportunity for free-flowing narrative. This preceded the semi-structured interview which followed the same interview schedule for all three cases, and gave scope both for exploring more deeply interviewees' responses to the questions, and for engaging them in dialogue.

The context of all the interviews was the school, in an area separate from supervising teachers but within public perview, such as at the end of the staffroom or library, during class time. This 'normalized' the context, and provided privacy for subjects to speak freely, as other people were not in immediate proximity or within listening range, without compromising safety and ethical considerations. Quite apart from ethical practice, it was important to conduct the interviews within the school setting. Removing interview participants from the context within which the research was situated, risked "the respondents' answers [being] disconnected from the essential socio-cultural grounds of meaning" (Mishler, 1991:23).

I gained written permission from interviewees and, in the case of students, their parents, to record the interview on audio-tape. The interview was subsequently transcribed, permitting an accurate record of interview that, in accordance with ethical approvals, could be edited by the subject to better reflect their meaning if they so wished. Recording the interview in this way also meant that we were not distracted or put off by note taking, which I did only incidentally to document an impression or a point for emphasis during the interview. This approach to the interview process allowed participants to reflect back on their Exhibitions experience and the impact of it, and for such anecdotal evidence to be collected.

In order that I would be open to the unfolding narrative of the interviewees and to the thoughts expressed by them, I composed 'self-reminders' that I took into the interview, and reproduce here.

> *Remember:*
> *Don't analyse, just clarify for understanding*
> *I am 'mining' tacit knowledge*
> *The heuristic draws on what's inside*

Identify turning points, realization points

Be sensitive to motifs as they emerge

Follow intuitions

Be aware of tone of voice, body language

Record as notes any impressions, feelings

The preamble to the unstructured interview appears in Table 4, as well as the kind of supplementary questions used to elicit clarification, elaboration and further information during both the unstructured semi-structured interview.

Table 4.

Unstructured Interview: Preamble

I am conducting interviews to follow-up on the work of last year to get your views on the process of Exhibitions, twelve months down the track. As you may know, I was originally involved as a project officer working with teachers in the Exhibitions pilot program. I now take a more neutral position as an independent researcher.

I am interested to get a clear picture of the experience from your inside perspective – what worked and what didn't, where the benefits and disadvantages lie.

If you would cast your mind back to about this time last year when you were involved in Exhibitions. Would you reflect on the experience as it unfolded?

Starting at the beginning, can you tell me about it?

Unstructured/ Supplementary Interview Questions

The following **prompts** are offered to elicit elaborated responses:
Can you give me an example of that?
How did you feel?
What were the problems?
When that happened, how did it affect you?
What if…….?
What might have happened if (another decision had been made)?
What made it work? (eg the talents of the individuals involved, the situation, serendipity?)
We can often learn more from the pitfalls. What did you learn from them?
If you had been ……., how would you have handled it?
When you made that decision, what learning or experience helped you?
I guess this would be a problem if…… What do you think?

The 2003 interviews conducted with two teachers and two students from each of the case study schools, asked them to reflect back on their Exhibitions experience of 2002 from "down the track". The semi-structured interview 'schedule' provided a consistent set of questions which covered the significant dimensions of school

restructuring, derived from school change theory. The questions related to key themes that my reading of the research literature in the field of school reform suggested. Some specific questions had their origins in my own observations during the Pilot program and in feedback from teachers related in the Year 9 Student Exhibitions Pilot Project Report (Brennan, White & Owen, 2001). The common interview schedule was designed to permit the responses of the different individuals and stakeholder groups at the different school sites to be compared.

The semi-structured interview framework allowed me, the researcher, to deviate from the set questions in order to pursue speculations and to probe responses, exposing underlying assumptions and investigating the motives and concerns of the interviewees. Within the 'face-to-face' interview context, the body language and intonations of speech of participants also revealed information that would not have been accessible from a written response. By using the 'insider' lens of professional colleague and teacher, given the empathy and understanding this stance afforded, it was possible to gain deeper and more compelling insights into the participants' experience of Exhibitions. At the same time, as an 'outsider' researcher, I was distanced from workplace 'politics' which could constrain the responses of participants.

The interview sessions were of 30 – 60 minutes duration with each participant. Teacher and student participants were invited to tell the story of their Exhibitions 'journey'. In so doing they were encouraged to explain their understanding of Exhibitions, to describe the model developed in their school context, and to share what they believed had been achieved using an Exhibitions approach.

The teacher perspective was sought regarding the impact of the Exhibitions experience on building their capacity for curriculum reform and pedagogical change, and on the quality of student learning. They were invited to identify any transfer of Exhibitions principles to subsequent curriculum development and if their pedagogic choices have altered since using an Exhibitions approach. They were asked what factors had helped or hindered their planning and implementation of Exhibitions.

Teachers were asked to reflect on what they had achieved in the light of what they had planned. The comparison was to indicate any mediating factors that had intervened. Students were also asked to describe their Exhibitions experience, the impact it had on them and to reflect on the transfer of understandings, skills and processes from Exhibitions to subsequent learning.

3:6. Data Analysis

Narrative analysis suits studies of subjectivity, in this case where unstructured and semi-structured interviews have invited respondents to "speak in their own voices" (Mishler, 1991:69); and where the research objective has been to discover what factors have influenced participants' uptake of Exhibitions and how the experience has affected them. Narrative analysis provides a method of reading and analysing the interview responses *as stories*, based on the assumption that "telling stories is one of the significant ways individuals construct and express meaning" (Mishler, 1991:67).

Mishler in his review of narrative analysis, discusses the features and merits of different approaches. The central issues, according to Mishler, to be considered in appraising any model are, firstly, the effects on the respondent's story, of the interviewer and the interview context, and, secondly, how the temporal ordering of events as expressed in the story, relate to those in the real world (Mishler, 1991:82).

Paget (1983), also cited by Mishler, grounds her analysis of in-depth interviewing in the "*dialectic of the interview*" where the answers to questions have informed "the evolving conversation", where the questions are "formulated and reformulated over the course of the interview" in search of "ways to ask about what she wants to learn" (Mishler, 1991:97). For Labov and Fanshel (1977), narrative analysis is focused on *the social meanings* of events in the real world as they are reported in a narrative account (Mishler, 1991:84). They also pose the notion of "*expansion*" whereby the researcher supplements the text using their "best understanding", bringing other material including shared knowledge between participants, to augment meaning. My approach to narrative analysis is founded on the tenets that "the interviewer's

presence and form of involvement … is integral to a respondent's account" (Mishler, 1991:82); and that the interview is a "jointly produced discourse" (Mishler, 1991:98).

Another approach is the organisation of an account in terms of *coherence,* where the focus is on the narrator's intentions and the strategies they use to produce a coherent story. Coherence in discourse provides unity to the text. Mishler cites Agar and Hobbs (1982) who describe three types of coherence in the narrative structure of a story - 'global' coherence (how what is said relates to the overall intent of the conversation), 'local' coherence (the causal and temporal links between parts of the text), and 'themal' coherence (as an expression of the speaker's "cognitive world") (Mishler, 1991:89). What is to be taken from this is that narrative analysis can "both respect the particularities of an account and relate an individual's story to general cultural themes and values" (Mishler, 1991:93).

In exploring narrative analysis, I found the work of Barone (2001) to be very useful, as he writes, like me, from the perspective of a researcher analysing teacher story. In *Touching Eternity* (2001), Barone interrogates what constitutes educational significance and 'good' teaching. He explores the life stories of one teacher and his ex-students, through the participation of the writer, the protagonists and the readers of the study in "poly-vocal, conspiratorial conversations" (Barone, 2001:151). This work contributed to my analysis by offering a critical lens to pass over the role of Exhibitions evaluation. According to Barone, *summative evaluation* provides "a terminal, overall appraisal of an educational program", usually for compliance purposes. *Formative evaluations*, however, are focused on improving an ongoing program, and "aim to discover deficiencies and successes in the intermediate versions of the program", providing "a useful tool of enlightenment and empowerment for the people affected by that program" (Barone, 2001:152). From my 'insider' perspective, applying this lens has permitted understanding of the value of the program, to inform its future implementation and sustainability.

Through the analysis of interview data of participants in the Exhibitions program, my research provides such a formative evaluation. I reject traditional social scientific research epistemology and the search for so-called objectivity and absolute truth as neither achievable nor the ideal. Instead I accept that studies of human phenomena

are subjective, and that the ambiguities and contradictions of multiple perspectives are inevitable. Throughout this educational enquiry, I have been interested in seeking out and enhancing the meanings conveyed by participants of the program. I embraced the interpretive hermeneutic paradigm, trawling the data in search of common and unique motifs that rose to the surface of the participants' *lived experience* of Exhibitions and contributed to emergent theory. I have sought to assume research practices where "our empirical and pedagogical work can be less toward positioning ourselves as masters of truth and justice and more toward creating a space where those directly involved can act and speak on their own behalf" (Lather, 1991:164).

I have taken an 'ideologically open' perspective on the research without an agenda, following a process of discovery, yet knowing that I write from a subjective position, referring to the personal meaning I take from it, and recognising that "as it really is" and "value-free knowledge" are Utopian (Lather, 1991:109). At the same time I have endeavoured to be 'ever reflexive', "committed to pondering the impressions, deliberating recollections and records – but not necessarily following the conceptualizations of theorists, actors, or audiences" (Stake, 2000:242).

The narrative analysis process of representing and interpreting student and teacher perspectives on Exhibitions, drew on my knowledge of the sites and reflected sensitivity to the issues confronting participants. As the researcher I became located in the construction of stories and their analysis. My 'insider' perspective rounded the construction of meaning, while my 'outsider' perspective permitted accounts by teachers & students to be viewed in relation to one another and in the light of the broader school and system context.

3:6:1. Document analysis

The analysis of system documentation, including the ACT Government Schools Plan, indicated the systemic policy directions behind this initiative. An examination of program documentation, including the *Assessment by Exhibition: Student Exhibition Teachers' Kit* (ACT DET, 2001-2002), revealed the curriculum, pedagogy and

assessment underpinning Exhibitions, and provided understanding of the kind of scaffolding support that was made available to teachers for their task and program design. The professional development Research Circle schedule and report indicated the support provided for teacher learning about curriculum, pedagogy & assessment, and teacher feedback on it.

School-based documentation, such as the School Handbook, provided insight into the context of each case study school (philosophy, demographics, culture, organisation) within which the Exhibitions program was implemented. Also the design of the Exhibitions task, specific to each school setting, was examined in the light of the design parameters, the *format* guide (Figure 1.1, Appendix A) and the '*ideal' task* set out in the kit (Figure 1.2, Appendix A). Other documents indicated the conditions, adjustments and processes created to accommodate the initiative ie parent/panel information, school Roundtable assessment matrix, school-based professional development, timetables, Roundtable schedules, student support documents etc. For example, Panel Information guides revealed the complexity of scheduling Roundtable panel assessments - where coordinating communication, time and space to hold the panels presented enormous logistical challenges, which would have consumed considerable teacher time and effort.

In some cases, individual evidence of the process and progress of learning provided by students eg Roundtable presentations, portfolios, journals, panel comments, were also examined. The journals, like the Roundtable presentations, revealed the student's learning 'journey', particularly aspects of self-management, including their use of diverse strengths and the strategies they employed to deal with weaknesses.

3:6:2. Interview data interpretation and analysis

I had conducted interviews with teachers and students, four interviews at each of three schools, and subsequently three interviews with system leaders, comprising a total of fifteen recordings. Reflecting the enthusiasm of some of the participants, many of the interviews were also lengthy, so that the data set burgeoned. I transcribed all the material contained in the recordings, intersected by my field notes

taken during the course of the interviews, and by reflections made during the transcription process.

I worked through the data, making annotations in the margins of the transcripts. Annotations on the left of the transcript became *inputs*, such as time, effort, space in the curriculum, and those on the right became *outputs*, including student engagement, commitment, pride, overload. Inputs and outputs could have either a positive or a negative connotation.

Key motifs became apparent, which I placed on a matrix. Ideas and direct quotations from the transcripts were transferred to the cells of the grid. In my role of 'writer-as-interpreter', the matrices represented my initial attempts to make sense out of what I had learned. They became my working interpretive documents, and contained different categories applied to make sense of the data, that shifted over time. Recording these direct quotations and qualitative interpretations in this way, enabled me to gain purchase on the data, and in so doing to produce a 'research text' based on the field text. For unity, clarity, comparability and differentiation purposes, I also created summary tables for each of the schools, (published at the close of each school chapter). The tables were helpful in relating the meanings made by one person, to the meanings made by another, within subgroups or between them.

The transition from data collection to interpretation was an iterative process. It involved 'reading' and representing the process of Exhibitions implementation at each site from the perspective of four different people, two teachers and two students in each case. The focus was on telling each person's story, relating them to the commentary of others and connecting their accounts to the context of the school. At times their views concurred and at others they diverged. Sometimes the interpretations made by individuals even contradicted their own previous perspectives.

My purpose was to identify recurring themes and singular motifs. It was important during this process to identify what was common without losing sight of what was unique. Although I had anticipated particular themes within the five dimensions of *teacher community and pedagogy, school conditions, school leadership, external*

support and *student learning*, preliminary framing was only a starting point that did not preclude themes and motifs emerging from the data.

The notion of *investment* became increasingly emblematic, and to complete the 'economic' metaphor, so too the idea of *return*. It became clear that the 'input' categories reflected factors that influenced the commitment of participants to the Exhibitions program, and that 'output' categories represented positive and negative outcomes. The categories, as a level of representation in the research process, became the organisational framework for reducing, sorting and analysing the data. They underpinned the emergent theory of investment grounded in the data. When I had trawled more deeply through the data, indicating factors that had inspired *investment* and their outcomes (*returns*), I went through a process of amalgamating categories then separating them again, as the subtleties between concepts became increasingly significant. Table 5 tracks changes to categories of investment.

Table 5.

Factors that inspired investment:

8-4-04
(1) **Pedagogical**
(2) **Intellectual**
(3) **Emotional** (as a learner)
(4) **Cultural** (engaged vs compliant)
(5) **Time and money**
(6) **Level of demand & effort**
(7) **Ownership** (level of responsibility for implementation)

13-4-04
(1) **Theory** (what is to be learned)
(2) **Practice** (how it is to be achieved)
(3) **Emotional engagement** (as a learner vs compliance)
(4) **Support** (time, money, team)
(5) **Labour**
(6) **Agency** (responsibility for implementation)

21-6-05
(1) **Reflexivity**
(2) **Proximity/Agency**
(3) **Collective Responsibility/Support**

4-9-06
(1) **Reflexivity** - theory (what is to be learned), practice (how it is to be achieved), action research, metacognition
(2) **Proximity/Agency** - close with no responsibility for implementation vs close with responsibility for implementation
(3) **Support** – time, money, team, teacher professional learning community
(4) **Emotional & Intellectual Engagement** - as a learner vs compliance

1-10-06
(1) **Proximity** – close (not necessarliy responsible for implementation) vs distant
(2) **Agency** - responsibility for construction and/or implementation

(3) **Engagement** – labour; emotional engagement as a learner vs compliance
(4) **Reflexivity** – theory (what is to be learned), practice (how it is to be achieved), action research cycle, metacognition
(5) **Support** – social and organisational; team, peer; teacher professional learning and/or community; time, effort; funding.

Returns remained consistent throughout in the categories of:
(1) **Teacher Renewal** eg pedagogy
(2) **Improved Student Learning Outcomes** eg independent learning skills
(3) Kudos / Credibility
(4) **Spinoffs** – transfer to other learning, approaches inspired by Exhibitions

Thus, having accumulated and interpreted the vast quantity of data, the challenge had been how to give shape to it. As described, the data was reduced through coding into tables, to distil what was essential and significant for teachers and students about their experiences. (For examples of completed *investment* and *returns matrices*, refer to Appendix F).

Over time and through repeated scanning of the data, the ways that the different perspectives were interpreted and related (or failed to relate) each to the other, changed in the course of deconstructing and making sense of the data, and proved significant in the final analysis.

Interestingly, analysis of interview data has revealed that as *project officers*, Sara and I held an *'insider' leader* perspective, in the role of mentors, close to the realities of Exhibitions design and implementation in schools. This contrasted with the more distant *'outsider' leader* perspective of the system *project managers*, Angela and Jenny. This finding has reinforced the notion of investment, where positioning with respect to implementation emerged as a key motif.

Also imagery and metaphor highlighted in the transcripts became valuable in illuminating the feeling, the depth and the quality of the experience for participants. For example, Julie felt confronted by the suggestion of doing an Exhibition without the Roundtable, and exclaimed, "No! It's the epiphany! … I'm trying to think of an analogy. It's like going to the Arctic without seeing the lights!"

A further tool for analysis was the productive pedagogies. Evidence elicited from interviewees, Exhibitions planning documents and other data were examined in the light of the productive pedagogies, which had been so fundamental to the Exhibitions

approach, to determine if the Exhibition program designed and implemented in each of the case study schools, provided *intellectual quality, relevance, supportive classroom environment* and *the recognition of difference*.

This helped in identifying the factors that facilitated or frustrated the application of an Exhibitions approach in that school setting, with a focus on the conditions for teacher learning and capacity-building, as well as the conditions for worthwhile learning processes and outcomes for students. From shifting categories to key motifs, the factors of significance that promoted investment by participants emerged from the data, to be thrown into sharp relief by theoretical analysis.

Synergies became apparent between the factors emerging from the research data, and the ideas identified from the broad educational landscape and represented in the literature review. For example, *engagement* was given form and clarity when viewed in the light of 'flow theory', in particular a consideration of contextual variables and learner characteristics that influence an individual's psychological state, and affect their performance and success (Czikszentmihalyi, 1990). The characteristics of flow experiences became useful criteria for examining Exhibitions task design, to gauge the potential for providing 'intriguing content', 'interest and enjoyment', 'personal control' and 'achievable challenge', and so for influencing the level of uptake of Exhibitions by students and teachers.

From their responses to the interview questions, I sought validation from teachers, students and system leaders teacher renewal and improved student learning outcomes, including unanticipated outcomes, for the whole range of students and teachers. Evidence elicited from interviewees, policy documents and other data also shed light on the uptake of productive pedagogies, and whether or not the Exhibition program designed within each case study school, provided for intellectual quality, relevance, supportive classroom environment and the recognition of difference. Where it did was reflected in the responses of participants, who described the ways in which teacher pedagogy and capacity for change had grown, and how student learning outcomes had improved for a greater range of students during and following the Exhibitions program.

The process of analysing interview data assisted me to identify the factors which facilitated or frustrated the application of an Exhibitions approach in each school setting, with a focus on the conditions for teacher learning and capacity-building, as well as the conditions for worthwhile learning processes and outcomes for students.

The interview questions were designed to illuminate the Exhibitions experience of students, teachers and system leaders, as well as offering insight into teacher practices and the educational possibilities that they have seen for an Exhibitions approach. In this way the interviews provided the means for exploring the points of view of the research subjects, "granting these points of view the culturally honoured status of reality" (Miller & Glassner, 1997:100). Hence, through the transcripts of interview, I have privileged the voices of informants and interpreted the data seeking to remain true to the meanings expressed by them. My aspirations have been heuristic rather than declarative, so that prevailing themes and singular motifs might be discovered. My voice has become audible in the analysis.

3:6:3. Emergent theory

Utilizing *grounded theory* methodology (Charmaz, 2006), I have allowed analysis to emerge from the data collected, to reflect the experiences of the participants, while also acknowledging the situated nature of the interpretations made.

The grounded theory that has emerged from the data relating to *investment*, elaborates on the existing work of Evans (1996). He portrays the human dimension of change in schools in both individual and organisational terms, whereby teachers are not only the "targets" and, sometimes the "foes" of change, but are above all the essential *agents* of change (Evans, 1996:xii). Where reforms following the rational-functional model have been the result of a top-down initiative, and involve the reframing of structures and functions (roles, tasks, rules) "grafted on to existing practices", the innovation inevitably fails to bring about real change in the structure of schooling and the practice of teaching (Evans, 1996:5). A strategic-systemic model aims to change not only the structure but also the *culture* of the organisation, in particular, its systems of meaning, value, belief, knowledge" (Evans, 1996:17). It

relies on *commitment-building* towards a common purpose for its successful implementation and is both top-down and bottom-up, resulting in a more dynamic systemic reform process to solve problems and foster continual improvement (Evans, 1996:17).

Resting with the data, as described in 3:6:2, are different factors that influenced individual investment in the Exhibitions program. As an organisational achievement in each of the case study schools, Exhibitions are always only approximations of what was intended. The theory emerging from the data indicates that the measure of their success, in terms of teacher renewal and improved learning outcomes for students, rests with the level of personal and professional investment of participants.

3:7. Limitations of the research study

Given my 'insider' perspective with regard to Exhibitions, it is inevitable that implicit bias has come into the choices of schools and interviewees. The assumption, therefore, is that my own 'biography' of involvement as Project Manager for Exhibitions in 2001, is a fundamental part of the research process. That 'subjective' choices were made ensured variety, but not necessarily representativeness nor typicality. This may be weighed against the ease of access to the schools and participants that my status allowed, and the unique opportunity that this provided to learn.

With reference to the CORS school restructuring model, and in the interests of keeping the research manageable, I did not examine in any depth the external support provided to schools nor the school's organisational capacity to support Exhibitions. Nor did I interview community representatives and parents or explore the perspectives of other stakeholders. These are beyond the scope of my research and would be the subject of further study.

While I interviewed system leaders, the focus of my research was the school-based experience of Exhibitions implementation as reported by teacher and student participants. At the same time the impressions of the leaders provided a useful

counterpoint to teacher and student stories, and to the perspectives of the project officers. The contrast helped to alert me to the significance of *investment* and to the factors that produce it. I also became conscious that assumptions made about teachers – that they were 'resistant' or 'just didn't get it', were more often symptomatic of their frustration with intractable school structures or 'quick-fix' initiatives that failed to deliver long-term, cohesive change. Of particular interest is whether Exhibitions, as an integrated approach, overcomes the privileging of traditional academic disciplines, skills and approaches to learning, to expand on and validate notions of achievement in a variety of non-traditional spheres. How pivotal Exhibitions are in bringing about transformational change in schools and the re-creation of schools as learning organisations is also a question for further study.

3:8. Conclusion

In this chapter I have described and justified the process by which I collected and analyzed interview and other data. I found themes that emerged from the data such as student agency, independent and self-initiated learning, curriculum innovation, pedagogical change, supportive or inhibiting factors, improved student learning and engagement. I transferred the data to rubrics to represent and highlight the similarities and differences in motifs between the three schools in their approach to this department-lead innovation.

It has been important to acknowledge my role in the research process and its impact on the interviewees and the data collected. Tension between the 'objective' and the 'subjective' researcher stance could be viewed as problematic, the former achieved through 'distance' and detachment, and the latter, where "inter-subjective understanding" produces the "self-conscious awareness" and engagement required for a successful interview relationship (May, 2001:127). However, I believe that for the purposes of this research, a balance between the two perspectives has been both possible and necessary. I provided a more impartial, objective view from my 'outsider' perspective, separate from Exhibitions implementation in the case study schools, as well as a more interested, 'subjective' view through my 'insider' role as an officer in the original Exhibitions change initiative, a teacher and a colleague.

“Qualitative researchers can also create spaces for those who are studied (the other) to speak. The evaluator becomes the conduit for making such voices heard” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:15). The spaces created in the next three chapters provide a powerful forum and opportunity for the voices of Exhibitions participants, teachers and students, to be heard. In so doing they take an agentive stance (Bourdieu, 1983), with ‘insider’ and ‘grass-roots’ perspectives privileged. Giving voice to Exhibitions students and teachers, permits the narrative of their Exhibitions journey to be shared, and participant critique to be aired. The thesis provides a platform for their recommendations for future implementation, admitting their ideas to inform the relevance and sustainability of the Exhibitions initiative in the longer term, and granting participants “a real voice in change" (Evans, 1996:233).

In the chapters that follow, the case studies themselves make available the reflections and evaluations of the stakeholders themselves, providing for rich understanding of the *lived experience* of the Exhibitions program and the impact it had on the schools and individuals involved.

4. Exhibitions in Three High Schools

4:1. The Schools

This chapter begins with the profiles of three secondary schools, Capital High School, Riverside School and Falls District High School, which were among the ACT's 19 government high schools, all of which had been mandated to implement an Exhibitions program for mainstream Year 9 classes in 2002.

The three schools were chosen for their varied demographic, historical and philosophical backgrounds and because of the difference in approach they had taken towards implementing the Year 9 Student Exhibitions Program. The profiles not only describe the context within which the Exhibitions model was developed, but also provide important perspective upon the unfolding story of Exhibitions at each school, as well as explaining the richness, or paucity, of data collected and what it reveals about the conditions of an effective Exhibitions program.

In the next three chapters the experience of Exhibitions in each of the three schools is revealed and deconstructed, drawing selectively on interview data from teachers and students. They explain what the schools intended for the Exhibitions program and what happened, providing the detail of the different Exhibitions implementation models and why they were designed in ways particular to the context of each school. The outcomes of each school's Exhibitions process and Roundtable presentations are described from the perspective of those involved, followed by their personal evaluation of the Exhibitions program and their recommendations for successful implementation. All of the insights come from the interview data and are revealed either through direct quotation or through commentary which has been paraphrased from the transcripts of interview for the sake of brevity and clarity.

As explained in the methodology, the informants in each school were two teachers, one a driver of the Exhibitions process in the school and the other a minor player, as

well as two students, the first identified by their teachers as ordinarily successful and motivated, and the second, as usually low-achieving and disinterested. The views of a teacher advocate of the initiative, is compared with those of another more peripheral to the process. The responses to Exhibitions of two students, distinguished by contrasting levels of prior school achievement and engagement, are also compared.

At all three schools I had been a consultant for the 2001 Pilot Year 9 Student Exhibitions Program. In that capacity, I was closely involved with the development and delivery of Capital High School's Roundtable panel training in 2001. I was a community representative on Roundtable panels at Falls District High School in the same year. At Riverside I was a consultant to the process of developing the 2002 model for Exhibitions, and participated in Roundtable presentations as a community panel member at the end of the 2002 Exhibitions program. Of the three schools, I was most familiar with Riverside, having been a teacher there during its first four years of operation as a middle school, prior to my appointment as the project officer for the pilot program.

During the period of this research project I have been positioned variously by my 'insider' perspective as an ACT public education system teacher and leader for many years, with a comprehensive knowledge of the educational landscape in which the subject schools operate; and as an agent of the Exhibitions initiative in my role as consultant to the program. I am also positioned by my 'outsider' perspective as a researcher trying to gain some purchase on the experience of participants in the program. Mine is not a traditional 'top-down' hierarchical position, nor is it a participant position with the perspective of someone interpreting and implementing Exhibitions 'on the ground'. Neither is mine a discrete research perspective, devoid of subjective understanding for the milieu in which Exhibitions have been developed. I take a participant-researcher position. With informants I have stated 'up front' my investment in the Exhibitions approach, viewed through a critical lens, with the purpose of understanding what factors influence its uptake, what impact it does have on learning and teaching, and what does and does not make it achievable and sustainable.

In Chapters 4, 5 & 6 the teacher and student informants for each school are introduced. From analysis of the interviews with them, I relate the Exhibitions experience of each school as a narrative. This follows the chronology of the unfolding process of Exhibitions implementation, recorded under headings consistently applied to the three schools.

The narrative, told from the perspective of the teacher and student participants, describes the preparations for Exhibitions implementation, including the purpose of topic and task, teacher preparation and resourcing measures, and the organisational support provided to accommodate the Exhibitions program. The focus of the Exhibitions task and the model for implementation is discussed in the context of each school. This discussion examines the 'designed-in scaffolding', the consciously planned goals, organisation, activity selection, sequencing and other design elements intended to prepare students for the Exhibitions task and Roundtables (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005, 12). After this I recount what actually happened when the model was applied at the task and assessment phase of Exhibitions. I document the experience of participants in addressing the topic and task and implementing the Exhibitions process and Roundtable assessment. This also describes the 'contingent scaffolding', the temporary, 'as needed' support provided to guide new student learning during the Exhibitions process. The outcomes of Exhibitions implementation are then detailed, again based on participant feedback, reporting their responses to the topic, task, scaffolding and Roundtable presentations, the impact of the Exhibitions process on student and teacher learning, and any organisational, relational and pedagogical changes that resulted. Finally a critique is provided from the perspective of teachers and students, with their recommendations for future implementation. In so doing, the perspectives of teachers and students are carefully juxtaposed to reveal points of convergence or divergence.

Below there is a key as to the role of participants in each school for ready identification, while a profile summary for each school, which facilitates comparison between them, is provided in the previous chapter. In Appendix G there is a summary table for each of the schools that records the factual, conceptual and procedural elements of their Exhibitions program. This allows the signifying features of Exhibitions, as they have played out at each site, to be distinguished, and indicates

how these elements shaped the uptake of the Exhibitions process. The critical evaluations of participants are also summarised in table form to separate out the metacognitive dimension of the Exhibitions experience, and to foreground the significant outcomes of Exhibitions in each school from the participants' point of view. The last table provides for a comparison between schools and highlights overlaps and differences between them. The analysis of interview data in the following three chapters identifies key factors for successful Exhibitions implementation and provides the basis for insights and claims which I have detailed subsequently in Chapter 7.

Table 2. 2002 Exhibitions: Interview Participants

Participant	Capital HS	Falls District HS	Riverside School
Teacher driver	Janet	John	Julie
Teacher implementer	Kerry	Emma	Eric
Other teachers	Kelly Carla	Jeanette	Jemima
High achieving student	Jessica	Ian	David
Under/low achieving student	Katerina	Melissa	Tom
Other students	Talia		Crystal

2001-2 Exhibitions: System Leader Participants

Year	Project Managers	Project Officers
2001	Jenny	Anna
2002	Angela	Sara

4:2. Capital High School Profile

According to the 2001 school handbook, Capital High School has operated since 1938, moving to its present site in 1969. The school had a student population of approximately 830 students and a teaching staff of about 75. The school's reputation for high academic achievement and a focus on intellectual rigour at the time that Exhibitions was piloted in 2001, derived from its strong commitment to a traditional high school structure. A high proportion of students (74% of the school's enrolment in 2002) came from out-of-area. Students also represented 42 different cultural backgrounds. Many parents were attracted by the school's traditional approach and sent their children to the school on the strength of it.

According to teachers of Year 9, the compulsory "core subjects" of Maths, Science and English were privileged over the less academic curriculum, the "elective" program, which included Arts, SOSE, Health & PE, Technology and LOTE. At the same time there was kudos attached to high achievement in non-core areas reflected in the school's *Program of Excellence*, which credited exceptionally talented students including AIS scholarship holders, elite ballet, music and sports students, and students studying a language outside the school.

As one of the teachers from the 2002 group expressed it, "It's a very academic approach. But that's not to say that the kids who are not on an academic path aren't catered for because they are. But it certainly is your core subjects, they're the important ones. …. They're your compulsory subjects and a lot of it comes from the parents who put a lot of emphasis on those things" (Janet, Exhibitions Coordinator, 2002:6).

The philosophy and structure of the school was for subject faculties to deliver content knowledge on a KLA basis, confined within fairly rigid discipline boundaries, towards the achievement of distinct subject outcomes. In 2000-2 professional development shared initially by teachers from the science faculty, promoted a cognitive approach, towards the development of thinking skills as a common, whole-school priority. Strategies included Conceptual Mediation (Harry Lyndon 2000), Socratic dialogue, a

conceptual framework for a challenging classroom (Ralph Pirozzo 2001), Bloom's Taxonomy (Benjamin Bloom 1950) and the Multiple Intelligences (Howard Gardiner 1983), which provided some interdisciplinary connection.

As my interviews with teachers and students made clear, routine classroom practice was for each subject discipline or Key Learning Area (KLA) to be allocated time and timetabled accordingly, with students moving between classrooms, subjects and teachers at regular intervals. Classrooms were teacher-centred and teacher pedagogy was very private practice, often didactic in style, with a high focus on covering content. There was a strong focus on summative assessment, especially in the form of assignments and testing, while formative assessment included practical, theoretical and cooperative tasks. Reporting was criterion referenced, with grades for each KLA.

The faculty structure at CHS influenced profoundly the school's organisation, teacher pedagogy and student learning. With limited communication between faculties, 'subject silos' can often create disconnection in learning and the duplication of content in the different disciplines, a phenomenon that student informants reported and teachers became more aware of as a result of Exhibitions planning. Students reported repetitive themes and reproducing the same material for assignments in Health & Physical Education (HPE) and Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) in the same year, while teachers who were brought together from different faculties for Exhibitions, were surprised to discover that other faculties were covering the same topics. As a result, and as Exhibitions background research indicates, any connections students might make between ideas from the different subject perspectives become 'accidental' and are not necessarily drawn explicitly (Hargreaves, Earl and Ryan, 1996).

The school's emphasis on academic performance during these years to some extent excluded a growing proportion of the student cohort. This was a function of the system-wide trend whereby more capable students, often from a higher socio-economic background, were enrolling at private schools with a consequential residualising effect on public education.

At Capital High, growing awareness of this changing demographic in the school, led to the implementation of measures such as work place training and work experience opportunities for students. The Exhibitions program, particularly, came to be seen as an opportunity to address the needs of their less academic, often more disengaged students. The CHS Exhibitions program was deliberately designed to appeal to the whole range of students by focussing on a topic of interest and real-world significance to young people, and by structuring the tasks so that they offered choice, catering for different abilities and learning styles within those choices.

However this concession was made for only the three weeks given over to the Year 9 Exhibitions program. Beyond this the school was not prepared to change existing structures and to put at risk the school's "academic" reputation. Further, the students were keenly aware of the prominence given to and the privileging of "core" subjects over electives, considered to be "bludge" subjects such as Food Technology, which were not given status as important life skills or for their potential as a desirable career pathway. (Janet, Transcript, 2003:6) To quote Janet, consequently the Exhibitions program "impacts on the school's organisation in the short term while it's happening. It has a huge impact over those two weeks, actually three weeks with the Roundtables as well. In the longer term it's fine. It's only those two weeks. The rest of the time there is no impact on timetable or staffing or anything like that" (Janet, Transcript, 2003:7) allowing the *status quo* to be maintained.

Significantly, at Capital High School the selling point for Exhibitions emphasised with parents, was the Roundtable. Called 'the interview', it was promoted as a quasi job interview and as important preparation for this real-life milestone. This interpretation of student Roundtable presentations of Exhibitions tasks, coopts the greater purpose of the Roundtable as a forum for authentically assessing the process and progress of student learning, and of providing the opportunity for students to demonstrate their achievement, and to receive feedback, informing their future learning.

Also at Capital High School, Exhibitions implementation came to focus more on awarding points to students for completing activities, than on the innovative approach to learning. In this way the Capital High School Exhibitions program coopted the object of the reform away from the deeper purpose of providing students with a more

active, more profound and engaging approach to learning and authentic assessment, to a more superficial and transient diversion. Interestingly the Exhibitions program in 2002 coincided with the arrival later in the year of a new principal at the school which saw a gradual shift in the dominant philosophy of the school taking place.

4:3. Preparing for Exhibitions Implementation

4:3:1. Topic and task design

The focus of the Capital High Exhibitions task was *Drug Education*. During a two week period students would be conducting information research and respond to the focus question *"Drug-free youth in Canberra" .. is this achievable?* Teachers from the Exhibitions committee responsible for the design and implementation of the Capital High School Exhibitions program, explained that the task topic was intended to generate debate among students with reference to newspaper articles from the *Canberra Times* which reported worrying trends of risk among ACT youth of smoking and self-harm. Students were provided with a booklet containing a grid of learning experiences or activities from which to choose as the focus of their research. (See Appendix) They were to be awarded points for completing activities. The matrix was to provide scaffolding for students, by breaking the Exhibitions task into a series of discrete activities, to help make the process achievable for students, particularly those who lacked experience or confidence with independent research.

Two teachers had conducted the Pilot Exhibitions program at Capital High the year before with a Year 9 science class. Ruth and Janet chose the topic of drug education for the 2002 Year 9 Exhibitions, out of concern that drugs and alcohol present a significant, real-life issue confronting youth today. Their purpose was to bring home to students the meaning of health messages surrounding the issue. Having completed the implementation of the pilot Exhibitions program, in October 2001 they nominated the topic *Drug Education* and mapped out a suggested implementation model for 2002. Their recommendations which are detailed in *The Ideal Exhibition* (see Appendix), were adopted by staff in 2003. The model included staff training, the

introduction of Exhibitions to parents, community and Year 9 students, the composition of teaching teams, the use of facilities (IT labs, Library, Hall), administration, organisation of Roundtables, and the resourcing of materials and staff.

4:3:2. Teacher preparation and resourcing

In late 2001 the teachers at Capital High School who had been involved in the pilot Year 9 Student Exhibitions Program, introduced their colleagues to Exhibitions by presenting demonstration Roundtables at a staff meeting. They discussed the process of Exhibitions implementation and the intended outcomes for students from the program. In 2002, system level training was provided for team leaders.

The Year 9 staff were acquainted with Exhibition pedagogy through a workshop from Viv White of the ANSN early in 2002 which focussed on productive pedagogy and authentic assessment. In addition all staff were introduced to the work of Ralph Pirozzo which combined Gardiner's Multiple Intelligences with Bloom's Taxonomy. These professional development opportunities provided important scaffolding for an Exhibitions approach at Capital High School.

The teachers who formed the Exhibitions committee, took from this professional learning the value of engaging students by providing them with choice to pursue their interests, and variety in the style and expression of learning, as well as different opportunities to employ a wide range of thinking skills. With the traditionally strong academic focus at Capital High, the use of Bloom's Taxonomy as both an indicator and a measure of different levels of intellectual quality was appealing. The Exhibitions committee designed the activity grid for Exhibitions by combining Multiple Intelligences and Bloom's Taxonomy, based on Pirozzo's model, towards this end. In so doing, as Janet explained, with "room for improvement", they were satisfied that "… using that grid format …" allowed the design criteria for Exhibitions to be met (Janet, Transcript, 2003:10).

As described in the *Model for Exhibitions 2002* (see Appendix), in subsequent staff meetings in early 2002, the remainder of staff received training in the form of short

presentations which explained the pedagogical underpinnings of Exhibitions, the background to the department's *High Schools for the New Millennium* initiative, the process of Exhibitions and its relationship to the Schools Plan 2002 – 2007. The topic for 2002 and related student learning activities were explained by the school Exhibitions committee, and guest presentations on Drug Education were also provided.

4:3:3. Organisational support

All year levels at Capital High School were routinely organised according to a traditional high school model with classes streamed for ability and a cyclical timetable. However, during the three weeks of Exhibitions, the usual Year 9 subject classes were suspended and class groups were reconfigured to achieve groupings of mixed ability and friendship. In the first two weeks these new groups of students would prepare their Exhibitions task, while Roundtable assessment would follow in the third week.

The allocation of Year 9 students to groups which did not align with their usual ability, subject or friendship groupings, was a strategy intended to promote self-reliance and to break down barriers of 'difference'. "They were outside of their friendship groups. That was deliberate" (Kerry, Transcript, 2003:2). As Kerry explained, teachers wished to challenge students to learn more about their peers and to relate to those who were 'unlike' themselves. It was also intended to dismantle powerful and sometimes disruptive peer groups which, with the more independent, student centred, less structured approach, could interrupt Exhibitions through off-task behaviour.

Lists of the groups for Exhibitions, with approximately 25 students in each, and the teacher teams, one for each of seven Year 9 groups which they usually took on a particular line of the existing timetable, were circulated through the Student Information Booklet. Each teaching team had a leader and an assistant leader who worked closely with the Exhibitions coordinator to monitor teacher and student progress during the implementation phase of Exhibitions. The leaders and their assistants formed the Exhibitions committee, led by the coordinator, Janet.

Janet became a ‘driver’ of the Exhibitions approach at Capital High School in 2002. She had been involved in the pilot program in the previous year, assisting Ruth who had orchestrated the 2001 Exhibition at Capital High School. They had both become enthusiastic advocates of the Exhibitions program and had identified a place for it in the Capital High School Year 9 program. Together they conceived and planned the 2002 Exhibition in late 2001 before Ruth took up an appointment elsewhere. Janet had the benefit of professional learning provided in the Pilot phase of Exhibitions, further system training in 2002, as well as the experience of developing and implementing the Pilot Exhibitions program at Capital High School. Janet felt confident to over-see Exhibitions with her technology background, as she considered the ‘learning style’ and portfolio assessment were common features of both a technology program and the Exhibitions approach. “It’s the same learning process where you set a task and there are things that you need to do, only the evaluation in technology you do a written evaluation, whereas in an Exhibition it’s a presentation of their learning” (Janet, Transcript, 2003:2, 3).

The Exhibitions coordinator and the assistant coordinator were resourced with a budget, as well as a 1.0 and 0.5 ‘line allowance’ respectively. That is, they were relieved of teaching duties for a group / half a group of classes in order to give them time for implementation planning. The committee they led was responsible for designing and planning the Year 9 Exhibitions to the point at which the Exhibitions program was ready to commence, when timetabling and the implementation process were explained to the whole staff.

> “We did most of the work until we got the Exhibitions up and running and then once we got there we had to explain it to the staff, we had to explain the timetabling of it and everything as well. The logistics were all explained at staff meetings and I guess what we were trying to get out of it as well.”

(Janet, Transcript, 2003:3)

Exhibitions was to be conducted in Weeks 4 and 5 of Term 2, immediately following Camp Week. With the normal Year 9 program suspended during the two week ‘task’ phase, all Year 9 students would be able to work on the Exhibition project at the same time. Each teacher in a ‘line’ team would be cycled through to supervise the

group of students to whom they had been allocated in a room dedicated to the group over the two week task period. Each group of students had available a box of print information resources in their room to refer to. Supervised student access to the library, internet and computer lab was also scheduled. In the third week, Week 6, three days were set aside for Exhibitions students to participate in their Roundtable presentations to be held in the school hall.

4:4. Exhibitions Implementation: What Happened

4:4:1. Introducing the Topic and Task

At Capital High School students were informed that they would be spending two weeks out of class "researching something" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:1). Drug use was represented to Year 9 as a subject discussed commonly in the community and reported widely in the media. Reference was made to articles from the Canberra Times 13-4-02: *Teen anti-cancer message going up in smoke;* and *Young ACT women at risk of smoking and self-harm.*

At the start of the two weeks each student received the *Capital High School Student Information Booklet 2002,* containing the grid of learning experiences or activities related to drug education with a focus on the positive and negative effects of drugs. Students were required to complete five mandated activities. These were: a glossary, a precise of a guest speaker's presentation, First Aid techniques, a spreadsheet, and a 'letter to the editor' challenging youth stereotypes (Student Information Booklet, 2002:8, 9).

When it was introduced, the students responded well to the choice of topic and found the subject engaging. It was relevant to their lives in general as young people living in Canberra where drug abuse was an issue confronting the community. It was relevant to them personally as they were making choices about using drugs themselves or had witnessed the effects of drug abuse on friends or family. As one of the teachers, Carla, explained:

> "… I thought the topic was really good, 'drugs', because there's so much around now and it really got some students to open their eyes, especially the guest speakers coming in. They always see their friends doing it and things like that and think it's really cool, but then when they hear of people who actually have done it and have survived a car accident because they've been drunk or whatever then I think it affects them a little bit more than us telling them in front of the class all the time, 'Don't drink and drive'. It also helped to target those kids who were already into drugs."
>
> (Carla, Transcript, 2003:3)

The student Jessica found the topic and the way it was organised was "pretty good, the way that they had lots of topics and they were in different categories and how they had different points, that was good" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:3).

4:4:2. Supporting student learning for task implementation

'Designed-in scaffolding' was provided for students through the information booklet to promote independent learning. This introduced the Year 9 Exhibitions 'Project' as "the usual teaching approach plus guest speakers, use of the internet and other activities" (*Student Information Booklet*, 2002: 2). It advised students that there "won't be the usual sort of lessons. The teacher's job will be there to help you, but you have to solve all the problems and find answers for the problems" (*Student Information Booklet,* 2002: 11).

The booklet contained a selection of learning experiences with different styles of presentation from which students could choose. These were set out in a matrix under the heading *Unit Theme: Drug Education "Drug-free youth in Canberra. Is this achievable?"* The requirements for the project were laid out, including the system by which points would be allocated to the different activities. Also included in the booklet was a list of the Exhibitions Class Groups, teacher teams and leaders, a description of the portfolio and the contents it should contain, and of how Exhibitions classes would work. It also contained information about the assessment process, the Roundtable Assessment rubric, the interview panel process and student exit outcomes, as well as a timetable for the three weeks. There were also some useful

hints on work habits including reminders to manage their time well (*Student Information Booklet,* 2002: 8 – 18).

The matrix described 40 different activities of different point value, which were differentiated to cater for different learning styles using Gardner's Multiple Intelligences and to provide a hierarchy of intellectual demand according to Bloom's Taxonomy, from simple recall (*Remembering*) through to creating new perspectives (*Designing*), with the number of points commensurate to the difficulty of the task. Students were required to finish their Exhibitions 'task' with a minimum total of 24 points, 12 for the compulsory tasks, and 12 more from activities selected by the student. The activities varied in the style and expression of learning based on seven of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences, from the *Intrapersonal* to the *Logical/ Math* and took a variety of forms such as skits, dance, graphs, surveys, songs, boardgames etc. There was also the opportunity for individuals to negotiate with teachers, student-generated activities.

At a 'market day', the representatives from organisations that provide drug education services were invited to meet together with the year group in the school hall. Students heard addresses by the speakers and could also avail themselves of one-to-one questioning, pamphlets and display materials pertinent to their individual Exhibitions tasks, providing them with more immediate access than the more usual approach of having speakers in class or at assembly. In this way the teachers brokered assistance for students from outside agencies, including representatives of drug rehabilitation centres, reformed drug users, support networks for young people etc. This gave students an opportunity for individual questioning and information-gathering.

Health and PE teachers also provided lessons on dealing with drug overdose, including instruction in First Aid treatment of persons suffering from alcohol abuse. First Aid procedures were demonstrated to the Year 9 students, who were then assessed for competency according to their demonstrated ability to meet criteria such as recognising patient symptoms, risk management and resuscitation techniques. This provided students with real-life understanding of the implications of drug abuse, as well as practical strategies for dealing with possible repercussions.

This learning opportunity was an example of designed-in scaffolding, intended to broaden students' knowledge base in the topic area. The scaffolding was also contingent in so far as teachers tested student competency through a student demonstration of achievement and provided them with feedback so that they could refine their practice.

Later, as students worked separately on their Exhibition task, teachers fulfilled a supervisory and resource role providing clarification of the task or other assistance. Rather than moving between classes for different lessons, each Year 9 Exhibitions group was assigned a room and a team of teachers. Supervising teacher teams were from across faculties and included one Year 9 teacher. The teams nominated a leader and assistant to work closely with the Exhibitions coordinator. Teachers in each team were provided with an information booklet and rostered on throughout the two week 'task' period during their 'free' periods when they were not teaching other year classes, to facilitate the learning of Year 9 Exhibitions students.

A box of print drug education information was made available to students in the classroom for each Exhibitions class group, while online resources were accessed during dedicated time using Library computers and an IT laboratory.

Students were required individually to maintain a portfolio containing summaries of the tasks completed, both compulsory and selected, and evidence of their achievements. Students were also expected to provide evidence of having participated in group work, such as collaborating on common areas of research. The folder documented their presented work as a record of progress.

Prior to the final Exhibitions week, students prepared panel members for the Roundtable with a 'covering letter'. The letter introduced the student and their interests. It described their Exhibitions task, their purpose in completing it and their most important findings.

4:4:3. Supporting student learning for Roundtables

The Roundtables were the opportunity for students to present their learning before a panel. The *Student Information Booklet* explained that students would have 15 to 20 minutes to discuss the work brought to the 'interview'. This included their assignment and the other items detailed on the checklist of requirements, to be documented in a student portfolio also containing reflection activities and evidence of the process of their learning and of their progress during the task. As well, the *Student Information Booklet* contained the *Roundtable Assessment Rubric*, which identified in detail the criteria for assessment under the headings *Student as an Active Learner, Student as a Reflective Learner,* and *Student as a Presenter.*

In the third week, following the two week 'task' period, students would present their work to a Roundtable panel, referred to at Capital High School as 'the interview'. The panel comprised a teacher, a student peer from Year 8 or Year 10 and a member of the community. The presentation would last for approximately 20 minutes, including questions, with feedback provided by the panel at the end.

The opportunity to present their work with a community panel as the audience, using their own choice of media through which to present, differed considerably from the usual approach students experienced at Capital High School, as did a focus on only one topic during the two weeks of Exhibitions, instead of on several KLAs each day. Also, within the broad focus of Drug Education, students were given a choice of topic and activity, unlike usual classes where students "just have to learn and … don't get to choose" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:1).

The Roundtable 'interviews' were featured at Capital High as a forum for presenting the school to the public. Students were informed about what to expect by teachers, Year 10 peers and through their booklets. The terminology used at Capital High School for the Roundtable presentation was 'the interview' because it was arguably the most important feature of Exhibitions, promoted by the school to the parents and Year 9 students for its value as a rehearsal for a real-life job interview. To quote one student, Jessica, "An interview at the end. … I found that was really good … because

I was going to do job interviews next year and stuff so it was really informative for me to be in an interview situation" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:1).

Panel members, including Year 8 or 10 student peers and members of the community, were briefed about their role at an evening information session prior to Roundtables and provided with the *Panel Information Booklet*. The principles, purpose and process of the Exhibitions program was explained to them. Members were acquainted with the assessment rubric. Training focussed on ways to support the Exhibition student during the Roundtable, and included the need to observe group norms, as well as ways to question appropriately, give constructive feedback and affirm student achievement.

4:5. Exhibitions Outcomes: Participant Responses

4:5:1. Responses to the topic and task

While students had no choice in the overall topic for Exhibitions and had no knowledge of the topic "before the day", they found Exhibitions to be relevant because the topic was broad, of interest to them and they could choose activities that suited them. Jessica comments, "In the topic of drugs, we got to choose what we wanted to research in that, so it was a bit more interesting than normal class" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:2,13). Teachers also commented that when students "got to choose what [they] wanted to research" they found it "a bit more interesting" (Carla, Transcript, 2003:2).

Katerina, however, felt that "it wasn't a wonderful topic" because, while relevant to "youth today" she felt that she "could answer this off the top of [her] head" having studied it in PE. She "didn't really learn anything new except for the way of learning." Katerina, like Jessica gained more from the process than the content. "It was the information outside that topic, so the new way of learning, time management, personal skills, interviews and things like that I really took from it more than it was the topic" (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:6).

The real-life and personal relevance of the topic for students, for some more than others, is illustrated most poignantly by an anecdote that Katerina relates.

> "There were some really funny moments. I remember we were talking about drugs and we had this drug addict in our Exhibitions task group. And this teacher said, 'Yeah and that's you, too.' And this kid's turned around and said, 'How do you know that?' It brought home the fact that drugs can ruin your life. … She had this sort of label tattooed to her forehead, you know, DRUG ADDICT, keep an eye out for. And I mean she's changed for the better. That was really good because she was actually quite shocked that the staff actually looked at her with this view. She thought that she'd kept it really well hidden. I'm sure there were heaps more."
>
> (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:13)

4:5:2. Responses to support for student learning

While it was the norm for guest speakers to be invited to speak to classes of students at Capital High School, 'the format' of the market day was unusual. It gave the students, who by then had 'some idea of which direction they were travelling', access to experts in different areas of drug education pertinent to their tasks. Janet reports on feedback from speakers that indicated significant student engagement. "… once the paper grab was over the questions that the kids were asking were fairly high level questions. They weren't just superficial. There were those who were really engaging with questions that did have a lot of deep meaning" (Janet, Transcript, 2003:5). By contrast, Jessica felt that the speakers "seemed to be obligated to be there" and were contributing not "because they wanted to but because they were asked to" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:5).

The teachers were satisfied that the grid of activities stimulated student interest at the same time as providing essential (designed-in) scaffolding. As Janet said, "there was enough structure in place that they … knew where they were going." (Janet, Transcript, 2003:1, 11) The matrix provided stimulus for the range of students - for those who "had no idea what they wanted to do and for those negative kids who

really didn't want to be here. It gave them a starting point", while "an academic kid who is used to doing a lot of research … can really get right into the topic" (Janet, Transcript, 2003:1, 11). In this way teachers believed that their model for Exhibitions "gave the opportunity for all those pedagogies to be put into action for everyone" and was able to "cater for everybody of all abilities," as they had intended (Janet, Transcript, 2003:1,11).

The students felt that they were 'moderately' supported at school in preparing for and implementing the Exhibitions task. The resource box "had some good stuff in it", there was plenty of research time on the internet and the information booklets provided "lots of information … about what the interview would be like" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:6).

Jessica found that the real-life relevance of the topic engendered support from home which was particularly useful. Being able to draw on the experiences of family and friends "was really good because I could reflect on that and analyse what they'd done" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:6).

4:5:3. Student and teacher learning

Janet believed that the Capital High Exhibitions task would cater for everybody of all abilities and was satisfied that "it does that nicely." (Janet, Transcript, 2003:11) Carla believed that because of the range of options, the achievement was more equitable. "It gave everyone an opportunity to do something that they may have been good at" (Carla, Transcript, 2003:3). The achievements of the range of students were enhanced, for low achievers, "who don't usually have anything … this time they did" (Janet, Transcript, 2003:13). High achievers were successful because they "could get their teeth stuck into it." (Janet, Transcript, 2003:14) Underachievers "did shine through, too, because a lot of those kids got into things like producing videos … they were doing exactly what they wanted to do" (Janet, Transcript, 2003:14).

Katerina was perhaps a good example of this, with greater motivation than usual because of the Exhibitions approach. She admits, "I for one was very different to

when I'm in a classroom situation. I'm sitting there, scratching my head, 'Oh god, when's this maths lesson going to end!' Instead I was very well into this. I wanted to do this, I wanted to get the best out of it" (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:2).

Jessica, whom teachers identified as a high achiever, corroborated this when she said," I was putting more work in. I was working for longer because I'd be working on one thing all day then I'd go home and keep on working on it, so I guess I did spend more time learning" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:7).

Janet, from the viewpoint of a teacher, attributed student success to three main factors, the scaffolding and scope provided by the grid, the condensed timeframe and not having students "travelling around the school much" (Janet, Transcript, 2003:10-14). Students had choice within one main focus, dedicated time, dedicated space and minimal disruption. The low achievers liked having their own space where they could keep track of their materials and found it easier without the distraction of moving from classroom to classroom. The high achievers "had a big block of time where they could actually get something done". The underachievers were doing what teachers expected of them but were still having "a bit of fun"!

That underachievers flourished with the Exhibitions approach, surprised many teachers at Capital High, especially as some of those who were usually more academically successful, took time to adjust. Jessica, for example, appeared to resent the lack of teacher direction. "They [the teachers] basically got to bludge for the whole time" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:5). She confessed that initially she achieved little because she was "not used to not being pushed" by teachers. (Jessica p1) The teacher, Kerry, reported that most students, however, "enjoyed this type of learning and felt in control" (Kerry, Transcript, 2003:1).

Katerina, who achieved well during Exhibitions, vindicated Janet's assessment of success factors. The grid, which accessed the multiple intelligences, provided her with the opportunity to succeed in an area not usually valued in the curriculum. "Another point was the various areas that we could do it in. I'm very into the arts, all the arts, especially music. So I don't get a chance to show all my abilities in those areas and creative writing and things" (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:3).

Further to this, Katerina maintained that the Exhibition task provided the opportunity for her to improve on her weaknesses. She acknowledged that she normally found maths difficult but in the Exhibitions context made more of an effort. The decision to develop a survey for her Exhibitions task necessitated approaching a maths teacher for assistance ie needs-based learning. "We went and asked him … none of us is really good at maths but can we do what we want and come to you and you'll show us? … So that different approach was very interesting and it showed us that, okay, maths can be all right if you come to it in your own sort of way" (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:4).

Katerina's analysis provides another example of this metacognitive aspect of learning promoted by an Exhibitions approach. When asked if she had discovered more about herself and how she learns, she responded,

> "I was able to really define my skills, my attributes and was able to get a finer tip on the points where I really do struggle, where I crumble. … And showed me just how much time management is a really big thing for me, presentation is something really big to me and … it brought home the fact that … I'm pretty good at them. It brought home the fact that I do need to work on these few little things. But that's okay. At least I know where they are. … at least I know what I'm good at, … and [it's] been quite an advantage to show those faults."
>
> (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:12)

As a longer term benefit of Exhibitions, Katerina felt that this insight really contributed to her success in "selling herself" and gaining a position in the college of her choice for Years 11 and 12. "I think it was that side where I said, 'I really suck at this. Can you help me?' that really sold it for me" (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:13).

Teachers commented that, "It was really the first time the students had been given the opportunity to use their time management skills" and "the responsibility for their own outcomes." While some had "a lot of difficulty with time management", many had "used it well" and had "really gelled with that kind of learning." (Kerry, Transcript, 2003:1) Jessica corroborated the former perspective with, "I needed someone to tell me exactly what to do because then I would learn it, whereas if I was free to do

anything then I wouldn't be as on task." (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:3) Katerina, on the other hand, revelled in the opportunity to work independently. "It gave all of us who were individual workers, especially myself, a chance to just go and do our own thing" and "… it was the end result that I just looked at it and went 'Wow! I've done all this and I haven't had a teacher breathing down my neck'. It was just amazing. It was really good fun" (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:1).

According to Jessica, while it was harder for some to keep themselves on task, students "felt happier to have choice in what [they were] doing and teachers weren't breathing down your neck … so it was easier and it was harder" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:7).

The potential value to students beyond school of the Year 9 Exhibitions was clear to teachers involved in the Exhibitions program. They had identified these outcomes of the program – time management, presentation and interview skills, accessing information from a variety of sources, teamwork and the creation of a folio as a problem-solving and research tool – as imperative for successful life-long learning to occur.

One illustration of this is the student, Katerina, who found the real-life application of skills learned during Exhibitions to be of benefit subsequently.

> "I've used my way of going about presentations and interviews-wise like letter writing in getting jobs. I'm recently now holding down two part-time jobs and that's helped me in the interview process, in selling a letter of introduction, really being able to sell myself." (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:15)

For the future she believes that the skills she developed during Exhibitions, as well as the topic, have inspired in her the desire to pursue a career which would involve her working with youth.

> "It really brought home the fact that … you can really help somebody … `youth work now is a really big part of my life. I love doing it and it brought home the fact that … youth work is a really big part in this society and youths really sometimes do need help." (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:15)

Through Exhibitions, teachers were also impressed by the power of student reflection and metacognition to help students realise "the whole reason they were doing it …" and that "different subjects do interlink" (Kerry, Transcript, 2003:3).

The scaffolding provided by the grid which contained discrete tasks, together with a limited timeframe, provided structure and short-term goals for students who could not sustain a prolonged focus. Teachers felt that:

> "The Blooms grid gave structure to it but it also allowed the kids freedom to take off in any direction. But the structure was in place for those kids that had no idea what they wanted to do and for those negative kids who really didn't want to be here. It gave them a starting point. These are the things that you have to do. At least there was a starting point."
>
> (Janet, Transcript, 2003:1)

Teachers reported that this contributed to the success of underachievers in particular, "The kind of students who would often be off task were on task more" (Kerry, Transcript, 2003:2). Kerry attributes this to,

> "Work presented in short sharp bursts, structured so that students only had a limited time to work on different sections, they knew the timeline with cut off dates, this kept them going, knowing that it wasn't going to stretch over a term or a semester, this was just a short space of time."
>
> (Kerry, Transcript, 2003:2)

In this way, Kerry argues, the model had succeeded in providing sufficient structure while still affording student agency and that because of this the model had raised achievement for a greater range of students.

> "The kids who normally do well did well anyway. It was the middle of the range kids who benefited the most from it because they excelled, the ones getting the most out of it. The kids who don't usually do much at all of course passed with minimum."
>
> (Kerry, Transcript, 2003:1)

As a low to 'middle of the range student', Katerina's achievement was raised during Exhibitions, and had the effect of improving her self-image as a student. Her perspective on the abilities of some of her peers also shifted.

> "The way in which I managed to get all the tasks at least to a point finished, that was a real surprise and a shock to me. 'I can do this!' And some of the other students who never complete work, never hand anything in can do this and even better than me. 'Wow! You are a pretty hard worker!' "
>
> (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:14)

4:5:4. Responses to Roundtables

The Exhibitions approach provided incentive for students to achieve well by making them responsible for their own outcomes and responsible to an audience at Roundtable. "It was the whole pride thing. They wanted to have something worth showing. The Roundtable at the end made something to aim for" (Kerry, Transcript, 2003:1). Jessica's corroborates this idea when she says that she felt "under pressure to give the answers … That's why I had to make sure I knew". Being prepared, knowing what she was talking about was important so that she could respond successfully (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:10).

For Katerina, too, her own pride and the desire to impress the panel was a significant incentive to do well at the Roundtable. The presence of the school principal on the panel made the imperative to do well even greater for her. "… in front of the principal because she was just such a high authority and she knew my dad and … I had a really big cloud for me over my head, thinking, 'I've got to do this right'." Also, "I didn't want to let my dad down. So I really went in there and I really gave it my all and came out on top. It was really great" (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:10).

Kerry claimed that the Roundtable process was also very supportive of student learning and provided good feedback to students. Jessica supports this with, "They gave me lots of oral feedback" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:10). She relates that at the end of the interview she realised what the interview was about, why people get

interviewed and why it was such a positive experience. She subsequently identified the interview as one of the best aspects of Exhibitions.

> "What I appreciated was the spotlight, the attention that was being put on you. It's the same sort of stuff that happens in … job interviews, people asking questions of you and you're under pressure to give the answers. I think that's good experience for me, even though that was quite nerve-wracking. Because I'd never been in an interview situation before … and it did build up my confidence to show that I could do it."
>
> (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:10)

Jessica admired the Year 8 student for participating and while she appreciated the oral feedback from the panel, she did not think they realised "how much work I put into it. I don't think anyone did" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:10).

Katerina states that "the interview process was great". She benefited from the "interview atmosphere" and found that, "It really allowed us to learn how to show people information and present ourselves in the best presentation way" (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:6).

She also appreciated the interview feedback, which contrasted with the more usual assessment where she felt that she was informed that it was wrong, but "was not getting the why" it was wrong. During the Roundtable she felt that the feedback she received was more constructive (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:7).

> " 'Hey, I don't think this is your best piece of work because, could you improve on … .' Telling them why it's wrong. So that was really good, getting back to warm and cool feedback, because I could go away and I could go, 'Hey, I can see why they would think that my music piece wasn't the best, but that's okay.' … It gives you an extra goal or something to improve on and ... You're not going back saying, … 'How am I supposed to get this right? You know I can't read your mind.' … It showed you that there is a good way of constructing feedback."
>
> (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:7)

For Katerina the most successful aspect of Exhibitions was the interview. “I had so much riding on this. … It was like I hit the nail right on the head. It was just amazing” (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:10).

4:5:5. Organisational, relational and pedagogical change

The committee who together designed and planned the ‘curriculum’ matrix for Year 9 Exhibitions, enjoyed the collegiality of the process of developing the topic. For Janet it was both personally and mutually rewarding. “I liked organising it. I got a lot out of it. … I did enjoy doing that. I liked working with other teachers and coming up with the [activities], filling in that grid. We spent a lot of time on that.” (Janet, Transcript, 2003:12) As teaching at Capital High School had usually been a private practice, this opportunity to work differently encouraged mentoring, teaming and other professional partnerships to develop. Teachers within the Exhibitions teams also benefited from the shared responsibility for monitoring student progress, although according to Janet, between teams “there was not a lot of sharing” (Janet, Transcript, 2003:3).

Exhibitions gave practical expression to the productive pedagogies with which teachers at Capital High school had become acquainted at a theoretical level through professional development and staff meeting discussion. Earlier, in 2000, intellectual quality, particularly higher order thinking and metacognition, had already become a focus for the science faculty at Capital High School with their work on *conceptual mediation* pedagogy, an approach to learning development based on a theory of cognitive change developed by Dr Harry Lyndon (Lyndon, 2000). However neither this method of raising intellectual quality, nor that of the productive pedagogies, impacted on the school generally, as corroborated by Carla who believed that there was little awareness and understanding of what the productive pedagogies should look like before they started, herself included (Carla, Transcript, 2003:5).

Teachers reported, that while training in the pedagogical underpinnings of Exhibitions was greater for team leaders who attended system professional development, “everyone learnt something”. This included content knowledge about drugs, and “how to stretch the curriculum over the full range of areas,” providing teachers with

experience in connecting the curriculum, an important aspect of productive pedagogy (Kerry, Transcript, 2003:2). Teachers also understood the value for student learning of the student self-assessment process through the use of explicit assessment criteria and the assessment rubric (Kerry, Transcript, 2003:3).

Teachers who supervised students, sat on Roundtable panels and marked Exhibitions presentations, also learned from the grid. It modelled the practical application of Bloom's Taxonomy, using different levels of thinking in different areas of the curriculum, and of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences, varying the style of learning and form of presentation. Carla acknowledged, "It helped me a bit more with the whole idea of giving different levels for kids to work at. Generally a lot of the time because you were limited for time, you were always giving every body in your class the same activity, and some kids would do it better and some kids won't. But for me now I can sort of look at different activities within the one activity …" (Carla, Transcript, 2003:4, 5).

Some teachers identified that their professional roles were redefined during the Exhibitions process. The Exhibitions teaching teams relied on and willingly supported teacher leaders who had emerged with the benefit of Exhibitions training (Kerry, Transcript, 2003:3).

Teachers also identified a change in students' perspective on teachers. Exhibitions placed teachers in a context out of their usual subject area and had the effect of both defying students' stereotypes of teachers and blurring the curriculum boundaries they usually represented.

> "Relationships with kids were good. They stereotype you into your KLA, then you go to teach them in a different subject and they're like, 'How do you know about this?' They don't see curriculum subjects can merge, Maths can correlate with Technology, or Science with Food Tech. It helps them, seeing teachers in different roles or teaching different information or values."
>
> (Kerry, Transcript, 2003:3)

Jessica noticed that with the movement of teachers instead of students between classes, and because different teachers were supervising Exhibitions students during

their release time and interviewing them at Roundtables, the teachers "don't actually teach all the time" and "recognised them to be more like people." (Jessica, Transcript 2003:6) Katerina comments that "The teachers were very relaxed and they sort of let their hair down. This is what Exhibitions were like. … We were up in the music room for our Exhibitions room so that was just like, "Yes!" They've got this keyboard and guitar and I'm going, 'Nuh!' every lesson. And I loved it" (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:2).

While some students experienced changes in their relationships with teachers during Exhibitions, this seems to have varied depending on the composition of the teaching team and/or group of students. For Jessica, because of the teachers' supervisory role and the mix of students in her particular Exhibitions group, the teachers "were more watching", which she believes provided little opportunity for engaging teachers in conversation or receiving assistance with the learning (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:6). By contrast, Katerina's experience was of greater than usual personal interaction with teachers. "Normally these student-teacher relationships are very strict and there's a square and you don't go outside of it. But these Exhibitions tasks, the teachers were willing to help the students and give them a bit of knowledge and let the kids take it away and use it to the best of their abilities" (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:2).

Since Exhibitions Katerina also reported that teachers have been more approachable in assisting with her with assignments, including those who are not currently teaching her, and attributes this to improvement in student-teacher relationships generated during the Exhibitions program (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:8). Katerina believes that the reason for this distinct change in teachers' perspectives on students with the advent of Exhibitions, is that "The teachers got to see another side to the students," and of herself. "'Hey, you're not so uptight and so bored and you're not such a stuck-up kid. You're actually quite relaxed and you're very intelligent!" (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:2).

Many teachers found the Research Circles conducted as part of the Exhibitions training provided at the system level to be useful. They were a rare opportunity for teachers to engage in dialogue focussing on an initiative common across the system.

Teachers appreciated the perspectives provided by their colleagues from other schools.

> "Sharing with other schools and bouncing off other people. I always need to know, am I on the right track? I'm not really that confident in what I do so I really found that (critical) feedback quite good."
>
> (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:2)

The arrangements for Exhibitions impacted significantly on the daily routines of the school, although less so for Year 10 who were on work experience for much of this time. For example the Library and IT lab were unavailable to other class groups for two weeks, and teachers who were supervising Year 9 groups had less time to devote to their students and programs in other year levels which caused some resentment. "There was a lot of negativity as well mainly around the distractions that it caused … there was this two week block that was about Year 9 and what about the Year 7s and 8s that were coming to school?" (Janice, Transcript, 2003:8).

However, despite the disruption to the rest of the school, Exhibitions teachers favoured the two week block because it afforded "a dedicated time to students so you can really get involved in it" (Janet, Transcript, 2003:2). Ultimately, while the disruption caused by the Exhibitions program was significant, it was mostly confined to a two week period and objections to it focused on "all the logistical stuff". Despite this, "People could see the value in doing it" (Janet, Transcript, 2003:10).

Similarly while the teachers felt that it was "hard work for the teachers" they thought it was "worth it" because it was "really good for the kids" (Karen, Transcript, 2003:1).

Students noticed changes to curricula at school since Exhibitions including the Oasis program, a gifted and talented program, "for people to do extra work," and a learner assistance program, "for people to catch up." Jessica attributed these new programs, as with Exhibitions, to "times changing in schools", "new people" and "new ideas". Interestingly she identifies that like Exhibitions, these programs also promote "much more freedom in what you want to choose to learn and also to learn extra stuff outside of school even though it's in school time" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:7).

Katerina also cites the Oasis program for Years 7 to 10, which was "in the design phase" while Exhibitions were on, as an indication of a worthwhile change in approach at the school.[8]

> "It's either an academic or a helping environment. So you go up there. You can do an Oasis gold for really academic kids or students who are just mainstream like myself I can go and I'm doing one now. In English we're doing mental health, the emotions are a really big thing for Year 10 and I'm really into mental illness and personality disorders and things like that. I've gone to my English teacher and I've gone, 'This is what I really want to find out about. Can I do a project?' So you go up there. You write a contract out for two weeks to a month and you've got to keep up with your class work but you every lesson and you work on this project and at the end you present it to a panel, so it's very similar to Exhibitions. That's really good for students. That's also been brought in."
>
> (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:8)

Teachers did not explicitly make the connection with programs such as Oasis that followed Exhibitions other than a reference to the transfer of an Exhibitions-style approach to physical education. According to Janet it was "already there" in technology. In some of the PE assignment work, "They do like a mini kind of an Exhibition but it's based on that class." (Janet, Transcript, 2003:3). Janet states, "That learning style is not developed in [English or maths]" and she sees it as "being difficult to incorporate into the school" (Janet, Transcript, 2003:3).

Quite independently of one another, Jessica and Katerina both recognised and valued that the experience of Exhibitions brought a change in pedagogical approach. From, "Teachers write stuff on boards, you write it down, you learn it … " to "They're actually trying to become more modern and trying to interact with the students, not just teach them, which is good," and consequently influencing Jessica's 'view of the school' (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:12, 13).

[8] Interestingly the Oasis program survived for only one year and was discontinued in 2004 with staff changes

Katerina observed, “So it was very different because I expected … groups where teachers were, ‘You’re doing this this lesson. You’re doing that and you’re doing this one the next lesson’. But we had a group of teachers who just said, ‘Okay. You have to have 30 points by the end of this two weeks. Go off. We’re trusting you to work’ ” (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:1).

Teachers observed that Exhibitions pedagogy, which gave students carriage of their own learning, provided students with more opportunity than usual to think. They had the “…opportunity to work on their own to find out information that way. It got them thinking a little bit. Too much of the time we feed them with information. They don’t actually think” (Carla, Transcript, 2003:3).

At Capital High it is clear from the student perspective, that the whole Exhibitions experience was “very different than normal school.” She saw it as “sort of two weeks off school because of there being no classes” but sees value in the approach, “in another way it was also very much a learning environment” (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:2). For Katerina, it was ‘something new and different’ (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:1).

Other differences Jessica identifies include “learning more about drugs than usual,” not moving classrooms, and being with people she did not know well. She also noted “a big difference” was that students took a more collaborative approach. “Everyone in our group was sort of teachers to each other … we assisted each other more than we usually would” (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:3).

In Jessica’s case the teachers’ objective in placing students ‘outside friendship groups’ succeeded in bridging groups and broadening friendships – “since the people who were in my group didn’t know me that well and I didn’t know them either … we formed better relationships.” Her stereotypes of other students were altered when she found, “they’re more sort of rounded than that” (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:4). For Katerina this was one of the most valuable outcomes of Exhibitions.

> “People that were so-called popular people who were just sort of like, ‘No I’m not working with you or whatever’. I became a lot closer to them. That benefited me in the

> long run because now I'm working with them closely on fashion parades and things like that … . So it's given us that communication line. … We went to do the Exhibition task and it brought out a different side to them and I was just like, 'Hey, these people are pretty much on the same wave-length as me. Cool.' I got to know them and worked with them. It was great".
>
> (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:11)

During Exhibitions, students asked more questions and took more responsibility for their learning – "we were basically more mature in researching and actually doing the learning ourselves not directed by a teacher." (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:4) Katerina corroborates this perspective with, "Yes this is what we want to do. This is the type of learning that I enjoy doing, where I can go off and do my own thing" (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:1).

Reflecting real-life and making use of "different life skills" also made Exhibitions different from the usual class experience. "A set curriculum … doesn't reflect what actually happens in real life because in real life you get to choose. … so I guess it is a good indication of real life, at least better than normal school" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:11). The opportunity Exhibitions gave for making use of different life skills also resonated with Katerina. "Nobody even knew I was such a big muso before this Exhibitions task and it brought a lot of my prior knowledge in First Aid and things like that to the Exhibitions task. I was able to help others with the First Aid tips" (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:12).

Jessica responded positively to the organisation of Exhibitions. After Exhibitions, she saw "all school assessment in a different light". She also felt she had changed the way she worked, approaching assignments in a more formal, structured way and "following certain steps" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003,13). She also believes that she tried harder and achieved at a higher level because she "put a lot of effort into completing it really well." She was not conscious of this at the time, because her focus was on, "Do the work, get the points, then it will be over" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:8).

In retrospect she also realised that she could not sustain working 'at that pace' for more than two weeks and that in itself was a valuable outcome in regard to her approach to future learning.

The most successful aspect of Exhibitions for both Katerina and Jessica was the approach to learning. For Jessica it was "not actually learning about drugs, it was more learning how to learn", particularly how to sustain her motivation and to stay on task (Transcript, 2003:9). For Katerina it was not really learn anything new, it was "the new way of learning" (Transcript, 2003:6). Jessica was able to reflect on the value of her Exhibitions experience very positively.

> "Overall it was quite valuable because it taught me a different way to learn. It put me in a strange situation with different people as well. It made me gain confidence. It also gave me more knowledge in the subject of drugs which is a good issue to be studying today because it's very relevant. It made me sort of analyse people's experiences and stuff which I hadn't done before because it's a sort of touchy issue but because I had a motive to do so, I did. That made me learn more about my family and friends as well."
>
> (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:11)

Katerina, too, learned more about her family and relations with family members became closer because of the conversations she had with them about the Exhibitions topic of drugs. "My uncle was on drugs. I was able to interview [my aunt] and get her life experiences, how that was for her. It … connected me and my aunty in a very different way" (Katerina, Transcript 2003:12).

Jessica discovered more about herself and how she learns – "I learnt a completely new technique, approach to learning and I discovered more about how I could cope with it, more about others as well, which also reflected back on myself because I was part of a relationship with them. Yeah I did." She realized that her 'learning patterns' "needed to have a lot of improvement" and that "other people aren't just back and white" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:11).

Katerina flourished during the Exhibitions program and maintains, “That two weeks was just, I think, honest to god it would be the best two weeks in my whole four years of high school. It was just amazing. I looked forward to coming to school every day” (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:4). She found class to be relaxed, she was able to do things that she really enjoyed doing, within a timeline but doing what she wanted at her own pace. There were no “smart kids with the answers” who made her “feel like an idiot for asking stupid questions” and she could go to the teacher and explain that she did not understand and would get “a full, complete answer without someone interrupting”, so that she learnt a lot “information-wise” (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:5). She could “only say good things”. She found that while some “idiotic things” happened, they were “nothing compared to the power there was in there. It was so much fun, it was so relaxed and you couldn’t do anything but enjoy it” (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:13).

Katerina found that she was able to take the initiative in accessing resources. “I had video cameras and all these computers up and running, all these resources that you don’t get to use very often”. She negotiated with teachers to connect her learning across the curriculum, whereas “before you weren’t getting a say edgewise.” “I was doing music and I was using English workbooks for music and I was doing music in English and I was using maths in music.” She described it as going “outside the box with Exhibitions” (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:5).

Katerina’s Exhibitions experience inspired in her enthusiasm for Year 10 which she had previously not been looking forward to. “It really gave me a sort of, ‘Wow I want to hop on and achieve something here!’ … I’ve shown that if I put my mind to something, I can work towards it so I’m really going to knuckle down and really finish with high scores and go from there …” (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:4).

At the same time Katerina found self-discipline difficult. The hardest thing for her was staying on task when someone else was doing something that she also enjoyed, “especially in the music room”. “That was the only thing for me, wanting to do the things I enjoyed the most, more than the things that I didn’t really enjoy doing” (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:14).

It was equally difficult for Jessica to manage her time. She says, “The first week was really not very productive at all … because I’d never done that way before, so it took me ages to figure that out” (Transcript, 2003:9). However, while “coping with the freedom” was hard to do, she identifies “the freedom of having our own choices” as “definitely the best thing” about Exhibitions and explains this apparent contradiction with, “You have your own choice but with that comes much more responsibility to make the right one. And that was the hardest thing” (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:12).

4:6. Exhibitions Implementation: Participant Critique

4:6:1. Agency

Katerina thrived in the Exhibitions context, whereas Jessica genuinely disliked the agency provided by an Exhibitions approach. She preferred the usual way of doing school because she believes that she lacks “what it takes to structure my own learning. I need someone else to tell me what to do” (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:3). She found it “really hard to learn on your own” and subsequently appreciated more “being at school in a normal school situation.” While she acknowledged that it taught her how ‘older’ people learn in college or at university, she believed that in Year 9 it was ‘a bit much’ for her.

4:6:2. Assessment

Some Capital High teachers considered that the emphasis given to the accumulation of points for activities they completed from the grid, distracted students from the more important focus of the learning. “A bit too much pressure on actual assessment … rather than what [students were] getting out of it” (Carla, Transcript, 2003:1).

The student, Jessica, corroborates this perspective when she explains the purpose of Exhibitions as, “You had to try and accumulate the points.” Depending on which topic you did from the grid, “they had specific points and they added up to have a total and you had to have a total … of over 24 to pass this.”

She is critical of the assessment because points were not awarded consistently between different teachers nor was relative achievement rewarded according to merit. She remarks that the marking of the free choice tasks "could have been a bit better because different teachers would grade the point differently"; and claims that individual initiative was not reflected adequately by the points awarded, "… there is no motivation for actually learning yourself." (Jessica p3, 4) Jessica clearly felt aggrieved that she had not been given more points for the play script she wrote, a task that she had negotiated – "I looked at others and they had more points and I was a bit annoyed at that because even though I did it towards the end it should have been more points I think" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:5).

From the teacher perspective, Carla also commented on the difficulty she had in moderating between the different forms of expression of learning and grading them. "I really didn't have an idea of how to grade them differently – like a board game compared to a piece of art, to me they both looked good but how to grade, that was really difficult" (Carla, Transcript, 2003:4).

4:6:3. Credibility

Jessica was surprised that whereas beforehand the Exhibitions program had been strongly promoted, after the Exhibition period was over, "it didn't matter any more." She thought, "because they were making such a big thing out of it beforehand and then we did it and then it was like, 'Oh yeah, it's over now' ", so that she felt "duped" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:13).

Students generally, while they valued Exhibitions as "a positive experience for most people", were aware of the temporary status of Exhibitions. As Jessica says, "It was my friends as well … we were all annoyed that it just came to an end and nothing happened." "We thought it was very valuable at the start because that's what the teachers said but then afterwards it wasn't as much as it should have been because it just sort of ended" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:16).

Jessica also noted that during Exhibitions "there was not a broad range of learning the way normal school does" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:7) and was critical of this variation on the norm, "The problem is it was only in one specific area" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:8).

4:6:4. Long-term change

Katerina observes, "I haven't really seen much of a change at school" since Exhibitions. However there does appear to be an improvement in student-teacher relationships, with an ameliorating effect on teacher attitude towards "low achievers". She describes this phenomenon when she says, "I think that the teachers have seen the students who they thought were immature and were low achievers and put a little bit more trust in them. … These students have come to them with this amazing piece of work and they've gone, 'Oh maybe we were wrong.' So now those students are looked upon and gone, 'Okay look obviously they're not very strong at this sort of work, how can we go about it?'" (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:8).

4:6:5. Teacher roles

Because teachers had a supervisory role and were slotted in during their release time, many found it difficult to be involved in the process of student learning. They found it difficult to support students because they still had responsibility for teaching students in other year levels. "It is very disruptive to the rest of the school and it also makes it very difficult to staff as well because [they] still have lots of other classes that they still have to teach" (Janet, Transcript, 2003:2).

Carla felt unprepared for her role in Exhibitions and describes how it was for teachers who were on the periphery of the program.

> "It would have been good to maybe have a more clear definition of what we were trying to achieve, have a bit more lead up to the program, in that there's a bit more preparation, the teachers actually knew what was going on, because some teachers, I would walk up to and say, 'Well what are we doing about this?' Half of them didn't

> know what was going on either, sort of had the attitude, 'Ah Exhibitions! Rock up each lesson.' So I think for me, I would go in there and the kids would ask me questions and I would say, 'Oh I don't know. I have no idea.' So that was one thing and I had to research a little bit myself to find out the answer for them. But I think some sort of more training, more idea of where this thing was going, what the purpose was, because it was, 'Ah here it is. It's over now.' Then we got to do their report on four kids. It was like, 'I don't even know what they achieved' in the end because I wasn't there for their Roundtable. I only saw them four times out of the two weeks. I talked to them, got to know them, got to know what they were doing, but really it was just really all over the place. … it could have been done a lot better."
>
> (Carla, Transcript, 2003:6)

4:6:6. Organisational support

Janet, the driver of the 2002 implementation of Exhibitions, was very conscious that the school organisational model restricted the approach to Exhibitions that could be taken at Capital High School. "It's a very difficult thing to try and implement." "We've looked at the timetable structure and looked at trying to do it say a set lesson but you've got seven days in between, do you know what I mean?" (Janet, Transcript, 2003:2).

She speaks enviously of the "newer type schools" where integrated curriculum or trans-disciplinary learning is the norm. An Exhibitions approach "would work much better in a new structure … where they have year groups" "rather than faculty-based. … That would be much easier" (Janet, Transcript, 2003:2,7).

She is keenly aware that the Capital High approach does not allow the Exhibitions approach to be integrated into the curriculum, that it sits apart from routine practice. Even so, Janet believes that while doing it "in that two week block … is not the best thing … it gives quality time to it." (Janet, Transcript, 2006:2) She believes that "for the kids to get the best out of it, there needs to be a continuation. You need to be able to move through it at your own pace." She likes the idea of having "a dedicated time to it so you can really get involved in it." (Janet, Transcript, 2006:2) She was conscious of some transfer of an Exhibitions approach into the ongoing practice of

the school but not “across the board”, only in some KLAs such as PE. In this PE/Health unit teachers set an assignment in which students follow a brief and conduct research, then “present it like a little mini-Exhibition” (Janet, Transcript, 2003:10).

Thus Janet’s commentary on the Capital High model is that it provides a set topic for students to look at and a block of time for them to “delve into it very deeply” so that they can “get the most out of it “ that they can. As a consequence it may not be integrated into the curriculum but “it’s not the project that survives at the end of the day, it’s the learning process that goes with it that you want to try to incorporate into the curriculum … so kids have some kind of concept of what the learning style is.” (Janet p2) Ultimately she says “ ... it’s just a project. It’s not being integrated into the curriculum at all. It’s just an Exhibitions project. At the moment, that’s what it is. … I see it being difficult to incorporate into the school” (Janet, Transcript, 2003:3).

4:6:7. Teacher workload

Teachers were concerned about the workload, particularly for organisers who “were not given a lot of relief time.” Kerry maintains, “That was a bit tough. They took a workload that was ten times more than ours. They were given a couple of lines but the amount of work they took, they’re not being paid any extra” (Kerry, Transcript, 2003:3).

All teachers commented that everything they did towards Exhibitions was “on top of what we already do”, and for this they were not compensated in either time or money. As Kerry remarks, “We just get a bit of thanks.” (Kerry, Transcript, 2003:4) However, Kerry found the Exhibitions program to be so “worthwhile”, that these issues became secondary. “The thing about teachers is that they are so passionate about the kids and what they do, that they do all this extra stuff because they know that we will. Because we know the kids have benefited and it’s been so valuable for them, so you just do it anyway” (Kerry, Transcript, 2003:4).

4:7. Exhibitions Implementation: Participant Recommendations

Teachers reported that many students enjoyed the autonomy and thought that this was "how they should learn all the time. … Teachers should give the topic" and students should "just go for it" (Kerry, Transcript, 2003:1).

Janet mused over the idea of using an alternative model for the Exhibitions process. There "could be the presentation of their learning across several KLAs" or at the end of the year you're going to exhibit your best work from three of your elective KLAs or your three core KLAs" as a means of incorporating the demonstration of achievement into the evaluation process and of integrating an Exhibitions approach into the routine practice of the school in the longer term, so "melding the two together" (Janet, Transcript, 2003:3).

Jessica objected to having a roster of teachers "which I think might have been able to be changed because if we had just the one teacher the whole time, then it would be more sort of structured learning; the teacher would be able to help us, we would get to know them" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:3).

From the teachers' point of view, particularly those not directly involved in the development of the process, more time prior to implementation to become acquainted with the philosophical and pedagogical underpinnings of Exhibitions, would be of benefit. In the words of Carla, "I think a bit more lead up to it would have probably helped especially for the teachers, too" (Carla, Transcript, 2003:6).

Carla also advocates that Exhibitions be given more attention in the school program. "I think that it's a program that could work really, really well. I agree that it's a wonderful thing to have in schools but I think it needs to be run a bit differently in that there's a bit more focus on it" (Carla, Transcript, 2003:9). This would be achieved were teachers better informed about its benefits to students. "The people who were really focussed on it were the people who were organising it rather than the rest of the teachers. They need to be made a bit more aware of the importance of it on

student learning rather than the fact that this is another pain in the bum and that we have to assess more" (Carla, Transcript, 2003:9).

Carla also suggests that students have more say in the topic chosen as the focus for Exhibitions. "But I think those kids who made something of it, got something out of it. Some were pretty slow and those who stuffed around will always stuff around and never get anything out of it so maybe having kids suggest ideas, it would be a good idea to find out what they want to learn about in future" (Carla, Transcript, 2003:9).

Jessica suggests that more time should have been allowed, perhaps three weeks, and that more resources allocated in the classrooms. Katerina concurred. "You know two weeks for me wasn't really long enough … " (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:11). Kerry also commented on resourcing saying, "There needs to be more time and money eg a small token to be paid to members of the community who come in to teach" (Kerry, Transcript, 2003:4).

Jessica believed that everyone should have been with at least one friend because friends "grow on each other's ideas." (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:15) Katerina considers herself fortunate because in her Exhibitions group was a close friend who also happened to live close by. "I was really lucky. I had my best mate in the group and I had a few other really nice friends that I have." This clearly had an effect on the immediacy of the task and the extent to which Katerina was able to discuss with her friend ideas that emerged from her reading whether at home or school. It also had the benefit of making their friendship closer (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:11).

Jessica's advice to future Year 9s was not to stress about the interview and not to worry about getting too many points. "It matters more about how you've gotten them like how you learnt to do that, not how many points you get." (Jessica p15) She suggests also that separate programs might cater better "for the people who can work and the people who can't work." (Jessica p15) Similarly, Katerina advises current Year 9s to "do your best and don't stress out too much. You can only do your best." (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:15)

The benefits of Exhibitions for Jessica were learning how to learn all by herself as the biggest thing she did, learning "differently", and participating in the interview, which while a "strange situation," built her confidence. She learnt how to cope when presenting in front of people, "I didn't like being the centre of attention at all. I mean I still don't like it now but I at least I can create a role for myself" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:15).

Jessica also recommends, "Give Year 9 Exhibitions more recognition. Some people don't put much work in at all but others do and it wasn't just me" (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:15).

Katerina suggests that students in every year of high school should have some role in Exhibitions, "like when I was in Year 8 I was on the Roundtables, when I was in Year 9 I was in Exhibitions, when I was in Year 10, I was a community member. I thought it all and I reckon that the Year 7's should even have an input … " (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:15).

The feeling amongst the Year 9 cohort at that time was, generally speaking, fairly positive towards the Exhibitions program. While "on the outside everyone was saying, 'Yeah, great, two weeks off school!' … underneath it was a positive experience for most people." (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:16) From the teacher perspective, the enduring legacy of Exhibitions is the learning process "that you want to try to incorporate into the curriculum" (Janet, Transcript, 2003:2).

5. Falls District High School Exhibitions 2002

5:1. Falls District High School Profile

Falls District High School was created when Falls High School amalgamated with Forest High School, each of which had experienced declining enrolments following the changing age profile of residents in the surrounding residential area. The school's enrolments continued to dwindle because of disaffection with this initiative and the gravitation of many higher achieving students to more elite 'academic' schools in neighbouring districts.

A defining feature of Falls District High School was its demographic profile. A significant proportion of students came from low socio-economic backgrounds, many had poor literacy and numeracy skills, many were international and indigenous students, while there was also a significant proportion of 'students-at-risk' (SAR) of not completing their secondary schooling.

Falls District High School, although originally based on a traditional high school model, had evolved in many respects into a more transitional model of secondary schooling through a focus on improving services and programs to address immediate needs identified in the community. Alternative programs, promoted by a *Schools As Communities* initiative, were introduced to retain 'at risk' students who were dropping out of school owing to issues related to drug abuse, adverse family circumstances, carer responsibilities, low literacy and numeracy, and school avoidance. Measures to build success for these students at school included small groups, flexible school days, reduced school hours, predictable routines, privileges, pastoral care, Special Teacher Assistants (STAs), community outreach workers and liaison with wider community groups through volunteerism and work experience.

It was a small school, dealing with "reputation" issues, under pressure to improve outcomes for students and defensive about what was being done to deal with the issues confronting it. Being a small school, teachers suffered the workload pressures

of having fewer teachers to address the same spectrum of curriculum and organisational requirements as larger high schools which had more staff to share the load. Work-related stress also derived from the integration issues attached to having a significant proportion of students with special needs and behaviour support needs. These stressors were exacerbated when the school became subject to major reform.

As one of the teachers explained about Falls District High School, “The dominant philosophy is that the students have the right to education and we try to do that no matter what. If they find it difficult to come to school we’re trying to find alternative measures for them to come to school. So we’ve got lots of students enrolled who aren’t physically at our campus, as such, but are still receiving an education through other support services in the community. So, I think, just providing them with an education that has been out of reach for them in the past, that now they can come here. And that to provide students with the alternative of doing an apprenticeship whilst at school, and being paid while at school during the apprenticeship and then to go on with their options” (Emma, Transcript, 2003:11).

Thus Exhibitions was one of a raft of initiatives, being implemented at Falls District, to raise student attendance and address inclusivity through the engagement of students, within a whole school culture open to radical, systemic change.

5:2. Preparing for Exhibitions Implementation

5:2:1. Topic and task design

In 2002, while most other schools identified a particular task as the focus for their Year 9 Exhibitions program, the decision was made at Falls HS to give students the choice of selecting one element of their year’s work to research independently and present as their Exhibitions task.

As became clear from my interviews with teachers, classrooms at Falls DHS had ordinarily been teacher-centred. The decision for students to negotiate their task, reflected the resolve of teachers to introduce measures that would increase student

engagement. It would give Year 9 students at Falls DHS, many of whom were low or underachievers, the opportunity to individually identify and explore aspects of their learning which they found personally motivating and interesting and could be successful in. The approach was designed to be supportive and non-threatening for students with limited experience of learning independently. Thus flexibility and student negotiation became a feature of the scope of the learning for the Exhibition task (located in one subject area or more), and in the composition of the Roundtable panel (selected by the student), designed to meet individual student needs and to promote student engagement with the program.

5:2:2. Teacher preparation and resourcing

At Falls DHS extensive professional learning had taken place during 2000 with the assistance of the Australian National Schools network (ANSN) in the use of teacher professional Learning Circles as a forum for examining innovative practice and to promote teacher dialogue and access to whole-school decision-making. During 2001 in Learning Circles at staff meetings and professional development days, staff were acquainted with the Education Queensland/University of Queensland *New Basics Project* and underpinning research, the *Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study* (*QSRLS)*. Discussions centred around developing highly relevant, engaging curriculum at Falls DHS and the potential for using the productive pedagogies to address student alienation with schooling and to improve the retention of 'students-at-risk' of not completing secondary school. This applied not only to the Year 9 students participating in the Exhibitions program, but also to the entire student body. Equipping teachers with the tools to achieve this became central to teacher learning.

The two teacher leaders involved in the pilot Exhibitions program at Falls had been instrumental in realising the school focus on productive pedagogy as the priority for professional learning through teacher Learning Circles during 2001. At the beginning of 2002 great effort was put into school-based professional development on the underpinnings of Exhibitions, introduced to teachers new to the school and consolidated with existing staff. Viv White from the ANSN was invited to present a workshop which focussed on constructing curriculum using a multi-disciplinary

approach and higher order thinking so as to reinforce whole staff understanding. A serious attempt was made to ensure that all members of staff were equally well versed through professional learning in the field. As one of the Exhibitions teacher leaders, John, contends,

> "You could ask almost any staff member at this school and say, 'What's productive pedagogies?' and they'd be able to talk about things like higher order thinking and looking at understanding versus knowledge … . "
>
> (John, Transcript, 2003:13)

The 2002 Exhibitions team, John, Janet and Emma, received Exhibitions training early in 2002, attending the Exhibitions professional development provided at the system level by DET with other participating Exhibitions teachers from all 19 ACT government high schools.

In this way, school leaders and Exhibitions-trained teachers gave all the teachers at Falls DHS a strong understanding of the departmental perspective on Exhibitions, including the background to the Exhibitions approach, with research quoted to provide evidence for productive pedagogies and assessment by Exhibition. Leveraged by the enthusiasm of teachers and students involved in the Exhibitions pilot and its success for otherwise low or underachieving students, a radical departure from the existing approach to curriculum across the whole school was proposed and designed for 2002.

5:2:3. Organisational support

Prior to 2002 Falls District High School had been structured according to a traditional high school model from Years 7 to 10, with the exception of a SAR unit, which followed a modified program with flexible school attendance arrangements. Teachers were organised within faculties and taught specific subject disciplines across the year levels, with classes following a weekly timetable.

In 2002 school organisational structures were radically reconfigured to support the use of the productive pedagogies. With the agreement of staff, the school leadership proposed that the whole school curriculum and organisation was to be delivered through 'HOT tasks' (Higher Order Thinking tasks), intended to engage the whole range of learners and to raise the bar for underachievers. While Falls DHS operated within a traditional structure, its small student cohort of 500, allowed greater flexibility and a closer community than most high schools, enabling the staff to engage with systemic reform more readily and to experiment with new structures in this way.

John had been an interested observer during the Year 9 Exhibitions pilot program in 2001. He had begun his teaching career at Falls DHS three years previously, and was a main 'driver' of the 2002 Exhibitions program at Falls District High School with Janet, a highly experienced teacher leader. The Exhibitions team also included Emma, a beginning teacher in her first year of full-time teaching.

In 2002 the Year 9 Exhibitions Program was to continue but this time for the whole Year 9 cohort, and within the context of a whole-school HOT tasks curriculum. Led by the Exhibitions team who had the benefit of Exhibitions training, teacher professional learning followed on from that provided earlier, during staff meetings throughout the year. The team maintained that this ongoing support and consolidation was pivotal in strengthening the mastery of all the teaching staff for the new whole-school approach to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. For one and a half terms, at staff meetings each week, 20 minutes only was allocated to administration and the rest was devoted to professional development in preparation for the HOT tasks/electives program.
To quote Emma, one of the Exhibitions teachers:

> "At the school level our Exhibitions team at each staff meeting would in-service our own staff. We had meetings on a weekly basis then and each week on a Monday afternoon we would just take a small snippet of time for admin, then talk about Bloom's Taxonomy or productive pedagogy or how to structure your subject overviews or activities or different assessment procedures or the language to use or the meta-cognition.
>
> (Emma, Transcript, 2003:7)

The new HOT tasks curriculum model developed at Falls DHS, which integrated the research that had come out of Queensland Education was, uniquely, to be implemented across all year levels. This represented a major curriculum and organisational re-structure at Falls. These 'HOT tasks' were interdisciplinary units of work, to be created and implemented by teams of teachers for each year level across the school.

The HOT tasks were developed and introduced in Term 1, 2002, with two or three teachers taking the same class across a number of lines within a team structure. They contributed the relevant elements of their discipline to inform the major concept of the HOT task.

However, as one of the 2002 group expressed it, when this "worked really well in one team and didn't in the others", the school stepped back and in Term 2 re-directed this approach. (Transcript, John, 2003:13). As the HOT tasks model had met with varying degrees of success depending on the composition of the year team implementing it - their backgrounds, skills and enthusiasm - it was decided instead to confine this approach to the electives program, now named 'HOT electives'. As John explained it,

> "The realization was that higher order thinking which was the focus, was actually happening better in the electives because of the environment for learning … setting them up as Exhibition-like units with focus questions and deep understandings, and very clear outcomes … ."
>
> (John, Transcript, 2003:13)

Hence the mainstream curriculum framework introduced in Term 3, now came to encompass the four 'tutorial' subjects of Maths, English, Science and PE, while all other subjects came under the umbrella of 'electives'. The commitment was then made by staff at Falls DHS for the new HOT elective curriculum to remain in place for the remainder of 2002 and into 2003, at which time it would be re-evaluated.

As the design brief made clear, the purpose was to provide a 'big picture' curriculum that would engage students with its more meaningful, real-world connection and greater focus on students' interests, based on the premise that a more meaningful context for learning and a deeper sense of purpose, would help to raise the level of student engagement and, thus, achievement. According to Emma, the vision was,

> "… to get these kids to have those deep understandings, and think about their learning and how they're learning. Not just rote learning … "here's today's topic, here's what you are doing, now write ten facts." Trying to get away from that and trying to get the kids more involved, more student-centred."
>
> (Emma, Transcript, 2003:1)

In support of this, at staff meetings each week during Term 2, 20 minutes only was allocated to administrative matters and the rest was devoted to PD on developing structured unit outlines with focus questions based on Bloom's Taxonomy, deep understandings, and clear outcomes, in preparation for the HOT electives program. Staff meeting time was also devoted to teachers working in groups on the design of the HOT elective units. A common pro-forma was developed to scaffold the process for teachers and to document the HOT electives. A HOT elective curriculum outline was also provided to parents. Thus the Exhibitions implementation model for Year 9 in 2002 was framed by this whole-school pedagogical and organisational construct, to create a whole new iteration of the Exhibitions program.

5:3. Exhibitions Implementation: What Happened

5:3:1. Introducing the topic and task

The HOT electives approach worked well for the school, including Year 9. Teachers told me that they were comfortable in adapting their previous electives programs to provide greater relevance, more of a student research focus, higher intellectual demand, and interdisciplinary connection. Pro-formas were set up for all the tutorial

subject outlines as well as for the electives, so that students and parents knew what to expect. Tutorial class teachers taught two electives, while off-line teacher specialists, such as IT teachers, could teach all of the four electives.

Although an Exhibitions approach was integrated into the 2002 whole school electives program at Falls, for all year levels from Year 7 through to Year 10, it is important to understand that the point of departure for Year 9 students came in Term 3, when mutually agreed electives and some tutorial tasks culminated in the presentation of student work at Roundtables. Unlike the rest of the school, the Year 9 students were required, as part of the Year 9 Exhibitions program, to present their work before a Roundtable panel which included a student peer and a teacher of their choice, as well as a community member. Students could choose which elective or tutorial task they would present, usually from the elective or tutorial that they had enjoyed the most or thought was the most interesting of the four semester-long electives or tutorials they had completed.

One example is the Roundtable presentation of a Year 9 student, which I attended as a community panel member. The student chose to describe the task she and three of her fellow music elective students set themselves, of forming a jazz quartet and performing together. She proudly played an excerpt of a recording of their work. She explained, animatedly, the process of their learning together and spoke profoundly of the difficulties she overcame, such as adapting the musical score for her instrument, and of her personal progress as a learner and musician.

While it was their choice as to which of their electives became 'their Exhibition', some students chose instead to present their tutorial subjects, such as English or Science. As Emma observed,

> "We had a great variety, not just from one elective. Some people think that most students did it in one elective but there was a really good spread. So that worked really well. It took a whole year to do that just to get all that thinking."
>
> (Emma, Transcript, 2003:2)

5:3:2. Supporting student learning for task implementation

At the beginning of Term 3, students were provided with explicit unit outlines, informing them of what to expect within each of the elective programs which included areas of the curriculum such as music, IT and LOTE. The activities within each elective were designed to scaffold students in the area of learning, building the skills and understandings they would need to apply to the completion of an independent task.

Then students moved to the next phase of negotiating from which of their four electives (or in some cases, tutorials) their task would derive and which particular task they would foreground as their individual Exhibitions task. Having selected the task housed within a particular elective or tutorial, students received coaching and other support from teachers, parents, student peers, and community partners over the following weeks in order to achieve it. Students were given a display book as their portfolio and collected in it evidence of the process and progress of their learning during the course of implementing their task, as well as final products, to illustrate their achievement.

With no common task designed and 'prescribed' across Year 9, explicit links were made from each individual student's task to the Exhibitions essential learnings covered by it. These were *critical literacies,* as a lens through which to read the world, *community building,* about learning to live together and with others, *real life research and future studies*, and *accessing a range of cultural, ethical and environmental heritages.*

Much of the project work incorporated into the HOT electives was negotiated and self-directed, with assessment items also negotiated, so that students were involved in decision-making about their learning, could pursue their interests and were able to build up assessment items. Emma maintained that this catered for individual learning needs and abilities by providing for incremental achievement and short-term goals for some, while challenging and extending other students, and recognised that "students

need to learn in their own style". (Emma, Transcript, 2003:11). She went on to explain,

> "Exhibitions targets some of those students who like to learn in that way rather than just sit in a classroom … it's a more hands on approach, they get to choose their final product, their final project and work in a group to get that goal… which all encompasses the philosophy of Falls being that we want to educate all that come to Falls. So it sits really well for those students, and our students seem to like Exhibitions rather well and they seem to enjoy the process."
>
> (Emma, Transcript, 2003:11)

5:3:3. Supporting student learning for Roundtables

In Term 3 in preparation for their Roundtable presentations, students selected one of their four HOT electives tasks to share with the panel in Week 9. The task they chose had to be of high personal interest to them and one at which they had achieved well, both to give them with a greater opportunity for success and to provide for more authentic assessment. Student choice was integral to the success of Roundtables, as John explained,

> "For us, because each Year 9 student during the semester was enrolled in four electives, we reinforced the fact that your Roundtable component of the Exhibition (because they're all doing all the assessment all the way through), the Roundtable where you write the letter and present the stuff you've been doing, you choose your favourite. [You choose] the one you have been doing best in out of those four. So once again it was that element of choice, so that when it came to 'I have to choose one of these', there was more opportunity for success … because we see this as a valuable component … as well."
>
> (John, Transcript, 2003:4)

Once students had selected which aspect of their learning to present as their Exhibition, they had the opportunity to choose the members of their Roundtable panel, invite them to participate and provide a presentation of the task they had achieved for discussion and feedback. Students who lacked confidence in their ability to present their learning were supported with practice opportunities and control over the composition of their panel, including which teacher would participate. They could select a parent, a sibling or a friend and a trusted staff member for their panel.

Most Year 9 students nominated a teacher and a Year 10 student to participate as members of their panel, knowing that they would feel comfortable to share their work with them. The students wrote letters of introduction, explaining their Exhibition task and inviting prospective panel members to attend their Roundtable which would be held at the school in Week 9 of Term 3.

Students were familiarised with the criteria against which the panel would provide feedback. They prepared answers to the questions from the assessment rubric and had opportunities in class to rehearse their presentations with peers acting in the role of panel members. Students were prepared for Roundtables with reference to their direct application to the real world beyond school, being asked to imagine the Roundtable as their first job interview. An information night was also held to explain the Roundtable panel process, engender support and recruit panel participants, which was attended by about 75% of the parents of Year 9, as well as community people.

In 2002, being new to the school, the Exhibitions teachers had no previous first-hand experience of Roundtables and were uncertain of how to structure them. Together with the Year 9 students, they agreed that each Year 9 student would have ten minutes to talk about their work and to share their experience of the Exhibitions process.

There was a very positive school community response to the prospect of Roundtable presentations by Year 9. The Year 10 students were keen to be involved as panel members with the benefit of having had experience of Roundtables as presenters in

the pilot Exhibitions program the year before, while some also mentored Year 9s in preparation for their presentations. The parents of each Year 9 student were also invited to be panel members, with at least one parent from all families but a few participating.

In the final phase of the 2002 Exhibitions program, staff who had not been immediately involved in Year 9 Exhibitions willingly offered to participate as Roundtable panel members. Being well versed in an Exhibitions approach to authentic assessment through the professional reading and staff development they had received, they were confident about the contribution they could make to the Roundtable process. Also some classes were collapsed and the timetable reorganised to utilise a social skills mentoring line for Roundtable presentations, minimising the disruption to other school programs and allowing all staff the opportunity to participate as panel members without having to sacrifice their own preparation time. This recognised that unless the Roundtable process was accommodated into teachers' existing teaching load, it was "not going to be valued because it's an extra thing" (John, Transcript, 2003:1).

Roundtables were organised so that presentations were conducted simultaneously. From first-hand experience I can report that, while the process was rushed, the Roundtables ran smoothly and systematically. The assessment rubric, which graded students on a continuum from poor to outstanding, was used to judge performance against the student's own abilities and progress, not to rank them against other students. I was told that teachers and students had agreed to limit the time frame for presentations to ten minutes, due in part to the necessity of ensuring that there was sufficient time for all the students to present in the time available to panel members. It was also either to allay students' concerns that they would not have sufficient material to utilise the whole ten minutes or that they did not feel confident about being 'scrutinised' for that length of time.

The teachers explained to me that elements of the process were designed by teachers to be as supportive of students as possible and to maximise the opportunity for them to succeed. These included student choice of the HOT electives task that they would present, the structure of Roundtables, individualised assessment,

carefully composed panels and the short length of time allocated to presentations. Teachers were very protective of their students. They took great care not to expose students to any unnecessary pressure during Roundtables, particularly as many of the cohort were low-achieving in traditional academic subject areas, and lacked confidence in oral communication, to the extent that they actively avoided public speaking situations. Teachers wanted to ensure that the Roundtables were a positive culminating experience and a celebration of all that students had achieved.

5:4. Exhibitions Outcomes: Participant Responses

5:4:1. Responses to the topic and task

The Exhibitions approach became a blueprint for interdisciplinary learning within the HOT electives program across the school. As a consequence the nature of the electives program at Falls DHS had changed for the better, with improved student engagement and, for many students, more significant learning taking place.

> "Once again, not across the board, not everyone, not every elective but quite a number of them, very focussed. There's a great atmosphere in the classroom, ownership and direction by the students, seems highly welcomed."
>
> (John, Transcript, 2003:14)

Ian was one such student. For his Exhibitions task, Ian completed an Information Technology programming challenge to "design a Menu with Options and its operational features", and had to demonstrate what he had achieved. While he found the "the IT challenge itself was hard", he liked the less teacher-directed approach. (Ian, Transcript, 2003:2) Even though he was "not used to taking so much responsibility", he comments, "I like doing it this way – doing it myself" (Ian, Transcript, 2003:1).

Melissa was more negative about the approach and preferred "the usual way of working". (Melissa, Transcript, 2003:1) She had looked at the influence of globalization, "using film texts, discussion and written tasks". Melissa found the topic and task "very interesting and a lot of work" and the questions they were investigating "very straightforward". (Melissa, Transcript, 2003:1) At the same time it was "a lot of pressure" because, "It was the main priority but on top of a whole lot of other work" in the same elective subject of Spanish, so that "there wasn't time to do it" (Melissa, Transcript, 2003:1).

5:4:2. Responses to support for student learning

Emma explains that Exhibitions provided the opportunity for students "to learn in their own style", particularly using "a more hands on approach", for student choice and a team approach. She maintains that this prompted students to give and seek out support from their friends and classmates (Emma, Transcript, 2003:11,12). She believes that it also gave them a process and the language to talk about and reflect on their learning, to recognise and discuss their weaknesses with teachers and to deliberate on strategies to address them, thus providing contingent scaffolding and preparing students for their future learning. Ian recognised the value of having 'just-in-time' access to teacher assistance, the kind of support that was available "when you asked for it" (Ian, Transcript, 2003:2).

5:4:3. Student and teacher learning

The Exhibitions teachers reported that every student who completed the Exhibitions program was positive and most considered it to be 'the best thing' they had done. Students valued the Exhibitions tasks themselves, responding well to the broad scope of Exhibitions as well as the personalised nature of the learning and its relevance beyond school. "The students were engaged, especially some students-at-risk because of negotiation, catering for their needs, extension and transfer beyond the school context eg job interview prep." (Transcript, John, 2003:3). Teachers also

reported that the experience of Roundtables where they found themselves talking to others “about the good things about myself”, helped students to envision their future selves, and through panel discussion, to situate the deep understandings they had learnt during Exhibitions, in a wider world context beyond the scope of school (Transcript, Emma, 2003:3).

Teachers also observed that student self-directedness became evident during the lead up to the Roundtables and that their anticipation of the Roundtables was positive. What impressed teachers was how focussed the students were in the care and thought they brought to writing their letters of introduction to panel members, and in utilizing their preparation time productively (John, Transcript, 2003:10).

A major shift also observed by teachers which resulted from students engaging with the Exhibitions program, was that they embraced **collaboration and reflection**, indicated by more teamwork, an emerging learning community and in-depth discussion taking place within it.

Further, the most significant outcome of Exhibitions for the student cohort was the shift in the students’ approach to learning, regarded by their teachers as “a life-changing view” (Emma, Transcript, 2003:18). The preparation for Roundtables required students to reflect. It allowed them to think about what makes them a good learner, to consider what they had done, and to discuss it carefully. In this way the Roundtable component of Exhibitions demonstrated to students, and gave them experience in, how to talk about their learning and to use ‘metacognition’. Emma describes it in the following way.

> “The other change is that students seem to be, now, more willing and open to talk about their learning. They are willing to share; they’ll work with other students and help other students … that’s a huge change for us, that [students are] more open and ready to share their learning. And they’ve got the language there now, especially the Year 10s who’ve gone through the process to talk about their learning and the meta-cognition … . What they like, their strengths, their weaknesses.”
>
> (Emma, Transcript, 2003:12)

The positive responses of the students to the Roundtables were a huge incentive to staff. From their perspective, they felt that all their hard work had really paid off. Staff valued the Exhibitions approach and Roundtable assessment so highly that they suggested the model be used for Year 10 in 2003 as a form of 'Graduation by Exhibition'.

With student collaboration, social inclusion also became a hallmark of the success of Exhibitions at Falls DHS. Exhibitions interest-based groups emerged around a common focus or topic, in contrast to the usual friendship groupings. Students who had previously worked independently and exclusively, as well as students with special needs, including those with asbergers syndrome, interacted more than usual with mainstream students in the Exhibitions context. This closer interaction extended to the social context of the 'schoolyard'. Teachers observed that the 'loners' were less inhibited about talking to other people, while the students with special needs were included much more, for example being approached to chat or to play handball. "Now they are willing to go through and look at other people and consider them as friends" (Emma, Transcript, 2003:18). "I think that's developing bigger relationships and alternative relationships between students so now they might have more acquaintances" (Emma, Transcript, 2003:29).

The Exhibitions imperative to make connections with the wider community exposed students, through their Exhibitions tasks, to new experiences and social interactions beyond home and school. Teachers were also challenged to be more active in accessing outside expertise and partnerships in support of their students' learning.

As Emma explained,

> "… there's sometimes very little opportunity from home. … They actually got out to see part of Canberra and some said, 'I've never been to these places before.' These kids are 14, 15. … an opportunity that they would not have otherwise experienced. … So I think Exhibitions have been really valuable just to give that experience and opportunity for our kids and even for the teachers as well to try something new.
>
> (Emma, Transcript, 2003:17)

During the Exhibitions program, teachers noticed that students were empowered by the opportunity to have agency in the focus, conduct and presentation of their learning. The effect on students was to make them more self-directed, to take more responsibility for their own learning such as by catching up on missed work and taking control of what they needed to do to prepare themselves for their Roundtable (John, Transcript, 2003:3).

Through their involvement as partners and resource people in Exhibitions tasks and as panel members on the Roundtables, the school community understood that their participation was integral to the Exhibitions process and the recognition of student achievement, and appreciated that their contributions were valued. The high number of parents who attended Roundtables as panel members was significant as it revealed their anticipation of an enjoyable school experience, and their confidence that they would see their children succeed. John understood the parent perspective well. "You know that they've got everything in advance. It's not a trick. You're going there to watch them do their best. That was big, that was valued by the community members. That was one of the big comments they made. It was great coming in to be positive, a positive aspect" (John, Transcript, 2003:3).

John contends that for teachers the professional value of the Exhibitions program was that it engaged them as learners, by providing evidence-based research and the background to the initiative. "Professional development towards the restructure process … made sure … to incorporate evidence and give a history of the studies that led up to that … that was powerful." (John, Transcript, 2003:5,6) John maintains that the teachers were well grounded, having examined the underpinning principles of Exhibitions each week at staff meetings and PD days at the beginning of the year and during the previous year, and anticipated the positive impact on student learning. "This is going to work and we're putting so much effort into this because we'll see these types of things" (John, Transcript, 2003:9).

Against this grounding, Emma explains that the teachers at Falls "were integrating the research … and trying to implement it into our school" (Emma, Transcript, 2003:1). They planned for the success of Exhibitions, experimented with different

structures, first with the HOT tasks then the electives program, and learnt from the trials. Thus, having restructured and refined the education program and thought through the timetabling and structuring of "the way [they] had integrated it into the school", together with the high engagement of students, "there was no way it couldn't work" (John, Transcript, 2003:10).

5:4:4. Responses to Roundtables

The result was that 95% of all parents of Year 9 students participated in Roundtables, while 90% of staff acted as panel members. Furthermore, with the exception of two consistently non-attending students, the whole cohort of Year 9 students presented at Roundtable, of particular significance in a school with a low academic profile. The Roundtables enabled teachers to meet with parents and provided an opportunity to involve the whole school community as a learning community. The great improvement in parental involvement was a product of the focus of Exhibitions on presenting young people in a positive light and also translated into the resurrection of the P & C at Falls DHS the following year. With so many parents demonstrating their interest in their child's Roundtable, "It's been really good for us" (Emma, Transcript, 2003:9).

The Roundtable component of the Exhibitions program at Falls DHS was intended to affirm student learning. It was to provide the opportunity for authentic assessment to occur, whereby students could demonstrate their achievement in a public forum and receive recognition and constructive feedback to inform their future learning.

The Falls DHS community found the Roundtables to be very successful and worthwhile. "From a whole school perspective, overwhelmingly a positive response from everyone who's been involved, students, parents, teachers, community members." (John, Transcript, 2003:10).

Contrary to expectations, presentations went over time because the students had so much to say, panel members were so enthusiastic and interested and the

experience so positive and enjoyable that ten minutes was insufficient time for students to present all that they had to share. All the Falls DHS teachers who participated in Roundtable panels were universally convinced that the Roundtables affirmed their students' learning. To quote both Emma and John:

> "And so, yes, the timetabling was a pain to go through but it was worth every moment that you went through it, because you see these kids talking about their learning, and actively talking about it, positively talking about it and actually enjoying talking about it."
>
> (Emma, Transcript, 2003:26)

> "So the focus was they were all working … in all electives but then the big Roundtable thing for them at the end - which of course isn't the major component of the Exhibition either, it's the process, that and the pedagogies as well … the huge talk at the end made it more powerful I think." (John, Transcript, 2003:4)

Students gave a personal response which revealed their knowledge and understanding. Teachers believed that students felt more accountable because they knew that they would be presenting their achievement before a panel**.** As a result the quality of their learning was enhanced. Also because it was their own choice as to which HOT electives tasks they would present to the panel, students were more passionate about the topic for presentation. Thus the assessment was more authentic because it optimised the demonstration of student achievement. For example, Nick, who participated in Roundtable panels for students from his advanced IT class and from a stop motion animation class, comments, "I think from the ones that I saw and the students that have been in my class just talking about it, that they produced much better outcomes when they were accountable" (John, Transcript, 2003:10).

The Roundtable presentations were the highlight of Exhibitions for John, as the forum for students to authentically apply their understanding and demonstrate their achievement, revealing the impact on their learning of the Exhibitions process. John reports that students found the Roundtable experience to be very positive and affirming.

> "I think that's a good clarification of it so it was great when it kept happening, every student was coming out of it smiling, going in terribly nervous, telling other kids that it was the best thing that they had done, can we do it next year?"
>
> (John, Transcript, 2003:11)

The value of the Roundtables was supported by student feedback. From the student perspective most felt that the Roundtables at Falls DHS had succeeded in providing them with a supportive forum to share their learning and positive, public recognition from people whose opinions they valued, having chosen the panel members themselves. The Roundtables had also provided students with the incentive to try harder and reinforced for them the value of their own achievements. As Exhibitions student, Ian, comments about his Roundtable experience,

> "On the panel I had Mr Panagakis and a friend, Sean, who is in Year 10. I respect his opinion. I wanted to get it over and done with. I was a bit nervous. It was good because you got to show what you can do. It ups the stakes a little bit. I felt comfortable in the end. It made me feel like my learning was more valued."
>
> (Ian, Transcript, 2003:1)

Student choice, another intended feature of the Falls DHS model, was achieved through the organisational structure for Exhibitions whereby students had four HOT electives from which they could choose to present at the Roundtable. This reinforced the value students placed in the outcomes of the process and contributed to their feelings of euphoria and sense of self-worth when they presented successfully. This clear example of authentic assessment demonstrates that the teachers had successfully applied their professional learning in the construction of the Falls DHS model for Exhibitions to achieve praxis. To quote John,

> "All the PD that we went to reinforced that students should have involvement and choice and really need to be intrinsically involved with that, what the assessment is or what the task. That of course contributes to how authentic the assessment is because then you've got that valuing by the students and they realize that it fits into their world, and that's important."
>
> (John, Transcript, 2003:5)

By contrast to Ian's and John's perspective on Roundtables is that of another student, Melissa, who was quite negative. Her Exhibitions task, *Cruisin' Cultures,* conducted in the context of a Spanish elective, examined the influence of globalisation. While she viewed the Exhibitions task and her presentation very positively, she did not see 'the point' of Exhibitions or the Roundtable because she had expected it to be assessed. She was upset that it wasn't, "With all the work I put into stuff for presentation and then I got no mark for what I did! I usually get average marks in tests and assignments. I prefer the usual way." To her a mark was more meaningful than recognition and feedback on her learning (Melissa, Transcript, 2003:1,2).

5:4:5. Organisational, relational and pedagogical change

The Exhibitions program has been both a model and a vehicle for pedagogical and organisational change at Falls affecting all year levels. School leaders and teacher leaders prepared teachers for change with a comprehensive and ongoing program of professional development during 2001 and 2002 which acquainted them with the theoretical underpinnings of Exhibitions and provided the practical support of time and scaffolding to apply their learning in the development and implementation of HOT tasks. Teachers had also become convinced of the value of the Exhibitions approach as a result of the success of the Exhibitions pilot for the Year 9 students in 2001. Teacher participants believe that these factors made teachers more open to change and more experimental in their approach.

> "People are more and more open to change at this school now, so slight changes don't seem to bother people, even big ones like HOT electives. I guess the school's known that we're in for it from the start of the year so people have had time to adapt."
> (John, Transcript, 2003:7)

Through student-centred learning, curriculum negotiation and the use of productive pedagogies, teachers have reported a shift from traditional, content-focussed, teacher-directed learning, to a more transitional approach. As Emma explains,

> "Instead of, 'I've got to teach this and this and this' - the content - they've gone into, 'How can I teach it and what can I do to support it or what different ways can I teach it?' - so that the content is covered but the understandings are drawn out from it. So they're more focused on the deep questions that they need to ask to get the students to understand what the content is about."
>
> (Emma, Transcript, 2003:13)

Through Exhibitions the teacher's role was redefined as coach, guide and mentor, in support of more independent, student-centred, self-directed learning. For example the student, Ian, who conducted an IT-focussed task out of the *Programming Challenges* course, in which he designed both a Menu with Options and its operational features, reported that what he liked best about Exhibitions was having independence and agency. "The teacher doesn't direct things as much. The teacher provided support when you asked for it. I'm not used to taking so much responsibility. I like doing it this way – doing it myself" (Ian, Transcript, 2003:1).

Subsequent to Exhibitions, teachers are also conscious of a more personal relationship with students. Emma describes it, "Students who are willing to confide in me. I don't think that would have happened if we hadn't been through some of these processes … . It's given me the insight to see students in a different light, … to see that actually they can do that only in a different format" (Emma, Transcript, 2003:24).

Teachers also came to embrace an inter-disciplinary approach, integrating learning both beyond their subject area, and with scope and relevance beyond school, where formerly they may not have done. Teachers took the initiative such as integrating learning in support of students' Exhibitions tasks into the work covered in their tutorial subject area (usually discrete from the electives program). One example is where teachers in English tutorial classes scaffolded students in letter-writing so that they could prepare their Roundtable introductory letters. There was also a strong team approach by teachers, grown of a common sense of purpose. Only 3 out of 25 staff did not participate in the Roundtables as panel members and many asked to do more, in their own off-line time. This sense of collective responsibility that had been fostered at the outset of Exhibitions program at Falls District High School, became

established during its implementation. There was genuine respect for stakeholders and shared leadership. Teachers willingly volunteered their time to organise Roundtable panels, to the extent that, “Even though we had officially only four members on the team, … in a way I considered the whole staff to be our Exhibitions team.” (Emma, Transcript, 2003:16). She explains why. “It was everyone’s baby. It is school-wide. … Every teacher is affected because they all teach a Year 9 class, so it’s everyone’s responsibility.” (Emma, Transcript, 2003:16).

The level of teacher engagement was also indicated by the very productive feedback they gave their colleagues on the Exhibitions team. They not only evaluated the process very positively, but also provided suggestions to improve the process. John maintained that this indicated the teachers’ sense of collegiality and collective responsibility for the success of the Roundtable assessment process and their faith in the responsiveness of the team. “They felt that their input would be valued ... [because of] making ourselves as flexible as possible to what needed to happen” (John, Transcript, 2003:6).

5:5. Exhibitions implementation: Participant Critique

Derived from their commitment and passion as educators, their sense of social justice, and the value they place in the Exhibitions program to produce improved outcomes for their students, teachers at FDHS were willing to ‘go the extra yards’ for the students in their care, in spite of the extra work required to implement the program. This sentiment is expressed by Emma.

> “Even though there are downfalls in time and money and effort and the amount of work that you have to do to actually make sure that it runs smoothly, I think the final product and the processes that the students did go through are excellent, especially for our students.”
>
> (Emma, Transcript 2003:17)

The workload involved in Exhibitions planning and implementation was an issue identified by teachers directly involved at FDHS. They were exhausted at the end of the Exhibitions program to the extent that they doubted their personal ability to repeat the program for two years in succession. “It’s a great procedure, a great process but it’s so time-consuming that they sometimes don’t feel like they could do it again next year” (Emma, Transcript 2003:20). At FDHS by the end of second semester, every HOT elective had a structured unit outline, based on the proforma, and other curriculum documentation. One suggestion which they made to overcome the issue of workload was for Exhibitions tasks to be documented by schools in this way and located centrally for access by other schools in the system as a collaborative resource.

There were other more minor elements of the FDHS model that impacted on the successful implementation of Exhibitions and required fine-tuning. These included that the Roundtables were not long enough for students to present and discuss their learning. Also, with so many Roundtables being conducted simultaneously and too much happening at once, the atmosphere was exciting and stimulating for some but chaotic and distracting for others. More time and space was needed with implications of disruption to the learning of the rest of the school and of heavier teacher workload unless extra relief resourcing was allocated. Roundtables coordinators had provided for these as best they could by reconfiguring the timetable but the latter was compounded in 2002 by the lack of available relief teachers in the ACT system at the time. Year 10 panel members also needed extra training so that they could contribute more confidently to the discussion.

5:6. Exhibitions implementation: Participant Recommendations

Teachers agreed that the sustainability of the Exhibitions program would be dependent upon continued funding and support, such as the extra days away from school that came out of the Exhibitions budget for FDHS Exhibitions teachers to plan and develop the program. “At this stage the kids seem to be grasping those deep

understandings and going away with it. I don't think that would have happened if we hadn't had those collective days as a group" (Emma, Transcript, 2003:18).

With the Exhibitions budget, teachers also purchased folders for all the students in Year 9 as portfolios in which they collected evidence of their work for presentation to the panel. Without this purchase not all students at GDHS would have had a portfolio. Without a portfolio, a student would be disadvantaged, particularly in preparing their Roundtable presentation, as it brings together evidence which documents their Exhibitions journey. This is important both for prompting students' recall of elements of the process they have undertaken and as a focus for their discussion.

John maintains that while support for Exhibitions at FDHS in 2002 was resourced well, the inevitable issue that "always comes up" and which would improve the implementation of an Exhibitions approach in schools, is that of time. "My other classes didn't suffer because I put in more time overall" (John, Transcript, 2003:8). He contends, however, that even if teachers were given more release time to complete Exhibitions planning and implementation, it is not always easy to find relief teacher replacements. "Even if you've got money to give time, you can't get anybody to give you the time" (John, Transcript, 2003:8). One suggestion to address this anomaly is to employ permanent staff to be 'on call' to provide teacher relief when the need arises, but who would otherwise be involved in supplementary school programs.

Teachers also felt that the sustainability of Exhibitions depended upon the nature of the school structure, and that were it not incorporated into the school structure, the approach 'could not survive'. There has to be 'room for it' through flexible timetabling and the integration of the program within the routines of the school, "Otherwise it's not going to be valued because it's an extra thing as opposed to part of it" (John, Transcript, 2003:2). The pressure on an organising team is also reduced by allocating the time and sharing the responsibility necessary to fulfil organisational requirements. Teachers suggested a cumulative process to build on the HOT electives model of 2002 at GDHS, by beginning with an Exhibition-style

task in Years 7 & 8 with less student choice, continuing in Year 9 with more choice, and culminating in Graduation by Exhibition from Year 10.

For Exhibitions to be successful teachers identified the importance of having people involved who were saw the need for, were open to and were prepared for change. It also requires a dedicated, team approach and ownership by the stakeholders who need to be convinced of its value.

John identifies the success of student Roundtable presentations as a key factor in convincing teachers of the value of Exhibitions for students, making all the extra work worthwhile because of student achievement and engagement with the process.

> "For it to be sustainable, it needs ownership. Now the best thing about it has been the feedback and I think if anything would sustain the HOT elective program and their structure re Exhibitions, it would be the success of the Roundtables at the end that the staff has seen. I think if there were any problems with sustainability, all that would be needed was, 'Remember how the Year 9's were last year and your participation' and I suspect that would be enough of an incentive at this point in time."
>
> (John, Transcript, 2003:7)

As a logical corollary to this, John recognises that for any initiative to be successful, staff need to be convinced of its value. To quote John, "If it's valued enough by the staff. If anything is valued by a whole staff, you can get it to happen in a school" (John, Transcript, 2003:11). At FDHS the process of having the whole school involved in developing HOT electives based on a full understanding of productive pedagogies also proved valuable. It enhanced the electives curriculum by providing greater depth, challenged the privileging of the academic program over electives and allowed 'non-academic subjects' which many of these students excelled in, to become a core part of what students were doing.

"Exhibitions has allowed me to see students in a different learning environment to what a normal classroom looks like. Therefore we are seeing students' strengths rather than just focusing on students' weaknesses. Exhibitions has allowed that kind of student to be able to blossom in an environment where it is supportive and then they're nurtured in a way to be able to come out with some understandings. They had the option of presenting their work in the form of their choosing – not just narrative essays" (Emma, Transcript, 2003:24, 25).

> "I think it's catching those lower ability students and giving them the opportunity to present the information in a different way to what the high achievers would, but in their own way that they could feel confident in presenting. So it didn't have to be in words. It could be in pictures or by technology they could do it really well."
>
> (Emma, Transcript, 2003:28)

Engaging staff intellectually and professionally was an important feature of introducing Exhibitions to FDHS and facilitating change. Through school-based PD the whole teaching staff knew where the Exhibitions initiative had come from, not only the practice but the theory behind it, backed up by research evidence. For teachers, knowing the background gave it credibility and made it 'powerful', as reflected in discourse, "Here's the paper if you want to read it. … This is a fascinating read" (John, Transcript, 2003:5).

Also, under the HOT electives program, small teams of teachers who were responsible for each elective, designed their own unit of work to include Higher Order Thinking questions, and an overarching question. It was a significant judgement when HOT tasks had not been working as intended, to re-group and shift to HOT electives as the vehicle for an Exhibitions approach. This recognised that the school had "pushed maybe too quickly into this", while the fall-back position of using the electives program, where teachers felt confident, highlights the importance of ownership and agency.

> "So you've got teachers with ownership of the elective because they've got background in the elective they're offering and the skills to teach it and enthusiasm to

> teach it. So you've got enthusiastic teachers teaching the electives and then of course making the elective program wide enough such that students have choice, you've got that whole ownership of the class as well, so it's twofold."
>
> (John, Transcript, 2003:12)

Teachers were able to accommodate an Exhibitions approach in their individual ways, experimenting and trying new things, in the context of structured curriculum development for the electives. Also the process of task design within a framework of focus questions, deep understandings, and clear outcomes, provided an opportunity for staff to talk at a higher level using meta-language which they had previously resisted.

> "I think because we were using that language so much that they finally got the idea of what it actually meant and adapted it and took it on board and went with it. So I think that was one of the pivotal moments of last year."
>
> (John, Transcript, 2003:25)

In this way, the Exhibitions approach influenced teachers' pedagogy for the longer term. Importantly John questions the sustainability of this and any Exhibitions model, "unless it gets valued enough in the ACT schools system", should several key players leave the school, as is the case with John who must leave GDHS in accordance with the mobility policy governing the tenure of beginning teachers at a particular school (John, Transcript, 2003:8). At FDHS, Emma's Exhibitions 'apprenticeship' through shared leadership and coordination, equated to succession training and equipped her to lead the program in 2003. She provided continuity between one year's iteration of Exhibitions with the next. John warns of the dysfunction that could occur if new teachers to a school were to find the structure or approach so radically different that they wanted to change the Exhibitions model "and once again there's a new change and resistance to change" (John, Transcript, 2003:8).

Other recommendations from teachers at FDHS included the importance of learning from the participants involved about how things could work better both during the process and for next time. Ideas from formal feedback sheets organised at FDHS at

important milestones along the way and following Roundtables, from tendentious planning meetings and informal discussions about timetabling etc, were all incorporated into the Exhibitions model and were instrumental in seeing it realized. All the stakeholders are keen for the initiative to succeed and have a contribution to make towards this end. Exhibitions at FDHS was much anticipated, with huge preparation and effort invested in its success.

> "The whole anticipation of the thing was, 'This is going to work and we're putting so much effort into this because we'll see these types of things', and it's that surprise in a way that, 'Yes all the work we've put in', because it is related to the amount of effort that you put in the first place, there's talking up of it and all of those types of things, really it was exciting. (John, Transcript, 2003:10,11)

Shared leadership for planning and implementing the Exhibitions program reduced the workload and shared the responsibility and ownership, as well as generating more ideas and solutions to address emerging issues.

Negotiations with students contributed to the form Exhibitions took and improving outcomes. Student choice about HOT elective tasks to be presented and the format of Roundtables were important factors in their success. As John says, "Make sure that the Exhibition itself is something that students value. They have to have a choice in what they do" (John, Transcript, 2003:4). This extends to assessment whereby students negotiate and build a body of assessment items tailored to their needs and abilities, which also challenge the individual student.

Another important recommendation is that staff should benefit from the experience of teachers who have implemented Exhibitions previously, as was the case at FDHS with school-based professional development and designated time set aside at staff meetings for sharing to occur.

> "… in-servicing staff about the Roundtables for those people who weren't here last year and buddy them up with people from last year and just talk about the experience. What a Roundtable is, what it looks like, show the video again, refresh people's minds, look at the questions that we're going to ask."
>
> (Emma, Transcript, 2003:8)

Teachers at FDHS believed that the system should continue to provide teacher professional development focussed on the background research and also greater opportunity for teachers from different schools to share ideas and discuss changes to their implementation models using Learning Circles (Emma, Transcript, 2003:6). This occurred at the system level in late 2002, with the added requirement that Deputy Principals attend as members of their school's Exhibition team, providing further insights to teachers and school leaders in anticipation of their pivotal role in the development of future Exhibitions implementation models.

6. Riverside School Exhibitions 2002

6:1. Riverside School Profile

Riverside was only three years old when the Exhibitions pilot program was introduced in 2001. At the time the school reflected a unique non-traditional K to Year 10 school structure, over two adjoining sites, a Primary School (K to Year 5), and a Middle School (Years 6 to 8) co-located with a Senior School (Years 9 & 10). The middle school differed from the traditional high school model by combining Year 6 (usually the final year of primary school in the ACT), with the first two years of high school. Consistent with traditional high schools, Years 9 and10 at Riverside, known as 'the senior years', prepared students to attend Secondary College for Years 11 and 12.

The newness of the school reflected the status of the surrounding suburbs, a newly-established growth area in Canberra's north. Satellite town planning encouraged innovative housing design and configurations, and provided for a range of housing needs and budgets, including expensive, contemporary, architect-designed housing, medium-density housing and low-cost, government and defence housing. The demographic profile of the families of students enrolled at the school reflected this range, from high socio-economic status upper echelon public servants and academics, through to those of lower socio-economic status including unemployed people and welfare recipients.

Many of the families who moved to this new area welcomed change. They were impressed by the state-of-the-art architecture of the new government high school and were excited by the promise of a new and innovative approach to education. Some were optimistic that the school would offer their children more relevant, higher quality programs, while others hoped for a fresh start for their young people who had thus far been disengaged or unsuccessful in a more traditional high school setting.

In more general terms and within the context of the ACT education system, the middle school was established in response to a growing Australia-wide concern with

the middle years of schooling, which recognised the requirement to change educational practice in order to provide more adequately for the needs of young adolescents. Transition issues for students moving from the primary to the secondary bands of schooling included an overall drop in academic achievement by the Year 7 cohort from that previously attained in the primary school, as well as emotional and social difficulties emerging among individual students in the traditional high school setting. Indications were that some young people were better equipped than others to deal with the transition from a relatively small, close-knit primary school community, to a large, impersonal high school setting. At the same time there was evidence that students in Year 6, undergoing profound physical and emotional changes, were unsettled and outgrowing the primary setting. With different needs from younger primary aged students, they were "yearning for something else in their schooling" (Maiden, 2004).

As an educator in the ACT public education system during the late 1990's, I was conscious of the contrast between the two settings which can be portrayed in the following way. Adhering to a predictable but flexible timetable, primary schools generally afforded their students the care and tutelage of only one or two class teachers in the same classroom for most of the school day. Usually one teacher taught most subjects through an integrated curriculum, and varied the interest, the level of difficulty and the style of learning to meet the needs of different students. This was in contrast to many secondary schools which followed a cyclical timetable that exposed students to as many as twelve teachers and classrooms in a week, a "daunting and alienating" experience for a significant number of adolescents. The 'disconnect' for students was compounded by the lack of a consistent learning space, the often didactic teaching style of teachers, and a content-driven, disjointed, subject-based curriculum. Discontinuity between the primary school and the high school experience contributed to the frustration felt by many young people. Some students, finding little relevance, conformed 'without enthusiasm' for their learning, while others became 'rebellious'. (Braggett, 1997) While this was well documented in the literature, as a practicing primary school teacher at the time, I was personally conscious of the issues, having witnessed falling levels of achievement and engagement of some of my former Year 6 students in their early years of high school.

Thus the ‘middle schooling movement’, out of which Riverside was inspired, emerged in Australia in the 1990’s as a result of disquiet over traditional secondary curriculum and practice, and the need to broaden the educational horizons of students in the later years of primary school and to better cater for their needs. (Maiden, 2004) It sought to provide more adequately for the needs of early adolescents, physical, cognitive, social and psychological, through school organisation and timetable modifications, and a greater emphasis on pastoral care and catering for individual students. In some cases changes in approach occurred in existing schools, while in others purpose-built middle schools were created, founded on middle-schooling philosophy.

In the ACT in the late 1990’s two existing traditional high schools experimented with middle schooling concepts. In 1997, during the construction of an architecturally innovative high school at Riverside, some modifications were made to accommodate a middle school within it. The middle school at Riverside represented a change of structure, philosophy, organisation and pedagogy from traditional models in the ACT and was attractive to teachers and parents for the promise it offered not only of addressing the transition issues of early adolescents, but also of providing them with a 21st century education. This sparked my personal and professional interest and prompted me to join the staff of Riverside in the middle school when it opened in 1998.

The primary site had already been in operation for six years when the senior site opened its doors. The senior site began as a highly successful middle school only, based on home-rooms, strong pastoral care, integrated curriculum, flexible programs, and year level teaching teams, providing a smooth transition for early adolescents to high school. The senior school sector of the ‘senior site’, Years 9 and 10, began the following year when Year 8 graduated to Year 9. Riverside attracted wide-ranging interest for its state-of-the-art buildings, equipment, ICT and computing resources, and its progressive, ‘cutting-edge’ program which reflected innovative approaches to curriculum, staffing, class structures and timetabling (Faulkner, 2003).

At Riverside the three sectors, the primary, middle and senior sub-schools, identified as one cohesive school and sought to complement one another educationally and

functionally. Professional dialogue was enhanced by “greater opportunities to get together”, such as at K to 10 staff meetings, and “to draw on expertise and experience across traditional sectors” (Zippin, 2003). As the school grew, however, complexities of communication and scale made planning and implementation increasingly problematic, while the production of documentation lagged behind the changes being implemented. Also some frustration resulted from the incompatibility of the senior site’s architecture (which had not been purpose-built as a middle school) with its philosophical approach. One example is that inflexible learning spaces limited the potential for team teaching to occur.

The teaching teams in the middle and senior schools comprised a mix of teaching staff drawn from general primary through to secondary subject-specialist backgrounds. While this diversity added richness to the programs they developed, it increased the pedagogical and subject-knowledge demands on teachers and often required them to work ‘outside their comfort zone’. However, the need for specialised training was ameliorated by a strong culture of mutual support, both formal and informal, among teaching colleagues with taken-for-granted sharing of expertise, mentoring and collaborative planning.

Significantly, the success of programs in 2002 rested with the strengths and cohesiveness of the team, and the capacity of teachers to share and grow as a teacher professional learning community. While this may be said to be true of all professional teams, it was exacerbated by the special nature of the school, the different expectations and the scope of change which confronted teachers who came from a more traditional school setting. Teachers found “the opportunity to be part of an important new direction in education” to be “stimulating, exciting and energising” (Zippin, 2003).

However, the ‘flat’ promotional structure placed added demands on classroom teachers to fulfil quasi-leadership roles, such as relief staffing and team leader positions, alleviated to some extent by time allowances, but still difficult to sustain over time. Also with the school’s non-traditional approach, there was greater scrutiny from the parents and wider community, many of whom were more familiar with traditional schooling, which necessitated explaining and justifying the voracity of

approaches used. There was a strong, continuing imperative to establish the pedagogical credibility and educational value of programs provided.

Thus I speak from first-hand experience of the extra workload that existed at Riverside in the first few years, (in addition to the usual curriculum and policy development, Professional Pathways and School Development), and of the ongoing pressure to continually update and justify teaching practice. As well as pressure associated with significant professional change, teachers felt "a sense of responsibility for the change to be successful" (Zippin, 2003). Importantly, while the expectation of providing new programs and documentation from first principles exacerbated staff workload, it also liberated and equipped teachers to respond to the changing needs of students from one year cohort to the next and to maintain the relevance of the curriculum they provided as a dynamic process. The evolution of the models developed at Riverside for Year 9 Exhibitions from 2001 to 2002, are a clear illustration of this.

The philosophy of the school was reflected in its structures. For example the school's approach to student management, was considered to be the responsibility of the whole school staff and not the province of a dedicated student welfare team as in many traditional high schools. While the middle school used an integrated approach to curriculum, the senior years reflected a more traditional high school model in order to prepare students for college. Even so there was greater collaboration and coordination across faculties than in a traditional high school, facilitated physically and pedagogically, by year level teaching teams located in common staffrooms, replacing a faculty-based, subject 'silo' structure.

Stemming from the school's innovative beginnings, there developed a climate conducive to initiative, experimentation and risk-taking by classroom teachers, which also fostered the active professional involvement of staff in the school's evolution and ongoing program development. Teachers had greater "opportunity to participate in more diverse thinking, varied tasks and mentoring", to be challenged professionally and to work with like-minded colleagues (Zippin, 2003).

Initially, extra departmental funding and support was provided to Riverside for the preparatory and early implementation phase of the new school. The school's non-traditional structure had also attracted additional support which included a generous provision of days for professional development. Favourable staffing provisions allowed for greater flexibility by way of special programs and additional release from face-to-face teaching for identified roles and responsibilities.

With the Principal shared between the primary and secondary sites of Riverside, greater than usual leadership responsibility necessarily devolved to the deputy principals, executive teachers and in turn to teaching team leaders and classroom teachers. Also, with the decline in 'new school' funding, there was a considerable element of professionalism, hard work and goodwill provided by staff to maintain the new, challenging structures and to respond constructively to extensive innovation within the context of a continuing change agenda.

Trade-offs occurred at the whole school level whereby fewer school leader positions were filled in favour of increased recruitment of classroom teachers and sharing of teacher leader roles. While this allowed for reduced class sizes, more planning time and greater program flexibility, it also had the effect of reducing career opportunities for teachers. Teachers seeking promotion applied for promotion positions outside the school, as few were available at Riverside. This, together with the impact of the mobility policy for beginning teachers who comprised a significant proportion of staff at the school, accounted for high staff turnover and the loss of a number of talented teachers within a few years of its inception. Hence, with the influx of new teachers to the middle school in particular, many of whom were more familiar with a traditional subject-oriented approach, some tension developed in subsequent years between the school's founding philosophy and the conduct of current practices.

It was against this background that Exhibitions was introduced at Riverside for Year 9 in 2001 at the pilot phase, as mandated for all ACT government secondary schools. Unlike other high schools, most of which trialled Exhibitions with the minimum of one or two classes across two disciplines, at Riverside, Exhibitions was adopted across all of Year 9, while the task was connected across several disciplines. System-based training was funded systemically for two Year 9 teachers from each government high

school. Riverside supplemented the funding provision to enable all seven members of the Year 9 team to be trained in the Exhibitions approach in 2001. By contrast the 2002 iteration involved less comprehensive participation in the program, with the Exhibitions task limited to two disciplines only, English and SOSE, and with one Year 9 class exempted because their teacher withdrew her support. The following account describes the implementation of Exhibitions in 2002 as part of the continuing evolution of the approach at Riverside.

6:2. Exhibitions Implementation: Preparation

6:2:1. Topic and task design

The Riverside Exhibitions task for 2002, called *Walking in Someone Else's Shoes - Appreciating Difference and Valuing Diversity* was a semester-long unit of work, designed to introduce students to the world of 'difference'. It provided students with experience in how to conduct independent research so that they could then pursue individually a study on a person of interest to them, exploring the detail and implications of that person's life experience.

The focus of the Riverside Exhibitions task was to develop students' deep understanding of four central, big ideas arrived at through sequenced, cumulative learning and modelling of the enquiry process. The enduring understandings were identified in the Exhibitions outline provided to parents and students as:

- *Our futures are shaped by us.*
- *We live in a global world of differing cultures and values.*
- *The past impacts upon and shapes the future.*
- *Understanding difference and appreciating diversity.*

Riverside teachers took a learner-centred approach, with the aim of engaging the whole range of students, and of targeting underachieving students and students 'at risk' in particular.

The subject of the task was situated within the curriculum focus area *Understanding cultural, ethical and environmental heritages* identified in the Exhibitions design framework, as described in the Student Exhibitions Teachers' Kit *Assessment by Exhibition.* The task also embraced the three other focus areas of *Developing critical literacies – reading the world*, *Community Building – learning to live together and with others*, and *Real life research and futures study*.

The purpose of the task was to have students examine their view of the world. Through their Exhibitions experiences, teachers intended that students would be enabled to deconstruct their own assumptions and underpinning values, identify the origin of these, analyse whether or not they did truly believe them and recognise if they did in fact adhere to them in day-to-day living. By entering the worlds of people different to themselves, it was hoped that the students would have a keener perspective on their own, and build empathy and understanding by appreciating that all people are more alike than different.

The Exhibitions task was summarised for students with the following:
Walking in Someone Else's Shoes is an integrated English/SOSE unit designed for Year 9 students, allowing them to explore and empathize with the experience of different social and cultural groups. There will be some compulsory and some optional elements all designed to enhance the learning of individual students. Students will focus on immigration and refugees, Indigenous Australians, disabled people, elite sports people, children, those people with mental illness, elderly, terminally ill people and prisoners of war, through a variety of genres. In addition students will conduct an independent and negotiated task focusing on a topic of their choice.
Students will demonstrate their competency through a variety of text types and will produce an anthology in the form of a magazine. This magazine, portfolio and negotiated task will be designed, produced, published and presented at Roundtable. Students will record their developing understandings of the issues concerned through a reflective journal.

6:2:2. Teacher preparation and resourcing

The team of teachers at Riverside in 2002, who were responsible for designing and implementing this Exhibition task, taught Year 9 classes for English and/or SOSE. With the exception of one teacher who did not want to be involved in Exhibitions, the Year 9 English and SOSE teachers, Julie, Eric, Mary and Jemima, attended together the system-provided Exhibitions professional development in early 2002, with other participating Exhibitions teachers from each of the 19 ACT high schools.

The Year 9 Exhibitions team were excited by the opportunity to pursue an Exhibitions approach and felt confident about constructing their model for Exhibitions, unlike some of their counterparts in other schools. Exhibitions is "as much the teachers' journey as it is the kids, and because there's so much teacher agency, they structure it according to their perspective." (Julie, Transcript, 2003:3) A team structure was fundamental and "non-negotiable" at Riverside, with teachers routinely developing and teaching programs that connected learning across disciplines. (Zippin, 2003) Teachers reported that at school-based professional development and staff meetings, teachers followed Learning Circle protocols learned through ANSN training, to share units of work, examine student work samples, explore new ideas (productive pedagogy, authentic assessment etc) and make shared decisions, which had created and supported a well-established teacher professional learning community at the school. Hence a culture of collegiality and mutual support underpinned the Exhibitions program at Riverside. As Julie explains, "The people I worked with, my colleagues, there were three others, we wrote the course together and we planned our student work" (Julie, Transcript, 2003:6).

6:2:3. Organisational support

While Year 9 and 10 programs at Riverside were timetabled according to a traditional high school model, staffing was organised so that teachers worked predominantly on one year level team. Hence it was arranged that the SOSE and English teachers in the Year 9 team would develop the Exhibitions task together, with each teacher allocated to the same Year 9 class for both subjects, ensuring that the learning was

connected and focussed on the Exhibitions task. In this way, the teachers found it "really easy" to organise Exhibitions to fit within existing school structures (Julie, Transcript, 2003:8). Also students already had a consistent space to work in, their usual 'homeroom', and scheduled library time and computer access. The teachers on the team had the benefit of one another's expertise in the two subject areas, and collaborated in the trialling and refining of lessons designed to scaffold the Exhibitions task for students, while the rest of the Year 9 team provided logistical support to help implement the program.

All of the Year 9 English and SOSE teachers were released to attend the system Exhibitions professional development program, which represented school-based support over and above the system-funded allocation for two teachers to attend. The team was expected to work together to design the 2002 Riverside Exhibitions task across two Key Learning Areas in order to best meet the needs of the Year 9 student cohort at Riverside, and consistent with the philosophical and pedagogical approach of the school and the Exhibitions initiative.

Julie became the main 'driver' of the 2002 Exhibitions program at Riverside, assisted by Eric, Jemima and Mary who also taught the Exhibitions program in Year 9 English and SOSE. Other teachers attached to the Exhibitions team, who had participated in the pilot Exhibitions program the year before, assisted with student mentoring, the logistics of setting up Roundtables and other organisational details. Julie's teaching background had previously been in Visual Arts and Languages Other Than English (LOTE) as a subject specialist, and Eric's as an English and Commerce specialist. Both had taught in a variety of disciplines, year teams and roles at Riverside School. Julie had taught in the Middle School and Senior School at Riverside for the previous three years, and Eric in the Senior School for two years, as a beginning teacher. Julie was a teacher of many years experience in traditional high school settings, while Eric's background was in commerce and youth work prior to his career change to teaching.

The Year 9 teachers were confident that they had the imprimatur of the school executive to address broad curriculum aims using content they considered appropriate for the student cohort at that point in time. They were not required to

adhere to any syllabus or predetermined curriculum, giving them the agency to develop a connected curriculum which would scaffold students for independent research and focus on the chosen Exhibitions task within the two identified KLAs.

6:3. Exhibitions Implementation: What Happened

6:3:1. Introducing the topic and task

In Term 2 of 2002 an integrated SOSE and English program took place for Year 9 which laid the foundations for student learning in both process and content, to prepare them for an individual, independent, negotiated Exhibitions task that would be conducted later in the term and presented in Term 3.

Unlike the approach taken in most other schools, which was to focus the learning from the outset on a big question for students to research and answer, at Riverside the first objective was for students to examine the underpinning assumptions and values upon which they based their judgements, so as to gain personal insight and perspective. Julie describes this as,

> "Where they're coming from, getting them to examine their values and really to think about the values that they pick up by osmosis at home and ones that they pick up from their peers, and then from outside in the community."
>
> (Julie, Transcript 2003: 1)

Consistent with the Exhibitions framework, the teachers explicitly planned for and implemented the dimensions of productive pedagogy, *the recognition of difference, connectedness, intellectual quality* and *social support* in the following ways.

Together the Exhibitions team selected activities which focussed on the concept of 'difference', accessing the knowledges of different cultural groups distinguished by gender, ethnicity, race, religion, economic status and age. In English and SOSE classes students were given the opportunity to explore essential content that related to the influence of ideas, beliefs, values, gender, race, income, social status, people

and events on identity, and on different views of the world. This allowed students to gain insight into the beliefs and social structures of different cultural or social groups, and some understanding of the development of human rights. Understanding and insight developed during the early work in the field, strengthened students' capacity empathize with other people and their situations. As Julie explains, "That is what it's all about … getting them to look at their place in the world …it helps them to develop a sense of them being not agin the world but a part of it in a constructive way" (Transcript 2003: 10).

The particulars of the literature-based unit of work in Term 2 included having students examine different visual and written texts which provided insight into the often difficult lives and experiences of people who were marginalised or alienated within communities. These texts included *Parvana*, a book about a young Afghani girl negotiating her way through life, often disguised as a boy, under the misogynous oppression of the Taliban regime; music, song lyrics and High Court testimonies by indigenous Australians from *The Stolen Generation*; the film *Aussie Rules* about an Aboriginal boy's experience of racism in a contemporary Australian country town; poetry about a desolate immigrant grandmother longing for the life and connectedness she left behind in her Greek mountain village; and a text written by a para-Olympian exploring how it feels to be an invalid being treated as 'not valid'.

Associated activities delved into the issues of 'difference' that had been exposed by the texts. Julie maintains that these various experiences developed in the students a deeper and more personal understanding of the perspectives of people from different sub-cultures compared to their own. David vindicates his teacher's view.

> "It was a good topic because … it helps us get to know what other people are going through. Because through life, like you just don't think about other people and how their life is. You're always thinking about yourself and nothing but yourself. Well most people are. Then but doing this just opens up our eyes and we can look at the world in a different perspective."
>
> (Transcript, 2003:2)

For example the shared reading of the book Parvana was complemented by historical information. Julie maintained that this gave students a greater awareness and understanding of what was in the newspapers and a context for events as they unfolded in Afghanistan and the region. She described how discussion about issues raised in the book, such as the removal of landmines, resonated with current events, "There were so many things that they picked up on that were contemporary issues." (Julie, Transcript 2003: 8)

Another example was a visit to The National Film and Sound Archive, where students were shown excerpts from the Australian film *Alibrandi.* This helped them to appreciate the experience of a migrant family, with understanding achieved more profoundly through comparison with their own.

> "From the kids' reports, they identified issues raised in the films which arise in their families all the time, … you don't have to be a new Australian to be thinking or feeling like this. There was no measure on how much or what they were supposed to get out of it really. So it was unquantifiable because it was such a personal experience."
>
> (Julie, Transcript 2003: 8)

The students found that the texts really opened their eyes. Julie describes the students' reactions when they saw the racism directed towards a young Aboriginal boy in a small Australian town as portrayed in the film *Aussie Rules*, "The kids were really shocked that that was happening somewhere right now in Australia" (Julie, Transcript 2003: 1). The students kept a written journal of their reactions to such texts, both to stimulate reflective thinking and as a powerful record of their learning journey. This prompted a metacognitive approach in students, and not only documented the evolution of their thinking but also provided valuable support for their Roundtable preparation.

From my interviews with teachers, it was clear that they were satisfied that their strategy of examining these texts, together with the associated activities, had achieved the purpose of arousing in the students an empathic response to the topics covered and a genuine appreciation of difference.

> "It just took the kids' breath away. That was a heartbreaking story. The responses that I got to the *Stolen Generation* were amazing and they all said, 'I had no idea'. So I was really looking for a very narrow response, actually. I wanted them to feel it. I didn't want dates, I didn't want land rights, just empathy."
>
> (Julie, Transcript 2003: 2)

Through the preliminary program, teachers intended not only to address *connectedness* by connecting the learning to the larger social context within which the students lived, but also by making explicit links with students' background knowledge, including local, community knowledge, and their own prior knowledge and experience. For example, one of the sub-tasks teachers set, required students to conduct a survey or interview with a recent migrant or refugee and prepare a biography. On the premise that "everyone knew someone who had immigrated, either a parent or a grandparent or friends of the family", this preliminary task established for students a personal and local community connection within the more generalized notion of 'difference' (Julie, Transcript 2003: 6).

Many of the learning activities that teachers planned had the purpose of engaging students in substantive conversation both with their teachers, their families and each other. This required students to reconsider 'taken-for-granted' information and ideas in ways that transformed their meaning, and allowed them to see things critically, through different lenses. These interactions had the effect of shifting student opinion and perspective, of creating new ideas and raising the *intellectual quality* of the process. Teachers reported that students had done "amazing interviews" with their relatives which had caused students to question their own assumptions, "to re-examine where they were coming from", and to change their views of their families by looking "at the real person underneath and a lot of them got to the real person" (Julie, Transcript, 2003:20).

Students were also given a multiple intelligences assessment to help them to identify and have insight into their dominant learning style. Trips to *Screen Sound Australia* and the *National Museum of Australia,* and a plethora of other activities were selected both to provide multi-modal experiences, catering for the range of student

learning styles, and to acquaint students with sources of information available to them in their community.

Against this comprehensive grounding in the field of knowledge around 'difference', students then completed an *Annotated Task*. This was a short research task that followed a process whereby students were exposed to a common stimulus, the book *Parvana*, individually posed a question related to an issue raised in the book (such as refugees, homelessness, gender issues, religious persecution), and then investigated and gained understanding about their question. (Shopen and Liddicoat, 2001) The teachers coached students through the annotated task which gave them experience in identifying a focus of interest and following an explicit information process. Both negotiating the issue for investigation, and following the independent research process, allowed students control over the nature of the investigation and the way they implemented it, a measure of *social support*. In this way the annotated task not only gave students practical prompts to guide their investigation of that particular issue, but also the confidence and process to conduct independent research later on when they completed their individual Exhibitions task. Thus the preliminary 'grounding' activities and the annotated task had provided important 'designed-in' scaffolding of student learning, modelling the process of independent research.

Familiar now with the field of knowledge and equipped with skills for independent research, students then embarked on the independent Exhibitions task *Walking in Someone Else's Shoes (WISES)*, to which the last five weeks of Term 2 were devoted. They posed their own question, asking what it would be like to walk in the shoes of a person they knew or were interested in - a friend, a grandfather, Michael Jackson. In this way, the Exhibitions task, *Walking in Someone Else's Shoes,* was a culminating experience. It was the opportunity for students to demonstrate their understanding of the concepts explored during the preliminary work, to apply their learning to a more personal context and ultimately to share their learning and achievement with interested and supportive others at Roundtable.

The foundation learning activities provided earlier in the term had predicated the subsequent Exhibition task, and spanned the field of study to offer students many avenues for their independent research. Hence the subjects they chose for their

tasks were extremely varied. While the teachers had not consulted with their students about the choice of the overall Exhibitions topic of 'difference' (which led to an initial lack of understanding about the topic for some), all of the students did get to choose the subject of their independent research task and to pose their own question. "It wasn't just directed ... you got to choose your own aspect … that was a positive" (David, Transcript, 2003:1).

When they came to 'walk in someone else's shoes', they had an infinite choice of subject - a person who was for them 'a role model' or who they wanted to understand more profoundly. Some of the tasks they chose to do included examining the role of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the mental health issues for a victim of trauma, the immigrant experience of a close relative, the impact of childhood 'stardom' on Michael Jackson, and the experience of female sportswomen in male-dominated sports.

For his independent Exhibitions research task, David investigated 'trauma', so that he would better understand the impact of a traumatic experience on a female friend from his hockey club who had been the victim of sexual assault. "I decided to look more into it because it's not as easy as some people think. It's not as blatant to get over and stuff like that" (David, Transcript, 2003:1). By contrast, Tom apprenticed himself to his grandfather in order to understand his passion for crafting wood, allowing Tom to learn more about his grandfather's life and to establish a closer relationship with him, at the same time as pursuing his own interest in working with his hands. At his Roundtable, Tom shared excerpts of a video of himself in the workshop, learning wood-working skills from his grandfather, "to show people as proof". Tom's father filmed it, then Tom wrote a script and recorded a voice-over commentary.

6:3:2. Supporting student learning for task implementation

At Riverside, scaffolding for the implementation of the Exhibition task was intrinsic to the task itself. The teachers had worked to establish students' knowledge of the field of study across subject boundaries. They provided activities that required students to manipulate information and ideas, allowing students to discover new meanings and

understandings. The teachers believed that this strategy would build the capacity of students to apply critical understanding when they came to the individual Exhibitions task.

At the same time the activities teachers provided supported students to develop their more functional process skills. Eric explains that these were designed in to the Exhibitions curriculum because, “We’re scaffolding, … building things along towards an end result, … looking for certain outcomes for kids” (Eric, Transcript, 2003:11). They identified project milestones. There were opportunities for students to improve their competence with ICT, and to develop their problem-solving, teamwork, presentation and project management skills, as elements of the task demanded. David comments, “The way that it was set out for us to learn it was good because it helped us to prioritise what parts of it needed to be touched up before the due date” (Transcript, 2003:1). Eric explains that they did a lot of group work, “having to work with somebody who … wasn’t your choice of person”, to promote teamwork and acceptance of others (Eric, Transcript, 2003:10).

The teachers monitored student progress and offered contingent scaffolding support for the new learning required to help students meet the challenges that arose. Julie stressed the value of talking to students regularly so that they were “monitored and brought back to their question and encouraged to explore their issue more deeply” (Julie, Transcript, 2003:23).

Underpinning this were the teachers’ high expectations for all the students, and the belief that all the students could achieve their Exhibition task. For example, knowing that Tom was a difficult student to engage, Eric “spent a lot of time negotiating about how he was going to do [his Exhibition task].” Eric “tapped into the fact that he’s a kid who learns really well practically,” and together they found “a high interest area for him”, his grandfather. (Eric, Transcript, 2003:7,8) Tom explained that they negotiated the task on “Pop”, “how life has changed since when he was my age” (Tom, Transcript, 2003).

6:3:3. Supporting student learning for Roundtables

Roundtable assessment required students to demonstrate their achievement, and provide evidence of the process and progress of their own learning. As my interviews with teachers made clear, at Riverside the criteria for the performance and assessment of Exhibitions were made explicit from the beginning of the process. At the outset, students were provided with a unit outline, including a checklist of sub-tasks and due dates, a reflective journal and a description of Roundtable protocols (see Appendix B). They were expected to create their own timeline for the completion of project milestones. They had to collect portfolio samples of the process and progress of their learning, as well as final products, as evidence of their achievement. As detailed in the Exhibitions handout, evidence-based assessment of student understanding and achievement was to focus on an anthology of student work ('the magazine'), observations of student discussions, journal responses, class work and the oral presentation of their culminating independent, negotiated task before the Roundtable panel. The Roundtable was to provide for authentic assessment as the opportunity for students to demonstrate their achievement and receive constructive feedback from panel members that would both acknowledge their progress as learners and inform their future learning.

Thus, during the foundation stages of the Exhibitions process, students completed work that informed their final task and was assessed by teachers on an ongoing basis. This was collected in 'the magazine' anthology and personal portfolios of students as a record of the process and progress of their learning in preparation for their Roundtable presentation. This included the biography based on an interview conducted with someone who had immigrated to Australia. Students were required to present important milestones like this in their learning journey as part of their Roundtable. Both the portfolio in which they documented their ongoing achievements, and the journal in which they recorded their reflections, were important sources of information which helped students to recall the Exhibitions 'journey' for their Roundtable preparations, "a helpful back-up", recalls Tom. Practical process skills were also taught including Power Point and other useful IT applications, to help students with their Roundtable presentation preparations.

Importantly, the elements of the presentation itself were the only thing to be assessed at the Roundtable, which was chiefly the opportunity for students to share their Exhibitions journey and learning, demonstrate their achievement and receive feedback. At the outset of Exhibitions, students had been provided with the Roundtable assessment rubric, detailing presentation requirements, protocols and assessment criteria so that they knew in advance what was required and what to expect. Along the way they collected portfolio examples of active learning, research and reflection, as well as final products, as evidence of their achievement to share with the Roundtable panel. They had to provide this evidence to show that they understood the issues. They would be given oral and written feedback about their learning "aimed at assisting with continued student self-assessment". The panel would 'assess' student performance and evidence against 13 process-focused criteria, at three levels – *demonstrates limited/satisfactory/thorough knowledge and understanding*, and identify student strengths and directions for future learning (*Roundtable Presentation Assessment Rubric*. See Appendix B).

In English lessons students were scaffolded in letter writing protocols and provided with a model letter, assisting them to compose a supporting letter for the panel. Mindful that preparations for the Roundtable presentation needed to support the student for success, teachers also helped them by providing constructive criticism and positive feedback on their portfolio and completed task. They provided ample practice opportunities for students to rehearse their presentations before an audience of peers in pairs and small Learning Circle groups, governed by protocols, to receive constructive feedback for improving their presentations. Teachers supported students to ensure that they would not go to the Roundtable without being adequately prepared or without confidence that the panel members were there to support their learning. Consequently the timing and composition of Roundtable panels was negotiated with individual students, the panel members were well-versed in their role, and protocols based on respect for the learner were adhered to. For the week during which Roundtables were conducted, the school library was taken over as the venue for the Roundtables. Other than this the Exhibitions in no way interrupted the routine functioning of the school.

6:4. Exhibitions Outcomes: Participant Responses

6:4:1. Responses to the topic and task

WISES proved to be powerful and rewarding for students and teachers alike. To quote the student, David, "I think Exhibitions was a great program" and "a good experience" (Transcript, 2003:13,1). He was inspired by the topic, *Walking in Someone Else's Shoes,* saying, "… because of my interest in it and finding out how everybody feels around the world and how people cope with things" (David, Transcript, 2003:5). I spoke to another student, Katie, who valued the Exhibition task because she had learned to "accept people for who they are, not what they look like." David recognised the motivation that having a personal choice gave, "Some people need motivation in being able to choose what they want to do. It gives them that motivation," and of a real-life purpose for conducting the research, "I chose to do mine on 'trauma' because it was just that people I know have been affected by some type of trauma. I decided to look more into it" (Transcript, 2003:13,1).

Another student, Naomi, was interested in the Australian women's soccer team, the Matildas. In the course of her research she discovered that, unlike their male counterparts, the national women's soccer team received no sponsorship despite their considerably greater success, and had resorted to displaying their bodies in calendars and advertisements to fund the team. She addressed the question, *"What is the controversy concerning the exploitation of the Australian women's soccer team?"* Naomi researched and learned about the opposing side of the controversy to that portrayed in the media. She examined the team's perspective and determined her own view of the situation which she identified as the product of discrimination. Julie observed that, prompted by her interest in women's soccer, Naomi had become immersed in a highly complex issue, debated its morality and eventually arrived at a well-substantiated ethical position on the subject (Julie, Transcript, 2003:18). Like many of the other students, she had been motivated by the topic for its personal relevance and had actively pursued the Exhibitions task with purpose. In this way, Julie valued the Exhibitions topic and task for the validation it gave to student

agency. She was conscious of how well students "… had taken their idea and run with it, and really been able to accept the challenge and look for the anomalies themselves instead of having had everything presented to them" (Julie, Transcript, 2003:22).

Teachers look back on their own Exhibitions experience as "a really positive thing" (Eric, Transcript, 2003:4). Julie valued their success as a professional team, "We all got on really well and we all contributed and it worked, it really worked" (Transcript, 2003: 3). Eric also valued the choice of topic. "The topic we did was great. The kids engaged in it. The levels of engagement were quite high not for all kids of course but for a lot of kids" (Eric, Transcript, 2003: 4).

Most students not only engaged with the topic, but also excelled, and among these were many who did not usually do so. "Some of the Exhibitions were absolutely stunning. They were amazing and really from unusual sources" (Julie, Transcript, 2003:6). During the scaffolding stage of Exhibitions, the stories and perspectives of minorities had "really brought out that empathic response" from students; the annotated task, for which the stimulus was *Parvana* (a book about Afghanistan), had led students to pick up on contemporary global issues; while the Roundtables, as the culmination of their independent research tasks, had elicited deeply personal and poignant presentations from students.

6:4:2. Responses to the support provided for student learning

The teachers at Riverside believed that in order for student learning to resonate profoundly, Exhibitions had to be more than a process, but a journey. Julie was emphatic that it be so. "I feel very strongly about it being a journey" (Transcript, 2003:9). The student, David, corroborates this perspective when he says, "I looked at one side and … then I've had to go and look at something else. You just need that time to be able to easily think of a subject that you're going to be fine with because if you don't have that time period, you're just going to choose something and then halfway through you're going to realize, 'Oh no. I can't do this well.' … Whereas if

you've got that time you know you can do it, you can do it well." Also he recognised that, "With something like this you have to run it at a comfortable speed so you don't burn out" (David, Transcript, 2003:11,12).

Both teachers and students reported that the Exhibitions framework effectively structured and supported student learning. Students felt that they knew what was expected of them and had control over the process of their learning. At the same time they were confident that they had the support of their teachers as required. David appreciated "the freedom in it". "Being able to go and do it ourselves, but while we needed the teacher's help we were able to get it" (David, Transcript, 2003:1).

In this way, teachers believed that the careful scaffolding for the Exhibitions process, had supported students **to succeed**, while the model for Roundtable assessment focussed on the demonstration of student learning and achievement, not on what they had failed to achieve.

6:4:3. Student and teacher learning

The Riverside teachers were delighted with the success of the model in achieving their purpose for the Exhibitions program of addressing the essential learning *accessing alternative knowledges* and of progressing the system priority *inclusivity*, as illustrated in the following example quoted from Julie.

> "… the stories came out. One of the little girls, [Crystal], said during that period she actually found out that she was part Aboriginal, which she didn't know about. She was able to discuss that. I think she may have known but never acknowledged personally."
>
> (Julie, Transcript, 2003:2)

In this way, as she explained, Julie believed that their Exhibitions task had achieved what was intended - "That's what inclusivity is about … recognising background and connectedness" (Julie, Transcript, 2003:3). Consistent with the 'recognition of difference' dimension of productive pedagogies, the task had assisted students to access diverse cultural knowledges. Crystal had opened up and was able to discuss

her heritage because *recognising difference and valuing diversity* in the context of the Exhibition task was a positive thing. Students of non-English speaking background also gave first-hand accounts of their immigrant experience. This was valued by their peers for the primary resource material that it provided in their research, the 'inside' perspective of 'difference' that it offered, and the respect for their 'life journey' that it inspired (Julie, Transcript, 2003:6). In this way the approach they had taken to Exhibitions implementation had also increased student participation, particularly students of different backgrounds.

For the recognition of cultural background and connectedness to be achieved, the Exhibitions task *Walking in Someone Else's Shoes* was designed to build student understanding initially through an examination of 'difference' in the broader social context. Transfer of insight was then achieved through the task itself at the personal level, within the sphere of the individual student. The opportunity to explore perspectives of the marginalised, to empathise with them and to personalise understanding, has engendered deep learning. "That is what it's all about for children of this age, 13 or 14, … looking at other people. They're making judgements. They can't not make judgements but they can be gracious and understanding" (Julie, Transcript, 2003:10). Teachers believed that the approach that they had taken in the design and pedagogy for Exhibitions at Riverside had been affirmed.

In the interview about his Exhibitions experience, David reflected on how conscious he had become of the need to countenance the perspective of others in life. He described a pivotal moment when he had been studying different kinds of trauma and realized what they had in common, "They all just clicked into place at one time." He describes when he recognized the effect of triggers on victims, "Something that's happened out of the blue that you wouldn't even begin to expect. And I've gone, 'Ah that's how it is!'" (David, Transcript, 2003:9).

He recognized that through his Exhibition task, having walked in the shoes of someone he knew personally and cared about, he had transferred his generalized understanding of trauma to the particular. He had refined his inter-personal approach as a result, and valued being able to apply the knowledge he had gained.

> "Especially from knowing someone with it. It's like I knew what it was like when you don't know what to do, … but then after doing this, you do. So it's like I've gone from one side of it to the other from just doing this one assignment and it's just helped a lot." (David, Transcript, 2003:9)

The Exhibitions program provided a valuable opportunity for teachers to apply **pedagogy** new to them. Teachers learned to be more aware, more in tune and more responsive to the needs of the group by promoting student meta-cognition, input, negotiation and choice. Eric acknowledges his learning,

> "I picked up a lot of stuff from doing the Exhibitions because the Exhibitions is so much geared towards, … you're working towards something all the time so the kids achieve success.
>
> I'm convinced that the Exhibitions style in terms of the presenting of it, is a real confidence booster because the kids actually get to say, 'Here's what I've learnt and here have a look what I've done.' "
>
> (Eric, Transcript, 2003:5, 6)

While her previous teaching experience had equipped her well for teaching the SOSE component of the Exhibitions task, Julie had not taught English before. She attributes her success to the effectiveness of the team, saying, "We were a very good team." Through professional dialogue, the teachers were able to refine their thinking, mentor each other, "and show how to put [ideas] into practice" (Julie, Transcript, 2003:16).

Eric also identifies gains in professional learning from Exhibitions in the area of curriculum and program development as a result of the whole task being assessed. Teachers have realised that "assessment is a really critical thing", not only assessing the products of learning at the end of the task but also the process of learning, with students providing evidence of the achievement of important milestones along the way. "Yes we're scaffolding, we're kind of building things along towards an end result, quite often we don't necessarily do that" (Eric, Transcript, 2003:11).

6:4:4. Responses to Roundtables

For Julie, the best thing about Exhibitions was the Roundtables. They were "the epiphany", "where kids opened up their hearts and their minds" (Transcript, 2003:18,19).

The experience of Exhibitions was profound and personal for many students, such as David. "Sometimes they'd slip into these little types of angers or solitude and I'd always wonder, 'Why are they doing it?' Researching this, now I understand" (David, Transcript, 2003:6). He was deeply affected by what he had learned and felt genuine empathy for victims of trauma. Hence he viewed the most successful aspect of Exhibitions for him to be the insight he had gained.

> "Finding out about each type of trauma just lets me realize what some people have been able to go through. Also realizing what not to do because people who have like a depression type of trauma like the death of a loved one, one thing you do not do is say, 'Just get over it. It's really okay.' Because that will just blow them away, they'll just slip into their sort of dark little world. They'll withdraw. That's not what you want to do. You want to comfort them through it. Instead of if you're being arrogant, at times you won't notice it."
>
> (David, Transcript, 2003:7)

When Tom explored 'the recognition of difference', he compared his own life to his Pop's. On learning about his grandfather's life, Tom was really struck by the responsibility his grandfather had had when he was the same age as Tom, that he had had to earn his way in the family at 14, get up so early in the morning and be responsible for so much. For Tom, the best thing about Exhibitions was making the pen with his grandfather, and what he valued most about the Exhibitions program was, "That I got to know my Pop better" (Tom, Transcript, 2003:9). The pen is a palpable symbol of his success in acquiring wood-working skills and of this inter-generational connection. Tom's lasting impression of Exhibitions was that he was happy that it was good and that people liked it (Tom, Transcript, 2003:10).

Julie was struck that through their Exhibition experiences, the whole range of students, in their various ways, had re-evaluated their assumptions,

> "They just made us gasp, just even quiet ones … . It wasn't life-changing, but it was exactly what we wanted them to be able to do, re-examine where they thought they were coming from, the arrogance of youth, you know. Dispense with that … ."
>
> (Julie, Transcript, 2003:20)

In another case, the student, Will, wanted to understand the impact of childhood exploitation on Michael Jackson, "as someone who had been marginalised and mistreated and his whole life was directed". The boy took the Roundtable panel into his confidence to share both his insights and the impact it had had on his own perspective on life by "… being able to understand where [Michael Jackson] was coming from". His teacher remarked,

> "[Will] was like, 'Being able to understand where he was coming from has changed discussed in Roundtables at any point after Roundtables. It was completely private. He reached a point and he'd been able to be really passionate about what he'd learnt and how it had affected him and he'd taken it with him… ."
>
> (Julie, Transcript, 2003:18)

At his Roundtable presentation, the culmination of his independent Exhibitions research investigation into trauma, David presented a Power Point slide show, provided commentary and engaged in 'substantive conversation', which elicited a powerful response from members of the panel. As a community panel member at David's Roundtable, I provided the following written comments,

> "This is an inspired overarching concept, 'trauma' as the common consequence of war, refugees, stolen generations. David was extremely articulate and has been profoundly affected by his learning through this Exhibition task. He has shown us how he has learnt to understand people affected by trauma and that he is a much more compassionate and 'self-controlled' person because of it. This truly is authentic achievement!"
>
> (McKenzie, 2003, *Roundtable Presentation Assessment Rubric*)

While the prospect of the Roundtables had been unnerving for students, across the cohort, they generally found it to be a positive and affirming experience. Tom describes it as, “You get real nervous and then after you do it, it’s like, ‘Why was I nervous? That wasn’t a big deal!’ It’s not as bad as you think” (Tom, Transcript, 2003:4).

Also at Roundtable students appreciated being placed in the role of expert. They were not only providing evidence of their achievement, but were also presenting the findings of their original research to an audience who valued what they had to say. “It’s just taking a whole different approach being able to direct it as if you are the person that … knows a lot about it, not looking at it from a person who has no idea” (David, Transcript, 2003:3). Julie acknowledged this as well, ”Because everyone did so many different things, the teachers couldn’t possibly cover the whole gamut of things. Normally when they’re doing lesson preparation and stuff, you do the research so you’ve got a lot of background. So in this the students are actually the experts” (Julie, Transcript, 2003).

For David, “being able to relate to people from outside” gave the process greater credibility and raised his achievement because the stakes were higher (Transcript, 2003:12). The following quotes illustrate this.

> “I thought it was good how they brought in a member from the community seeing it was to do with how other people work. … if you had someone from the community they would also benefit from your research.
>
> It made me want to do it to a high standard. I don’t want people coming in … and saying, ‘That person is a disappointing student’. I just want them to know, ‘He can do it’ and that’s what you need to be able to do. … Whereas if it’s someone you know, they already know what you can do, so having someone different … you have to do it.”
>
> (David, Transcript, 2003:12)

While talking to the panel was the most difficult thing about Exhibitions for David, he identified that it gave him more confidence in speaking publicly. It "improved more free talking to people" (David, Transcript, 2003: 2,10).

6:4:5. Organisational, relational and pedagogical change

What was different for students and what the majority liked about the Exhibitions approach was being more independent and having greater responsibility for the process of their own learning, with the assurance of teacher assistance close at hand should they need it. For example, David who normally achieved well academically but took a functional approach to learning without being really engaged, found **the best thing about Exhibitions** and the approach taken to learning, was the choice and agency students had in the process, "**The freedom in it. Being able to go and do it ourselves**, but while we needed the teacher's help we were able to get it. It was more a very individualised program which I guess helps us for college and further on studies where it just seems to be a lot more based on yourself" (David, Transcript, 2003:1).

It was not only the high achieving students who responded to the choice and agency of the process. Tom, a low-achiever in most areas except mathematics, also enjoyed the different approach of Exhibitions. "A lot more homework. Like it's not textbook work or anything. It's like more you have to go do it yourself, not just find answers in a book or anything like that. But yeah, I liked it better that way, more choice to do what you want to do" (Tom, Transcript, 2003:5). He explained that he was more engaged in learning than usual because he found it more interesting. He found it more interesting because it was contemporary and personally relevant to him, and because it was interesting he found it easier to do and tried harder. "Like instead of learning about stuff that happened 2000 years ago it was like stuff that's happened recently and stuff to do with me" (Tom, Transcript, 2003:10).

For this to be achieved, the Exhibitions task *Walking in Someone Else's Shoes* was designed to build student understanding initially through an examination of

‘difference’ in the broader social context. Transfer of insight was then achieved through the task itself at the personal level, within the sphere of the individual student. The opportunity to explore perspectives of the marginalised, to empathise with them and to personalise understanding, has engendered deep learning. “That is what it’s all about for children of this age, 13 or 14, … looking at other people. They’re making judgements. They can’t not make judgements but they can be gracious and understanding” (Julie, Transcript, 2003:10). The approach that teachers had taken in the design and pedagogy for Exhibitions at Riverside had been affirmed.

Julie also welcomed the opportunity afforded by the Exhibitions program to move away from the more didactic, teacher-directed approach to teaching and learning which she had reverted to when she found herself teaching English and SOSE, areas of the curriculum for which she had no specific training. It was “like bringing in the visual arts style of teaching into the classroom. … having kids using different techniques, … you’ve got to teach them, then they can combine them. … Now I have a much better idea of what they can do. I really like the freedom” (Julie Transcript, 2003:15). In this sense the Exhibitions framework, which provided a structure for implementation, as well as pedagogical support in the form of the productive pedagogies, was as liberating for teachers as for students, particularly with regard to student-centred learning “ ... you can take this in another direction. It’s validating kids’ learning. It’s so important. So many kids lose interest in school because they don’t have their ideas and needs addressed” (Julie, Transcript, 2003:12).

With the experience of Exhibitions, Julie felt confident to transfer the strategies and knowledge she had gained to future classes. She believes that the Exhibitions initiative is “really valuable and worthwhile” and that it is an important vehicle for confronting teachers “with having to address the new pedagogy” (Julie, Transcript, 2003:5). It is an important opportunity for teachers to see it working successfully and of learning how they can use it themselves. She also believes that her experience with the Exhibitions program has “actually given me a lot of confidence in handling adolescents” (Julie, Transcript, 2003:13).

Since Exhibitions, Eric has focussed more on doing things in such a way that students can see the relevance, and on catering for the range of learning styles, particularly kinaesthetic and visual sorts of learners. “How am I going to teach them these concepts in a way that’s practical?” (Eric, Transcript, 2003:5). Eric has learned the value in particular for SAR students (students-at-risk of not completing secondary schooling), of project-based learning that is high-interest and linked personally to the learner, and which provides structure and meaning for the elements of the learning within the context of a negotiated task.

6:5. Exhibitions Implementation: Participant Critique

6:5:1. Organisational support

While the Exhibitions teachers appreciated the support of their colleagues in the implementation of the Exhibitions program, they felt there was less support from the school executive. They would like to have had the benefit of “proper evaluation or feedback from [the executive] at school” (Julie, Transcript, 2003:5). Some teachers felt that not receiving specific feedback from school leadership was a missed opportunity to formally recognise the achievements of all those involved in the Exhibitions program, while a formal evaluation would have identified strengths and areas for improvement to the benefit of future programs.

6:5:2. Monitoring student progress

A criticism directed at the Exhibitions team by their teacher colleagues was that there were too many students who did not perform well. Julie concedes that some students “slipped through the net.” Some students who never performed, still did not perform, while a few ‘bright’ students did not do well, because they had difficulty making decisions about their learning.

Not all students responded well to the pedagogical approach of Exhibitions, and like their counterparts at Capital High School, found having agency and independence

difficult. “Well there were some students who really rose to the occasion, took responsibility for their learning and some who abrogated completely because it wasn’t as tight and traditional in approach ... it was really those students who wanted you to open a book and give them a set of questions to do” (Julie*,* Transcript, 2003:10).

The consistent monitoring of student progress was something that Julie maintains could have helped with this. “It’s got to be really tightly managed ... the mechanics of following up kids’ work and making sure that they all get the basic part of the course done” (Julie*,* Transcript, 2003:4). The dilemma for her had been to decide “… what [she] was going to push.” Because she “gave too much ground” some students did not complete their task as well as they could have.

Even though explicit project milestones had been negotiated at the outset, students who had difficulty with working independently and time management, failed to adhere to the timeline and did not meet even short term goals. Other students of different cultural and educational backgrounds, had no prior experience of either thinking for themselves or of expectations for high order thinking. This suggests that access to good contingent scaffolding is imperative for many students.

6:5:3. Roundtable assessment

As a corollary to this, there were students for whom Roundtables were not a success. These students had demonstrated task-avoidance throughout the Exhibitions process, and having missed contributing tasks, were not able to present successfully at the end. “If they miss one or two things along the way then it makes it very difficult for them to have confidence to achieve the end result” (Eric, Transcript, 2003:12).

The Roundtable presentation was a key element of the Exhibitions process, a form of authentic assessment which provided students with the opportunity to demonstrate their achievement in a public forum. Teachers were concerned that for some students, the high-stakes nature of the experience was counter-productive. Eric explains, “at the end is the big, you know the whole kit and caboodle tied up in the

Roundtable. I probably don't see that as an entirely positive thing … . I think that places a lot of pressure on kids" (Eric, Transcript, 2003:11).

He advocated a more project-based approach whereby students complete a series of discrete tasks of increasing challenge, linked within an overall theme. This way the sub-tasks and the achievements are sequential and cumulative, providing for designed-in scaffolding of the learning process, while contingent scaffolding is accessed as required. Progress is measured and mapped along the way, allowing students to build upon the affirming experience of success.

6:5:4. Differentiated learning – empowering students

However, the team contended that the majority of students did as well as usual or better, including some low achievers who excelled, which Julie attributes to the opportunity which Exhibitions affords for different learning styles to be embraced. Importantly, a number of underachievers and 'students-at-risk' who, "weren't performing in class, did really well in the Exhibitions. … it offered them an opportunity to have their learning styles addressed" (Julie, Transcript, 2003:12).

Many high achieving students were empowered by Exhibitions. They performed well, as they would otherwise have done, but were even more successful, achieving the most profound learning because they were provided first with a solid grounding in the field, and then the imprimatur to pursue their interests. The success of these high autonomy learners was leveraged by the designed-in scaffolding. Teachers identified a number of students "who had taken their idea and run with it", and been able to accept the challenge and think through their task more or less independently (Julie, Transcript, 2003:22).

6:5:5. Sustainability – an overwhelming commitment

The commitment required of the Exhibitions teachers at Riverside was significant. "I found it unbelievably overwhelming." (Julie, Transcript, 2003:9) The challenge for teachers was to experiment with new pedagogy and develop a new approach while

still supporting and monitoring student learning, a difficult task to achieve "on the run". "It's such a big ask because you're still trying to teach the other way at the same time as you're trying to develop a new approach for the time that you are going to do it" (Julie, Transcript, 2003:11).

6:6. Exhibitions Implementation: Participant Recommendations

A complementary strategy to monitor student progress and alleviate the pressure some students may feel, is to incorporate a mentoring system for all Exhibitions students, "where a kid has to sign up with a teacher to do their Exhibition" (Julie, Transcript, 2003:10). This would increase the opportunity for students to access support and a wider field of expertise, and spread the load on Exhibitions teachers among other members of staff. This level of support could also be achieved with small classes, allowing the class teacher to monitor student progress more effectively, guiding the process and ensuring that students continue to be successful. In the initial stages of the negotiated task especially, close monitoring and discussion would ensure that the focus of student research and the question it raised had sufficient scope and depth to sustain prolonged scrutiny. Subsequently it ensures that students are clear about the purpose of their research, how it informs their question and what they need to do next. "They're monitored and brought back to their question and encouraged to explore their issue more deeply. … they need to be guided because it won't happen of its own accord" (Julie, Transcript, 2003:23).

Julie is convinced that there must be a 'journey' process and that there must be time for the journey to happen. "It's got to be internalised. You've got to give them **time** to be able to dismiss and come back to it" (Julie, Transcript, 2003:3). Students need time to engage with the task, to experience new perspectives, both intellectually and emotionally, and to arrive at a personal position. This growth will not occur in just three or four weeks - "It can't be seen as something that you have to do and get it over and done with. It's so valuable" (Julie, Transcript, 2003:4).

When it was suggested by new teachers planning the 2004 Exhibitions program at Riverside, that they might 'do' Exhibitions without the Roundtables, Julie was

adamant that the Roundtables were such an essential part of the Exhibitions process, that to complete the task without presenting it at the Roundtable would be "like going to the Arctic without seeing the lights" (Julie, Transcript, 2003:19). She insisted that the Roundtable presentation was essential to the journey, the realisation of learning that brought it all together. The students also saw longer-term value in having the Roundtable. For example Tom thought that the Roundtable was useful for the future because if he had to do an interview, he would have had experience in it.

Both staff and students found the new style of learning challenging, while most, in meeting the challenge, were surprised at how much students got out of their involvement in the program. While it did not happen for everybody, most were successful and benefited from the opportunity to examine themselves, the origin of their own perspectives and in turn how others might see them. Exhibitions was both novel and valuable, "a different way of learning" which Tom found "breaks the term up." (Tom, Transcript, 2003:11). Julie advocates Exhibitions as a means of providing students with innovative and challenging learning and teachers with a model to achieve it. "I think schools really need it. I think schools really need something like this which is out of the box. You know it's not predictable, it's open-ended. They all talk about open-ended questions and teaching; and it's difficult. (Julie, Transcript, 2003:11) She also recommends that the system-provided individual training needs to be offered and extended, "it's like generational learning", with more inter-school sharing (Julie, Transcript, 2003:11).

> "There was a range of things that I'd change and do differently if I had the opportunity to do the same topic again. … And there'd be some different ways I'd look at engagement. … rather than thinking and dreaming about how we could do this a bit differently or how we could do this for this particular kid, it was rather so much energy went on logistics. But if … the logistics are really taken care of, fairly largely, they're really well organised which frees you up to then really work with kids to really help them explore. I'm not saying I didn't do that but … to a greater extent."
>
> (Eric, Transcript, 2003:4)

A significant challenge for both an Exhibitions and any mainstream program is to meet the needs of students at risk. Eric acknowledges the importance of catering for

different learning styles, particularly for kinaesthetic and visual learners, and of helping students to see relevance in their learning by making direct links with the real world and providing opportunities for the real-life application of the learning. He identifies that this is a pedagogical challenge for teachers in more 'academic', less 'hands-on' areas of the curriculum in particular. "For me, an English/SOSE teacher it's been really challenging to find, 'How can I do this in a way where they see the relevance?' but also we're talking about kids who learn so much better their learning styles are kinaesthetic and visual sort of learners" (Eric, Transcript, 2003:5).

A possible alternative model for Exhibitions suggested at Riverside is a mentoring system where students sign up with a particular teacher who guides and advises them through the process; who monitors their progress, and checks in at points along the way to see that important project milestones are achieved.

Exhibitions, as a new way of doing things, has spawned new programs such as the G-Tech program at Riverside. Situated within technology but integrated with the other areas of the curriculum, G-Tech had a strong vocational education orientation. An alternative program for Year 10 students at risk, G-Tech was initiated by Eric following his implementation of the Exhibitions program the year before. G-Tech was premised on similar principles to Exhibitions and assumed many of the elements of an Exhibitions approach, including much of the pedagogy, the use of a reflective journal and the 'public' demonstration of student learning.

The program proved to be very rewarding for the students involved, many of whom had experienced little success in the mainstream classroom setting. Students conducted a practical, project-based enquiry each term, culminating in a Roundtable presentation before the assembled parents and teachers of G-Tech students. "Here's a job you're doing, you've got a deadline, … when it's due, they've got the parents coming here and they're presenting it, they're doing an exhibition. We do an Exhibition once every term in G-Tech and the kids cook and they do a whole range of things and they get up in front. … doing the presentations, which is a bit like doing the Roundtable. … I'm convinced that the Exhibitions style in terms of the presenting of it, is a real confidence booster" (Eric, Transcript, 2003:6).

Eric cites the example of Tom as positive proof of the value of the approach for students at risk. Tom was 'a very sporty sort of boy' who had low literacy skills, was difficult to engage, made little effort and failed to see the relevance of school learning prior to Exhibitions. When he was so successful in his Exhibitions task in Year 9, his teachers realized that he could be motivated to learn by better catering for his preferred style of learning and by increasing its personal relevance for him. "I guess the thing that I've seen that's really positive with Tom, is that he's a kid who hasn't had a lot of success, particularly in English and SOSE but last year, through the Exhibitions program we tapped into the fact that he's a kid who learns really well practically" (Eric, Transcript, 2003:8). Eric recalls, " I remember last year, part of it is probably maturation as well, but he was a kid who would always say, 'Why do I need to learn this?' It was a question of relevance all the time. 'I'm never going to use this.' And in G-Tech everything that we do, the links are fairly clear" (Eric, Transcript, 2003:9).

Tom became a candidate for the G-Tech program in Year 10. This proved to be "a really positive move for him because now, he's one of our highly successful kids." (Eric, Transcript, 2003:8) Tom became engaged in self-generated tasks, could see the learning links for himself, and understood the need for planning and reflection when the cost of wasting expensive materials was at stake.

Eric lists other Exhibitions principles transferred to the G-Tech context including the setting of realistic personal goals and teamwork. "Exhibitions, there's no choice about it." (Eric, Transcript, 2003:10) As in real-life relationships, students are expected to work in teams with the people around them, not just self-selected friendship groups, and to negotiate tasks and resolve issues appropriately between members of the group.

Eric's concern about negative pressure on students of having to present their Exhibition task at Roundtable, also prompted an innovative, alternative model for G-Tech. "And I thought well how can I go about designing a curriculum where we minimize that happening for kids? Because the idea is to have a high success rate to increase the student outcomes, that's why I decided to design my curriculum much more project-based but over short periods of time; to have lots of little discrete

projects that maybe interlink with an overall theme but rather than building up towards one big thing at the end. The way that we do that is they still do the Exhibition at the end with the parents, but we actually don't assess it. It's like the icing on the cake. We actually call them *G-Tech Celebration Events*" (Eric, Transcript, 2003:10).

Among ACT schools to date, networking and 'clusterisation' has most often been incidental and haphazard. Given the relatively small size of the ACT system, it should be possible to formalise the kinds of networks that teacher participants, involved in Learning Circles in the early stages of Exhibitions, so valued. These networks or 'federations' require re-focussing on the nature and range of professional learning opportunities on offer and should be strategically supported with resourcing at the system level, to promote teacher professional learning communities in areas of common interest across the system. These networks would also serve to realise a 'new enterprise logic' in schools, creating "horizontal lines of support" for sharing knowledge and innovation, addressing problems and pooling resources (Caldwell, 2007:7).

6:7. Conclusion

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 have provided an in-depth participant perspective of what happened at the interface between Exhibitions ideas and on-the-ground implementation in the school context. Literature on *narrative analysis* has framed the methodology used in this study and offers acute perspective for analysis. Chapter 7 compares Exhibitions uptake in the three schools and draws generalised inferences from the data. It explains how the research integrates and elaborates on commentary about learning and educational change.

7. An Investment in Being Human

7:1. Introduction

To introduce this chapter, I re-state the vision for reform in ACT government high schools, with Year 9 Student Exhibitions as its flagship program, and try to re-capture the flavour and excitement of the initiative and the anticipation of its potential for transforming approaches to high school education. I demonstrate how my work builds on and contributes to the vision which was outlined by Brennan et al in the formative stages of the Exhibitions program. I also explore what theorists would predict for school change measures such as this.

In previous chapters I have related the stories told by participants of their experience of Exhibitions and the uptake of the program in the case study schools. Now I will argue that in order to gain purchase on the data, it is essential to recognise the invested nature of the reform agenda and the implications of this for Exhibitions implementation and the success of the approach. **What is crucial to the effective uptake of Exhibitions and to the value individuals place in Exhibitions as being worthwhile or not, is the extent to which they invest in its success and their concomitant sense of return.**

I provide a discussion of insights, reflecting on what can be taken from the data. I evaluate the status of the data collected from each of the three schools and for the different stakeholder groups. I show how I generated the findings and reveal the challenges involved in developing findings where the data is so diverse.

In previous chapters I have described how the Exhibitions program played out in each school setting from the perspective of participants. In this chapter I interpret the findings in terms of investments made and benefits returned. I identify the kinds of investment which I consider were made by different stakeholder groups, in particular by students and teachers, and between schools, explaining how investment exhibited and worked, what needed to be in place and what it says about the uptake of an Exhibitions agenda.

I make the case that **how individuals 'profit' by the program, is determined by five critical factors which are realized differently for them. The critical factors which I have identified are proximity, agency, engagement, reflexivity and support. These factors inspire commitment and cause participants to invest in the success of the Exhibitions program.** I examine the factors based on what I saw and what participants told me, and draw on examples from all the case studies. I also discuss what the theorists of school change would predict are the important factors and their bearing on my findings.

The investment, generated by these five different factors, also determines the returns to be had from Exhibitions, including the value of the program, perceived both by those directly involved and those more peripheral to the program. The nature and extent of the investment varied between schools, creating gaps in the uptake of the program and differential achievement among stakeholder groups. I have identified where the 'gaps' for each school and stakeholder group occurred.

In the past theorists have argued that school reform can fail when participants are not part of the innovation, as in the case of 'top-down' initiatives. Top-down, imposed change undervalues teachers, by making them the *object* instead of the *subject* of change. It can introduce practices inconsistent with a teacher's individual pedagogical approach, so that curriculum, pedagogy and assessment are out of alignment. It also fails to achieve improved student outcomes because they generally focus on structures. (Lingard & Mills) More recent theory has predicted that success is more likely when participants are involved in creating the change, based on the assumption that "People are much more likely to invest themselves in something they help shape" (Evans, 1996:232). However Evans, and Sarason before him, have argued that teachers are often reluctant agents of reform because these changes "swim against the tide of life and career", while contemporary change theorists not only identify the problems of "change resistance", but also of "complexity" and "change fatigue" (Evans, 1996:232).

Senge and associates warn that reform attempts fail when they neglect to take local *context* and *culture* into account. "The fundamental flaw in most innovators' strategies is that they focus on their innovations, on what they are trying to do –

rather than on understanding how the larger culture, structures and norms will react to their efforts" (Senge, 1999:26). Further, as Fullan argues, promoters of change, with a particular end in sight, may fail to take account of the means required to achieve their vision. They become impatient with and dismissive of those who 'resist', rather than trying to understand the situational constraints confronting potential implementers, to heed their values, ideas and experiences, or to use them as a source of improvement. "Innovators who are unable to alter their realities of change through exchange with would-be implementers can be as authoritarian as the staunchest defenders of the status quo" (Fullan, 2001:97).

Evans makes the argument that innovations can be so sophisticated that they "demand far more of participants than their advocates acknowledge," resulting in overwhelming *complexity* (Evans, 1996:232). Giddens maintains that the trend of endless change, for time-strapped teachers, can be so unsettling and *fatiguing* as to become destructive, while Fullan has argued that *time* is a serious impediment to successful school change (Giddens, 1995; Fullan, 1991). Hargreaves suggests that how 'time' is regarded in teaching, should not become an obstacle to change, but a focus of it, and invites teachers and administrators to consider how it might be restructured in schools to facilitate change (Hargreaves, 1997:88).

Adding to the raft of impediments to change, Hargreaves blames the highly structured and inflexible nature of high schools for the problems that confront attempts to change school organisation, the work of teachers, the role of students, and the curriculum. He likens the separate and competing faculties or discipline areas to 'Balkan states'. The core, "high-status" subjects are privileged, through teacher background, timetabling and student assessment, over the optional areas of the curriculum, so named 'satellite cities' because of their marginal status, even though these electives are often high engagement and high achievement areas of the curriculum for teachers and students. Not only do traditional subject structures "skew the curriculum towards the academics, in a way that can be de-motivating for many less able students, who find such work unnecessarily difficult and remote from their experiences," they also fragment time and space for students and isolate the teachers (Hargreaves, 1996:109 -110; 2003: 128). Balkanisation also makes it difficult for teachers to establish and maintain professional learning communities, so

fundamental to the deprivatisation of teacher practice, support for authentic pedagogy and bringing about strong and measurable improvements in students' learning, as the work of Newmann and associates has demonstrated (Newmann, 1996: 183-190).

Rejecting early work on school effectiveness which searched for the impact of 'whole school effect' on student outcomes, Lingard and Mills, maintain that "apart from family background, it is good teachers who make the difference to student outcomes from schooling" (Lingard & Mills, 2003:1). Drawing on contemporary school effectiveness and school reform research (Newman and Associates, 1996; QSRLS, 2001ab; Lingard, Mills and Hayes, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2000) Lingard and Mills, view the valuing of teachers "as the central element in effective school reform" (Lingard & Mills, 2003:2). They contend that the kind of reform required, "spreads the best classroom practices across the whole school," and that this is achieved "through certain leadership practices, culture and structures and support for teacher professional development" framed by appropriate policy and funding (Lingard & Mills, 2003:2; Apple, 2000).

In the light of these and other perspectives, my interrogation and analysis of the Exhibitions data integrates and elaborates on commentary about learning and change, and offers fresh perspective on existing theories. Observations are also made about other factors of interest that may be operating within the general milieu of Exhibitions in schools. Finally I discuss the implications for the future of having the five vital factors in place.

7:2 The Vision

In 2000 Professor Marie Brennan, Professor of Education, Division of Communication and Education, University of Canberra, was briefed by the then ACT Department of Education, Youth and Family Services (ACT DEYFS) to prepare a paper which would provide the focus for discussion among key stakeholders on issues central to developing a practicable and challenging rationale for the ACT's government high schools.

The ideas which she explored in the paper were formative in the conceptualisation of the Year 9 Student Exhibition program, one of a suite of high school reform measures which came under the umbrella of the ACT DEYFS *High Schools for the New Millennium*. Brennan's paper served to situate, within the context of current research, changing conceptions of schooling and the re-positioning of Australia in a globalised world, in an era of very different ways of living and learning. As such the paper provides insight into the milieu into which Exhibitions teachers were introduced, and suggests a framework for analysing the conditions created by schools for implementing Exhibitions.

Brennan (2000) articulated guiding principles for the 7 – 10 Years of schooling in the service of young people "in their current lives and for the future society in which we all have a stake" (Brennan, 2000:ii). These included an emphasis on 'the social' as an important dimension of learning and living together and with others, on the need for a broader education and on 'life-long learning' for participation in a changing society. As referred to in Chapter 1, Brennan identified the essential areas of learning required by students in the high school years as critical literacies, community building, real-life research and futures study, and working with cultural, ethical and environmental heritages. These were sources for the content, skills and processes necessary for students "to navigate their way in a changing world" (Brennan, 2000:1).

Brennan (2000) pointed to the incompatibilities between the formal expectations and structures of schools and the daily lives of young people. She contended that their experience of exciting technological innovations, together with the uncertainties of rapid change on a global scale, rendered the purpose of working hard at school in order to get a job less potent, and their personal futures less hopeful. Further, while the traditional instrumental function of schools, of transmitting the knowledge and skills to prepare citizens and workers for the society, continued to be important for future decision-making and productivity, for this to be achieved relied ultimately on young people finding in education a way of connecting with each other and with other people (Brennan, 2000:3).

Brennan (2000) also maintained that massive shifts in the political, economic, cultural and social context had made it difficult to predict the future with any form of accuracy, so that high school reform could not be tied "to any single, definable future" (Brennan 2000:4). "Globalising processes" (economic globalisation, major population movements, access to the rest of the world through information technologies), had come to challenge traditional notions of national citizenship and the idea of an homogenous community. These trends required the creation of new forms of communities and knowledge relationships, in recognition of "a wide range of people, perspectives, practices and priorities". This in turn made it "crucial" for high schools to develop young people's understanding of the changing world beyond the local setting (Brennan 2000:5).

Brennan (2000) advocated that students not just learn about but participate in the active practice of democracy, it being critical for them "to learn through experience how to learn to live together, to resolve conflict, to address difference and to work in both independent and conjoint ways." (Brennan 2000:6) She asserted that the most fundamental of tenets for school reform is that those who would be most affected by what went on in a school community had to have a voice in that community, be listened to and have their views respected. Thus young people needed to have agency in the process of redeveloping the school and approaches to schooling.

In this way Brennan (2000) challenged accepted ways of achieving the traditional functions of schooling, of preparing citizens and workers for society. She identified an important third purpose of schooling, to provide the means by which young people become social and value ongoing education for the common good, described as "**an investment** in being human" (Brennan, 2000:3). In a similar vein, Giroux (2006) describes education as "a form of persuasion, power, and intervention [which] is constitutive of those ongoing struggles that shape the social" (Giroux, 2006:169).

7:2:1. The investment context

The nature of the investment being made through the Year 9 Student Exhibitions initiative, in terms of what people give to the process and get back from it, is not

disconnected from the context of the times, both systemically and in the schools. This in turn relates to the broader socio-cultural conditions which prompted the need for change.

Student disengagement, a drop in school retention rates, and an exodus of students from government high schools to private, had all prompted the need for change in the experience of students in ACT secondary schooling. Students-at-risk of not completing the compulsory years of schooling (SAR) were the subject of a report commissioned by ACT DET with officers of the Australian Education Union (AEU) at the time that the *High Schools for the New Millennium* reforms were being considered. Influential research from South Australia, *What the Boys Are Saying*, which informed the report concluded:

> "The choice, whether or not to correct declining rates of retention and achievement, they believe, lies largely with the teachers and the preparedness of an aging adult world to '*genuinely listen'*, and to '*catch up'*; to bring the culture and focus of schooling up to date so that it might be better placed to keep pace with the economic, social and cultural changes that are already making demands that it cannot meet, and that in the coming decades will be as much dramatic as they are inevitable."
>
> (Slade & Trent, 2000:33)

According to this research at the heart of the disaffection of young people with contemporary schooling was the quality of relationships with teachers and their "ability and willingness to establish relationships of mutual respect and friendship with their students" (Slade & Trent, 2000:20). "The best classroom environment is one in which there is a conjunction of diversity and the kind of good teacher who is comfortable with difference and is not troubled by the riddle of relativity and its application in teaching practice" (Slade &Trent, 2000:20). I believe that it is no coincidence that Cox (1995), in proposing alternative frameworks for viewing society, named the same keywords and concepts that the boys in the study identified were missing from the schools that had alienated them - trust, reciprocity, mutuality, co-operation, time, and social fabric.

The concerns of the education community with the failure of secondary schools to retain students and to meet the educational needs of its young people, were symptomatic of and mirrored growing unease on the national landscape about forces at work undermining civil society.

> "I have serious concerns about the current dominant fashion of macho, competition-driven 'progress' and the intensity with which these economic frameworks are promoted. These frameworks are particularly dangerous because alternate views are denied, ridiculed or ignored. The 'social' has been relegated to such low priority that it's almost completely off the agenda."
>
> (Cox, 1995:4)

Giroux (2006) has voiced the same kinds of concern. His big picture conception of education as a moral and political practice, promotes a socially critical approach, a 'politics of worldliness', and reinforces the role of educators in:

> "… the connection between pedagogy and agency, knowledge and power, thought and action that must be mobilized in order to confront … the crisis of democracy under the reign of neoliberalism and the emerging authoritarianism in the United States and other nations throughout the world."
>
> (Giroux, 2006:301)

Robbins (2006) says of Giroux that he gives "a sense of the despairing civic atrophy currently undermining democratic public life" as the reason for his project, "a radical, inclusive democratic social order." (Robbins, 2006:vii) In this way, the "politics of crisis" is seen as instrumental in:

> "… energizing people to not only think critically about the world around them but to also use their capacities as social agents to intervene in the larger social order and confront the myriad forms of symbolic, institutional, and material relations of power that shape their lives."
>
> (Giroux, 2006:301)

The term 'investment' like the word 'capital' is borrowed from the language of finance. In that narrow context, *capital* is accumulated wealth, especially as used in further production, while *investment* is money applied for profit. In the broader sense there

are different forms of capital – economic, cultural and social, according to Bourdieu, or financial, physical, human and social, as referred to by Cox (Bourdieu 1983: 249; (Cox 1995:15). In talking about investment, I refer to investment in the social sense. I take *social capital* to mean "the processes between people which establish networks, norms and social trust and facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit" (Cox 1995:15). As Caldwell and Spinks have raised in support of the effort to have all students achieve success, "What is needed is the application of all of the resources of a community, not just government and not just money, and this is where the notion of social capital comes in" (Caldwell & Spinks, 2007:3). In the past it has been under-valued and under-utilised, yet there is no measure for the level of social capital that supports a school.

I acknowledge Bourdieu's concern that building social capital through social networks can serve to reinforce privileged access to resources and power for some but not others. It can lead to a narrowing of perspective and to the oppression of others. This possibility demands a focus on accessing, accepting and embracing difference as part of building social capital, what Putnam has labelled *linking* social capital (Putnam, 2000:22).

I also acknowledge that there is the danger of skewing the social by using the language of economic discourses. However, bearing in mind that not everything we value should be called capital, and that even though the notion of *capital* inevitably links it to *capitalism*, it remains a useful metaphor because the term *capital* "invests the concept with reflected status from other forms of capital" (Cox 1995:16). As Cox argues further, *social capital* is also appropriate "because it can be measured and quantified so we can distribute its benefits and avoid its losses" (Cox 1995:16).

I consider the notions of social capital and of investment to be helpful in this examination of the uptake of Exhibitions in 2002 for two reasons, firstly because the social purpose of schooling was so strongly a feature of the reform agenda, and secondly because of the potential for high schools to profit by the curriculum innovation invested, (subject, of course to the extent of investment made by the schools themselves).

Further, I firmly situate Exhibitions, as a feature of the reform agenda for ACT high schools, within the systemic socio-cultural conditions that existed at the time. The Exhibitions project was intended to challenge the accepted ways of achieving the traditional functions of schooling, such as the problems of institutionalised curriculum and rigid organisational structures. Through my research on Exhibitions, I am able to show that student engagement and educational achievement is likely to rise, and the quality of the day-to-day experience of schooling to be enhanced, when an investment is made in the social, as well as the civic and instrumental aspects of schooling.

In this chapter I examine what was intended by the ACT high school reform agenda and, based on findings from the three case study schools, explore the nature of the investment required for a successful Year 9 Student Exhibitions Program, as its flagship reform initiative. In this context, success is measured by the extent to which this reform progresses the purposes of schooling.

7:3 Qualifiers

The evaluation participants provided was sometimes contradictory. For example, at one point in her interview, the high-achieving Capital High student, Jessica, was critical of having to take responsibility for directing the learning process herself (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:1). She was highly insecure with this more autonomous approach to doing school, and implied that her teachers had been neglectful and had abrogated their responsibility. The same student subsequently acknowledged the benefit of the approach as valuable preparation for independent learning in Year 10. “It was like I had to go through the whole process in order to be a better person, specifically in how to learn” (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:12). In this way, the student did not approach her evaluation from an integrated position. She operated in two discourses, both contradictory, on the one hand as a student who routinely complied with and preferred a teacher-directed approach to learning, and on the other, as one who appreciated the value of having learned how to learn autonomously.

I need to point out also that in all of the three schools involved in this study, good things happened, but not in the same ways. The conditions that were important for the uptake of Exhibitions and for change to occur, were in evidence to some extent in each school but were inflected differently, influencing the quality of the experience for participants.

With school-based management and curriculum development the norm in ACT government schools, this meant that each school was unique in the way that it interpreted the ACT Curriculum Frameworks, responded to the expectations of its school community and catered for the needs of its student cohort. Each school was positioned variously in its approach to outcomes-based education with respect to philosophy, planning and programming, curriculum, classroom practice, assessment and reporting, while school leadership, culture, structures and support also operated as a function of the particular context in each school.

It is important not to decontextualise the work of schools and teachers, as much of the early school effectiveness and school reform research has done (Sammons, Hillman and Mortimore, 1995). School and system leadership is particularly important in creating the climate and capacity for change. School leaders play a crucial role in creating the structure and culture that places effective classroom practices at the centre of school business. To quote Lingard and Mills, the kind of leadership required is:

> "Leadership that disperses the practices of leadership across the school and that also creates a culture and structure that links ongoing teacher learning to the enhancement of student learning."
>
> (Lingard & Mills 2003:3)

The implications of particular conditions that existed in schools prior to Exhibitions, became evident in this study. Whether or not a culture of collaboration among teachers and across faculties had been fostered, the nature of the school structures in place, and, to some extent, the size of the school, were among the pre-existing conditions important to Exhibitions uptake and change. Falls District, had the

advantage of small school status, allowing greater flexibility than larger high schools to experiment with structures. It had a whole school culture open to radical, systemic change in response to residualisation issues, as discussed in Chapter 4. Riverside having grown out of the middle-schooling movement, was a school premised upon innovative structures. Both of these schools had worked with the ANSN to establish protocols for teacher collaborative practice and well-developed professional learning communities.

Further, what needs to be highlighted, is the very formative nature of both the Exhibitions approach to driving school reform and its application to the mainstream, that is for the whole of Year 9. While most schools had trialled Exhibitions, as part of the pilot program just the year before, with a couple of teachers and one or two classes only, the scale of the program in 2002 was much greater, with many more students and teachers involved. Also, by its very nature, Exhibitions is constructivist in approach and, within the constraints of its design parameters, there is no one 'correct' way of doing Exhibitions. With each year's iteration of the Exhibitions program, provided there is an open, consultative process with teachers and students, the opportunity is there to continuously improve the program.

Also of the factors operating in a school setting which impact on the commitment of participants for the uptake of an Exhibitions approach (alongside teacher reflexivity, agency over its implementation etc), there is the 'serendipity dimension'[9]. In some circumstances, through no deliberate manipulation, perhaps as a function of the personalities of the people involved, things come together well, while conversely, in others, 'the best laid plans' are interrupted. School and system leaders found it hard to explain that under seemingly chaotic circumstances, with difficult students and under-prepared staff, serendipitously, some Exhibitions programs were highly successful. One can theorise about putting in place the appropriate human and

[9] Serendipity is the faculty of making *fortunate* discoveries by accident. (Oxford Dictionary). From the Persian *Sarandp*, and Arabic *sarandb*. After the *Three Princes of Serendip* (Sri Lanka), a fairy-tale. "As their highnesses travelled, they were always making discoveries, by accidents and sagacity, of things which they were not in quest of" (Walpole, 1754).

structural conditions to support change and find that they coalesce quite serendipitously.

7:4. My Case: the conditions of investment

According to Evans (1996), the responsiveness of people to innovation is measured in terms of *commitment*, whether they are *invested* in the change, and *fulfilment*, whether they are actually *implementing* it. On this premise, I contend that what is crucial to the effective uptake of Exhibitions and to the value individuals place in Exhibitions as being worthwhile or not, is the extent to which they invest in its success as a change process, in a variety of ways, and their concomitant sense of return. The 'success' of the reform is calculated specifically in terms of improved student learning outcomes and teacher renewal, the stated goals of the initiative, and more broadly in relation to the contribution this aspect of the ACT high schools reform agenda makes to the civic, instrumental and social purposes of schooling. Further, this investment has to be supported by, and is a function of, the conditions operating systemically and in schools.

Schlechty states that it is the "business" of educators "to design tasks and activities with attributes that encourage students to invest their most precious resources, that is, their time, energy and attention. Learning in schools happens when schools do their business" (Schlechty, 2005:8).

Barone highlights the notion of teachers expending emotional labour as an important element of creating a culture and learning environment in which there are not only high expectations for student achievement but also expression is given to "the dreams of students", particularly those who are 'different', and where, through tacit understanding, students are granted permission to be themselves (Barone, 2001:viii). This emotional labour is a function of teachers' faith in the value of their mission and their worth as faithful members of society. As such it is very much an aspect of investment.

Personal pride is a significant aspect of investment. The notion of personal pride came through as an important motif in the analysis of interviews with both teacher and student participants (Barone, 2001:20). The motivation that emanates from personal pride is palpable.

I maintain that both the level of investment that individuals make in the success of a program or task, and how much they profit by it, is determined by five critical factors which are realized differently for them. These factors, crucial to the experience and uptake of the Exhibitions approach, are proximity, agency, engagement, reflexivity, and support.

Firstly the proximity of stakeholders to the Exhibitions initiative and their level of involvement is determined by their role. Their position in relation to 'on the ground' implementation and how central or peripheral they are to the process, influences their level of investment and return.

Closely allied to this kind of investment, is the individual's sense of 'ownership' and responsibility for making it happen, in other words their sense of agency. Here individuals find themselves in a position where their personal pride and/ or professional reputation is at stake. Agency is determined by the degree of control and understanding that they have, or perceive that they have, and is crucial to professional and/or personal "commitment-building" (Evans, 1996:7). I have observed that proximity often generated in teacher participants both the desire and the capacity to have more agency over the Exhibitions implementation process.

Evans also contends that, "Implementation depends crucially on the meaning the change has to those who must implement it" (Evans, 1996:17). This foreshadows the corollary to agency which is engagement. Not only having responsibility for the reform but also believing in its purpose and value, inspires engagement with the process. The more engaged individuals are, intellectually and emotionally, as a co-learner or facilitator of learning, then the more they invest their labour. Their labour comprises the physical, emotional and intellectual effort required to implement and sustain the program to its successful conclusion. Engagement as a form of

investment in the process produces significant returns, far exceeding the products of mere compliance.

A fourth factor is reflexivity, the potential for individuals to self-critique. I argue that to succeed in Exhibitions is to be reflexive. Exhibitions participants need to have moved between action and reflection, to have changed their thinking and transformed their practice. Reflexivity shapes the value of outcomes derived from the experience and can allow the change process to become a journey, rather than merely following a blueprint (Fullan, 1991:5).

The fifth critical factor is the level of support provided by others and through structures and resourcing, such as a team approach, time allowances, funding and accommodating structures. Where a collective sense of responsibility and purpose prevails, there is a division of labour through which everyone contributes, allowing an open climate of exchange, reciprocity, ready discourse and support for one another to grow. Support also takes the form of designed-in and contingent scaffolding both for teacher participants in the program through support materials, training and mentoring; and for students through the prior learning experiences provided, explicit assessment criteria, access to information, monitoring by the teacher of the process and progress of their learning, and the ongoing, explicit, 'just-in-time' teaching provided as students require it.

7:4:1. Proximity

I maintain that how close to the action the participants were, how involved they were in Exhibitions implementation, affected their commitment to and uptake of the program.

When I examined investment in terms of proximity, I saw that the teachers who were central to the Exhibitions process in their school, were more likely to demonstrate commitment to the program.

At Capital High School, for example, the drivers had built on the previous year's model for Exhibitions by developing the grid of activities across the spectrum of learning styles and levels of thinking. They were central to designing this aspect of the Exhibition model, to planning its implementation, and had control, within defined parameters, over the process as well. They became engaged as a professional learning team and appreciated the opportunity to work together across disciplines, with time allotted to a designated purpose. They derived significant benefit, in terms of teacher renewal, through professional discourse and reflection, and from seeing their model for Exhibitions come to fruition.

Importantly, however, closeness to the centre was not the same as agency because participants could be vitally and centrally involved without having a sense of control over the process. There were teachers involved in implementing Exhibitions, who were close to the centre without being agentive.

This was demonstrated in the case of those Capital High School teachers who provided 'cover' for Exhibitions classes. During the time usually allocated to them for lesson preparation, when they would normally have been released from face-to-face teaching duties, they were physically in the same room as the Year 9 students in a supervisory capacity. Depending on the individual, some teachers chose to engage with the students about their learning and developed, informally, a sense of what was intended for students to achieve through Exhibitions, while others seemed lost as to what their contribution could or should be.

Through informal staffroom conversations, I became aware that there were many teachers, typically those on the periphery of the program, who were critical of Exhibitions at Capital High School. They considered that Exhibitions was extremely disruptive to the education program across the school and sacrificed, quite unreasonably, the interests of other year cohorts to those of Year 9 through the diversion of resources such as the computer lab, teacher time etc. They held that during Exhibitions, without the usual teacher-directed focus, Year 9 students were not engaged in meaningful learning, and that the sole value of the program rested with the opportunity Roundtables provided for students to simulate the experience of a job interview. These were teachers not responsible for the implementation of the

program. Their involvement in the program was generally limited to their role as panel members on the Roundtables and in some cases, supervision of Year 9 Exhibitions classes.

This points to a significant point of divergence between stakeholder groups at Capital High School. There is marked difference in the value students placed on the outcomes of Exhibitions and that of teachers, of those not central to implementation in particular. Students acknowledged that they had not learnt much about drugs that they did not already know, but what they had learned was how to go about doing research. While student participants recognised the long-term benefits of the Exhibitions process for their future learning, particularly that it had developed their capacity to work independently, many of the teachers focussed on the end point, the Roundtable, construed as utilitarian, job skill preparation. This teacher perspective failed to appreciate the impact of the program on students' experience of the learning process, on their engagement and on building their capacity for life-long learning. The students themselves, being central to Exhibitions, were able to articulate this outcome, yet the teachers who were more peripheral to the program, failed to recognise the 'learning to learn' that had taken place.

Interestingly, despite their minimal involvement in the program, some of the 'supervising' teachers became enthusiastic about the Exhibitions approach and by the end had become advocates for it. Carla, who as a Health and PE teacher had been enlisted to teach First Aid treatment to Year 9, is a good example. She had been close to what was happening, so that by the end of the process she looked forward to having greater involvement and agency the next time Exhibitions was to be conducted. While initially her understanding of the Exhibitions approach had been superficial, by the time she had witnessed the process at first-hand, she realised the potential of it for engaging students and producing meaningful learning. As a corollary to this she and her colleagues used independent tasks based on Exhibitions methodology in Health and PE the following year.

In this way I observed in all three school settings that those teachers who were directly involved in the Exhibitions program, even though they may not have had much say in how it was designed and implemented, were more likely to be invested

in the approach than someone who was peripheral to the process and had no responsibility for the participating students. Even though they may not have benefited professionally from the experience in terms of teacher renewal, the teachers who had engaged personally with students about their work, had some insight into the benefits of the program for students.

By contrast I discovered, through casual conversations with teachers in the case study schools, that teachers who were aware that it was happening in the school but were not involved in the Exhibitions program in any way and had been inconvenienced by disruptions to timetables etc, were often critical and negative about the approach, had no investment in its success and would welcome its demise. They typically were highly suspicious of the intent behind it, as were some school leaders who were dismissive of these new ideas because they threatened the status quo.

The case of the system leaders for the Exhibitions program demonstrated the influence of proximity even more dramatically. I observe clear distinctions between the perspectives of the leaders, which seem to align with the defined role they each had in the initiative. That is, there are obvious synergies between the reflections of Angela and Jenny as managers of the initiative which contrast with those of Sara and myself who were project officers. The former were 'distanced' from implementation, while the latter were closely involved with students and teachers, coaching and mentoring them with their Exhibitions tasks. The former held the view that the role of Exhibitions was as a temporary vehicle for reform, providing impetus for change in the high schools. Sara and I, however, 'being close to the action' witnessed the genuine commitment to an Exhibitions approach, generated through students and teachers working together as partners in the endeavour, and appreciated the stimulation, higher order thinking and the creativity that this researchful, open-ended curriculum approach offers.

Fullan (2001) also observed that the regular changeover of "district administrators", equivalent to our system leaders, discouraged commitment-building and that for "continuation" of a reform to occur, it needs the continued attention of system managers (Fullan, 2001:91).

Sara and I had a similar role. We were a lot closer to the ground, closer to the teachers' experience. Angela and Jenny had a more global perspective, viewing the Exhibitions initiative from a management point of view, as system leaders responsible for its implementation as a vehicle for high school reform.

Proximity, as the first element of investment, is closeness to the ground, to the centre of making it happen, so that participants, including leaders, who are more directly involved in implementation, are more likely to be invested. Just like other key stakeholders, leaders operate differently depending on where they are situated in relation to the initiative.

Angela's position needs to be situated within the context of her role at Riverside prior to her 2002-3 system management of the Exhibitions process. As one of three deputies in a large K to 10 school which was based on a model of home-room groupings, teacher leaders and year team planning, Angela was responsible for putting in place the necessary framework for the teachers at that school to pursue the Exhibitions initiative. While Angela's viewpoint was of a leader with intimate involvement in the day-to-day management of her school and a strong commitment to educational innovation, she had not been closely involved in the on-the-ground implementation of the pilot Exhibitions program nor had she experienced directly the development and implementation of an Exhibition task at her school.

Consequently, as a system manager, Angela had a meta-perspective on Exhibitions. She also had the role of a roving, critical friend from central office, but not the perspective, nor perhaps the level of investment, of someone who had struggled to assist teachers in their own school to come to grips with the process, in the real classroom context, and to make change happen. Judy had this insight, having returned to a school-based leadership position in 2002.

Jenny's focus had shifted from the meta-level, to the practical application of Exhibitions at the school level, with more personal investment in what was happening in her school. She spoke of the challenge and frustration of working with teachers who had no clear understanding of productive pedagogy or of what a rich task

entailed; of her concern about teachers tied to a traditional approach and wasting kids' time with 'busy work' and not demanding much of them. There were other schools with a similar demographic of students from low socio-economic backgrounds, which had, despite this, managed to overcome disadvantage and achieve improved learning outcomes for students through Exhibitions.

Even so she came to believe that Exhibitions had served its purpose of raising teacher awareness of new pedagogical approaches and improving student learning outcomes and engagement. She, like Angela, maintained that the purpose of Exhibitions was as a vehicle, a practical means of helping teachers in schools to understand what education for the 21st century actually might look like. It having achieved this end, they believed that it was no longer necessary to persist with the program.

7:4:2. Agency

Agency is how much control the participants have over the design, the process, the outcomes of an initiative. Essentially the closer individuals are to the process of Exhibitions and the more agency they have over making it happen, the greater their investment and the more likely they are to reap returns and to want to re-invest. The less agency individuals have and the less invested they are, the less likely they are to commit to its success and long-term sustainability.

It is my observation of the Exhibitions experience in the three case study schools, that the further away from responsibility for program or task design and implementation the participant was, and hence more distant from the realization of the approach, then the less likely they were to be invested in the process or to appreciate the potential of the reform to change the quality of high school education for the better.

When teacher participants had a strong understanding of the underpinning principles and purpose, as well as responsibility for on-the-ground implementation, they were

more likely to be committed to the program. Those who invested most heavily, were the most engaged by it and passionate about it. Their investment was such that they were immediately conscious of the benefits to be gained, including improved outcomes for students, their own professional renewal and a growing learning community. They were therefore more likely to value the approach and to be resistant to the program being diminished, misappropriated or superceded by the next and latest change initiative.

Only a few of the Capital HS teachers had the opportunity to influence the design of the Exhibitions program for their school. Although the topic had been decided previously, the 2002 'drivers' built on the organisational model designed by the pilot program teachers, incorporating current perspectives on levels of thinking and styles of learning to cater for the range of learners. In so doing these 'drivers' had some agency by adapting the Exhibitions design principles to their school setting and taking responsibility for implementation.

The 'drivers' enlisted the support of subject specialists to provide instruction and assessment tasks which related to drug education, for example the instruction to students on First Aid for persons suffering from alcohol abuse. The teachers from the Health and PE faculty who provided this, had some input into the process and gained some practical appreciation of Exhibitions methodology.

By contrast the supervisory teachers, who had been pulled into Exhibitions at the implementation stage, even though close to the action with first-hand experience of the approach, had no control over the Exhibitions process at it played out at their school. They arrived in Exhibitions classrooms at the appointed time, sat there and supervised Exhibitions students, without any their genuine agency or control in the process. As a result their sense of investment was diminished and the outcomes were less personally rewarding.

Interestingly, a significant point of divergence between stakeholder groups at Capital High School was the marked contrast in emphasis students and teachers gave to Exhibitions outcomes. While student participants emphasised the long-term benefits of the Exhibitions process for their future learning, particularly that it had developed

their capacity to work independently, the teachers focussed more on the end point, the Roundtable, construed as utilitarian, job skill preparation. The teacher perspective reduced the relevance of the Exhibitions experience to a 'project', which was quickly followed by a resumption of 'business-as-usual', devaluing the impact of the program.

The students articulated the benefits of the program for them of learning to learn, being able to work autonomously, applying self-discipline, taking pride in their achievement, and being able to use and be recognised for their particular talents. The teachers were less aware of the significance of what had taken place. I suggest that the students, because they were not only central to the process but also had choice and agency in the performance of their Exhibitions tasks were better positioned to benefit than the teachers whose role was far more instrumental than constructive. Consequently the teacher perception that diminished the significance of the reform was commensurate with the impact it had had on their own renewal which had been limited. As a corollary to this, that Exhibitions, as a high school reform initiative, had little impact on curriculum and pedagogical change at Capital High, was due not only to structural barriers. That teachers were robbed of the opportunity to be agentive at Capital, vindicates the following point theorised by Evans about school change:

> "Innovation is almost certain to encounter problems when its implementation is defined according to one reality (its creator's). The reason is straightforward: the subjective reality of the implementer (in schools, the personal experience of the teacher) is crucial to successful innovation; transforming this subjective reality is the task of change."
>
> (Evans,1996:16)

In this way, separating proximity and agency has allowed a distinction to be made between those involved without much power, and those who were involved but had both centrality and power over what was happening. My analysis demonstrates that when participants have both centrality and power, it is much more likely that they will make a much more powerful investment with concomitant benefits for improved student learning and teacher renewal.

7:4:3. Engagement

Engagement involves how much interest in the task or process that participants have intellectually and emotionally. It does not relate to external inducements but to the meaning, importance and value of the task to the learner. There is the opportunity for true engagement when participation in the activity is inspired by the intrinsic interest that it offers, in the extreme when the individual becomes totally consumed by it.

Schlechty understands engagement as "the interaction between attention and commitment" (2005:9). He maintains that engagement does not result from the desire of students to learn, rather from their desire to do things they cannot do *unless* they learn. Therefore it is the task of teachers to design schoolwork "that the students want to do and that results in students learning what their teachers, their parents, and the larger community want them to learn" (Schlechty, 2005:9). Further, engagement is crucial for the learner "to develop higher order skills (evaluation and synthesis) and complex understandings" (Schlechty, 2005:11).

The case of Riverside exemplifies the notion of engagement. Because of the conceptualisation of the Exhibitions program by their teachers, engagement by students moved beyond mere compliance or a passing interest in the topic and process. Rather student engagement extended to the investment of genuine connection and commitment. Through a holistic, trans-disciplinary learning provided for students prior to embarking on the Exhibitions task, students not only developed an interest in difference, but also gained experience of difference and learned to empathise. Through powerful narratives situated in a range of sub-cultures and accessed using a variety of media, the students were provided with a wealth of rich experiences to engage with over time. Each new context provided the opportunity for students to test out and transfer their understanding. This approach to stories and their analysis not only provided an important platform for students to understand the experiences of others, but also gave voice to sub-cultures represented among the students.

Time is key to engagement. The students at Riverside had the time to become immersed in the field of difference and time to pursue their Exhibitions journey. Similarly their teachers had the opportunity to engage intellectually through professional dialogue about how best to integrate knowledge from the field with Exhibitions pedagogy and processes. They could devote time to developing students' conceptual understanding as well as scaffolding their competence for independent research. The teachers invested emotional and intellectual effort in the design and delivery of curriculum, drawing on their areas of expertise in English and SOSE to foreground the task. They were immersed in the unfolding creation of the Term 1 program, matching student interests with curriculum goals and exploring the field together with the students, a process akin to what Freire describes, not as information transfer but as "acts of cognition", where teachers and students learn simultaneously and from one another. The teachers were engaged by the intellectual work of designing the Exhibitions task and implementation model to suit the context of the school and the aspirations they had for the Year 9 student cohort. Both students and teachers were engaged by the Exhibitions journey itself.

Engagement comes with the learner's desire for meaning and the value they attribute to the task. Theorists cite evidence that engagement produces commitment, persistence, the retention of learning and the transfer of what is learned to other contexts (Schlechty, 2005:11-12). The implication is that as a consequence of the high levels of engagement at Riverside invested by teachers and students, they were returned considerable benefit.

This was in marked contrast to Capital High School where teachers had two weeks to implement the task, followed by one week for Roundtables. The 'drivers' had limited scope for conceptualising the Capital model, while supervising Exhibitions teachers, often working outside their area of expertise and with commitments to other classes, had little time to integrate information related to *Drug Education* and the Exhibitions process. Neither did they have the 'space' to engage with an Exhibitions approach to learning, for their thinking to evolve, to delve into it in any depth nor to gain any more than a superficial understanding of its purpose or value. Hence the engagement they invested in Exhibitions and the teacher renewal returned to them was low.

By contrast, students at Capital found Exhibitions to be 'the best thing they had ever done' because they had had the scope to select activities that engaged their preferred learning styles, those in non-traditional academic areas in particular. They were able to connect emotionally, not just intellectually to maximise their skills. At their Roundtables, they were confident and proud of their achievement. At Falls, similarly, students had choice over the elective through which they would pursue their Exhibition task, such as music, and were intrinsically motivated by the opportunity to work on something that really interested them and allowed them to use their "creative power" (Freire, 1970).

There is strong iteration between these research findings and 'flow theory' (Czikszentmihalyi, 1990). 'Flow theory' identifies contextual variables and learner characteristics that influence an individual's psychological state, and affect their performance and success. Moments of optimal 'flow' occur when,

> "Alienation gives way to involvement, enjoying replaces boredom, helplessness turns into a feeling of control, and psychic energy works to reinforce the sense of self, instead of being lost in the service of external goals."
>
> (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990:69)

Czikszentmihalyi identifies five major characteristics of flow experiences - when an activity is challenging, physically or intellectually, yet meets a person's skill level, when the individual becomes completely engrossed in the activity, unaware of self and giving their full attention to it, when they find it intrinsically interesting or authentic, and they have a sense of control over what they are doing.

Here there is a correlation between the factors which I have identified for successful Exhibitions implementation, engagement in particular, and the conditions which optimise the potential for students to experience 'flow'. *Engagement* occurred when students participated in Exhibitions-related activity for the *intrinsic interest* that it offered them. Opportunities during the Exhibitions process for *agency*, decision-making and autonomy provided them with *personal control*. Also *support* from the designed-in and contingent scaffolding of Exhibitions allowed the *level of challenge to match* the growing skill level of students.

This also demonstrates that the factors of engagement, agency and support are inextricably linked. For optimal *engagement*, the learner must have the opportunity for autonomy and self-expression, a sense of control or *agency*, such as through the use of preferred learning strategies and involvement in decision-making. For this to happen they must also have the *support* of an "autonomy-supporting environment", particularly where learners are not inherently independent and need to be guided towards increasing independence. These three factors combine to create and maintain the effort invested by the learner in the achievement, from which he/she derives pride, self-esteem, a sense of self (Egbert, 2003:505).

The Exhibitions Roundtable presentations had inherent value to students, representing a culmination of the Exhibitions journey and, I suggest, also gave the opportunity for 'flow'. The ideal authentic assessment process was designed so that the student was well-prepared for their presentation to achieve success, the significance of the student's contribution was apparent to the panel, and through supportive feedback, the student gained affirmation of their personal worth.

The Riverside student, David, whose Exhibition presentation I witnessed as a panel member, achieved profound understanding about trauma and revealed astonishing insight into its affect on victims, and, I believe, experienced flow through just such a period of optimal learning. He was personally and profoundly interested in the subject, his prior learning and ability were appropriate to the challenge of investigating the topic and of transferring conceptual understanding to a personal context, and he had strong autonomy and control over the topic and process of his investigation. He was working at his best. It was clear at the Roundtable that David was very proud of what he had achieved. The experience of Exhibitions had *reinforced the sense of self* for David, both as an effective student and as a worthwhile, autonomous person (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990:69).

Among Exhibitions design criteria is the requirement to provide different levels of demand appropriate to a range of learners through the Exhibitions task. As a corollary to this, where teachers provide contingent support, the levels of student skill

and understanding, even of low performing students, can be raised to meet a high level of challenge.

I believe this has been demonstrated at Riverside, that not only the high autonomy students like David, but also the underachievers, such as Tom, can perform at a level beyond expectation. Prior to the Exhibition program, Tom had most often been disengaged from learning, and displayed difficult, 'at risk' behaviour. Yet throughout the Exhibition period, teachers reported that he and others like him, exhibited much greater interest and motivation than usual. All the students found the narratives shocking, surprising, even heartbreaking, and made personal connections with the subjects of the stories, including a previously disengaged student who publicly acknowledged her Aboriginal heritage for the first time. Subsequent to the scaffolding period, students relished the opportunity to focus on the subject of their choice. Tom ultimately presented an expose of his grandfather's immigrant experience, with deep understanding of the hardship and perseverance involved, which he had gleaned through making a clock with him, as captured on video. He was intrinsically motivated to know his own grandfather more closely, and with contingent support, particularly from his parents, was encouraged to meet the challenge.

These students are indicative of many Exhibitions students who demonstrated at their Roundtables, that out of the personal responsibility and engagement generated by the Exhibitions approach, came a significant increase in student ownership over learning.

During the preliminary 'designed-in scaffolding' period of Term 1, the whole range of Riverside Exhibitions students reported strong fascination for and engagement with the material on difference that they had been exposed to in a wide variety of forms. They were so interested in the experiences of the protagonists they had examined and so grounded in the parallels drawn between sub-cultures about difference, that when it came time to select their own subject for investigation, the task at that point was achievable for everyone. Further, these students had been handed a high degree of autonomy and control over, not only the choice of subject, but also the medium for analysis and presentation of their Exhibition within the broad parameters of *Walking in Someone Else's Shoes*.

It was at this point however, as Julie and Eric indicated, that they 'lost' the low achievers, for whom, effectively, the stakes were too high, and the contingent support was inadequate. The following year, in the G-Tech program, which took an Exhibitions approach, this scenario was avoided by introducing stages. With the accumulation of a series of discrete but related tasks, these low and under-achieving students received feedback that they were succeeding along the way, which made completion more achievable for them, and the whole the process less daunting. Then at the end they were able to celebrate their achievement with an Exhibition presentation.

7:4:4. Reflexivity

The fourth theoretical category focuses on the reflexivity of individual participants. Reflexivity combines the process of reflection with self-critical analysis. In the social sciences it allows researchers to explore their own subjectivity, to be more aware of the impact they necessarily have on the research data they collect, and to increase the sensitivity of their analysis and interpretations of data (Somekh & Lewin, 2005:348).

In transferring this concept to teachers involved in Exhibitions, I take it as a necessary pre-condition for them to have had an agentive role in the design and implementation of their school's model for Exhibitions. Their project was to synthesize Exhibitions theory and practice and apply it to their school setting and student cohort, and to evaluate the progress and outcomes of implementation. To do so implied consciousness of their own role in that process, and reflection on their own learning as a result of it.

For teachers, the reflexive aspect of their investment in Exhibitions can be realised when meta-reflection occurs on the theoretical conceptualisation and educational significance of the approach, as they experience it individually both during and after Exhibitions implementation, revealing growth in their professional knowledge and

pedagogic practice. Teachers act as researchers of their own practice, able to recognise when they have moved further along the continuum of traditional, transitional through to transformative, as well as their potential to move even further. During a Research Circle held in the pilot phase of Exhibitions, I was privileged to witness just such a point of realization when one of the Exhibitions teachers exclaimed, “Until now, when I thought about my future teaching career, I expected more of the same, but now, there is ALL THIS!” (Jan, 2001).

Indeed, participants could find themselves in any of a number of reflection cycles at different points in their experience of Exhibitions:

- specific project cycle
- personal/professional praxis cycle
- program/approach cycle
- school/implementation/future cycle
- school in society cycle

The opportunity for teachers to experience praxis, the synthesis of theory and practice in which each informs the other, was not available to all the Exhibitions teachers in the case study schools. Some schools’ cultures afforded their teachers powerful intellectual support for Exhibitions, such as a through strong teacher professional learning community, whole staff professional development in the theory of productive pedagogies and authentic assessment, and a thorough grounding in the Exhibitions approach, whereas other schools gave a more watered-down version, a distant and superficial ‘translation’. Some schools gave teachers the creative imprimatur to experiment with the approach, and facilitated the implementation of their Exhibitions model through accommodating structures and collegial support, while others begrudgingly made room for it in the curriculum and tolerated the disruption to routine.

At Capital High School there was limited scope for teachers to conceptualise the approach to Exhibitions in the context of their school as the topic of drug education and the model for implementation had already been decided and developed the previous year. In 2002 the contribution of Exhibitions teachers was to organise

scaffolding experiences for students such as the market day and to devise the matrix of activities for students to select from across the disciplines. They applied Gardner's multiple intelligences and Bloom's taxonomy to provide for the range of learners through options in the matrix that varied the focus of interest, the level of difficulty and the style and expression of learning.

The teachers who were involved in this way, acknowledged the value of cross-faculty professional collaboration for themselves but focussed on Exhibitions as "really good for the kids." Others, like Kerry, whose role was "just monitoring" the students, had minimal involvement because her KLA "didn't come into it" (Kerry, Transcript, 2003:4). Thus, having been denied the more significant opportunity of taking a constructivist role, of moving between theory and practice to achieve informed action and praxis, there was neither consciousness of having made an impact, of sensitivity to the process, nor was there any self-critical analysis.

Teachers at both Falls and Riverside had been involved in early work on teacher professional Learning Circles with ANSN. The work of Newmann and Associates and the QSRLS has found that the creation of teacher professional learning community, embeds within school culture "reflective collaboration amongst teachers around the relationship between their pedagogies, assessment and student learning outcomes". This, together with the "de-privatisation of practice", is the 'trick' of effective school reform (Lingard and Mills 2000:13). At Falls and Riverside, teachers were accustomed to professional discourse and reflexive practice. They had developed understanding and intellectual engagement through well-established teacher professional learning communities. Together they had examined and deconstructed samples of student work, from different discipline perspectives, and critiqued one another's work. They had learnt to be independent and constructivist in approach, and how to 'do' praxis in their schools. They had consciously developed a perspective on their own pedagogical effectiveness which informed their ongoing professional learning and improvement pathways, both as individuals and in teaching teams.

Thus reflexivity was very strong across the school at Riverside and Falls but not so well established at Capital High because of its traditional structures, very academic,

‘subject-silo’ approach to faculty, and culture of ‘private’ teacher practice. The Falls District Exhibitions teachers were fundamentally engaged in experimenting with new structures, within a whole school culture open to radical, systemic change. The Riverside teachers were well accustomed to experimenting with innovative structures and programs, were enabled and confident to apply Exhibitions theory in the context of their school, and of developing and implementing a formative model for Exhibitions contingent upon the emerging needs of the students. In designing and implementing the Exhibitions program they brought all their prior learning, and collaborative capital to the table. While they conceded that the Exhibitions journey had made heavy demands on them, all agreed that the effort had been worthwhile.

Exacting though it had been, the teachers had emerged from the Exhibitions experience aware of their own heightened consciousness of teaching and their role as an educator. Teachers reported that their understandings of the curriculum focus areas, the productive pedagogies and authentic assessment, particularly ways of students demonstrating achievement, had transferred to subsequent teaching and learning. Julie’s meta-reflection summed it up, “I wouldn’t be teaching the way I am today if it hadn’t been for Exhibitions” (Julie, Transcript, 2003:13).

For students the reflexive aspect of Exhibitions was promoted through meta-cognition. Reflecting on their learning is key to the ‘apprenticing process’ as students assume increasing responsibility and independence over their research (Sharpe, 2006: 214). Through reflection they become aware of shifts in their perspective and are able to monitor their personal growth as a learner.

Self-reflection was integral to the Exhibitions approach so that students were self-directed towards meeting future learning needs. Capital student, Katerina, demonstrates this,

> “… it also gave us a chance to show our weaknesses. For me it was in maths and I went in there knowing that, and came out with even better knowledge … it *is* one of my really weak points and you do need to work on it.”
>
> (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:3)

In most schools it was an explicit requirement for Exhibitions students to keep a learning journal to map the progress of their thinking, and a portfolio in which they would collect evidence of the learning process. Also they knew at the outset that they would be expected in the final phase to present their achievement to an audience beyond the teacher at the Roundtable, providing evidence of the learning process, as well as explaining their planning, problem-solving and reflections on their Exhibition.

At Capital High the Student Information Booklet stated that each student was to keep a portfolio containing a "sufficient range and number of items to adequately monitor a student's progress/growth", including finished work and "evidence of the processes that the students used to develop those finished … products." As well students were each required to make daily entries in a journal of "student reflections, attitudes and understandings" (Student Information Booklet, 2002:1,10,11). As this focus on student reflection had not been a feature of routine classroom practice, it emerged as an important element of building student capacity to become active and independent learners, as the student interviewees at Capital identified.

Allied to the notion of reflexivity is that time is needed for authentic reflection to occur. Julie asserted that Exhibitions "needs to be a journey" and that time is necessary for the journey to take place. This was vindicated when David revealed that he had changed the focus of his Exhibition a week or more into the task phase of implementation. It is likely that David's Exhibition would not have been the success it was, had he not had the time and opportunity for reflection, for his ideas to gestate, allowing him to arrive at a focus on 'trauma' as the topic of his Exhibition task, a topic which had for him, he came to realise, significant personal meaning.

In this way, student self-reflection on how they perform in relation to their goals and the depth, detail and range of their own learning, is a key feature of the Exhibitions approach and of the authentic assessment process. Importantly, students play a lead role, taking responsibility for self-monitoring through journal entries, annotations of tasks in portfolios and other means, to document the evolution of their Exhibitions journey. In so doing they not only record explicitly the steps that they have taken to

achieve learning outcomes but also capture the complexity and richness of the experience.

At the presentation stage students are able to reflect on the success of their Exhibition task for themselves and on the achievement of personal learning goals, as well as recognising strengths and unintended outcomes. In this way, reflexivity is key to involving students in communicating about their learning. The Roundtable presentation supports student learning, giving students a purpose for collecting, reflecting on, selecting and presenting evidence of their learning for an audience beyond the teacher. Students articulate what they have learned and what they still need to work on, and receive descriptive, non-judgemental feedback that recognises achievement and guides and supports their future learning. While the highstakes nature of the experience is challenging and demanding, the intrinsic feeling of pride in the achievement and extrinsic acknowledgement from others are potent. Through reflexivity and self-critique, a sense of coherence for the subject is created, personal competence is reinforced and resilience strengthened, as other important benefits to be had from this aspect of investment (Davies, 2001: 47).

At the outset, the staff at Capital High had been introduced to Exhibitions at a staff meeting, with the presentation of a demonstration Roundtable. This had left people with the mistaken impression that the Roundtable was Exhibitions and the purpose of the program, with the unfortunate effect of focussing attention on the final product, the so-called 'interview', and less on the process that had lead up to it. Although the Roundtable was intended as the opportunity for student reflection and panel feedback, as a community member on several panels at Capital, I was conscious that deep reflection over the learning process was missing from the awkward 'show and tell' approach of many students. Given the limited scope and time for students to engage in the Exhibitions process, it was perhaps not until I interviewed them the following year, that students fully appreciated what they had learnt through the Exhibitions program. Then in Year 10, where they were expected to learn more independently, they seemed to realise the 'learning to learn' legacy of Exhibitions.

The enthusiasm of Falls District and Riverside students for the Roundtable presentation was palpable. They spoke animatedly, with a strong sense of

ownership, about what they had achieved through their task, the progress of their learning, what they had gained from the process and what it meant to them. By contrast, at the time of the Capital High Roundtables, student enthusiasm focussed on the 'freedom' of the approach rather than the learning. I believe that the reason for this difference is that the students at both Falls and Riverside were able to choose the focus of their task. This afforded them personal meaning, which translated to a greater investment of intellectual and emotional labour in the first place, more engagement in reflecting on the experience, and a greater desire to share this with others and to receive their feedback. The Falls students had the choice of selecting from elective or tutorial tasks across the range of disciplines to present at Roundtable, while the Riverside students had the opportunity to 'walk in the shoes' of someone for whom they felt a personal connection. Authentic assessment results from the process when the assessment is the corollary to the learning that has taken place.

For the Riverside student, David, it could be argued that his success with Exhibitions was also contingent upon demonstrating achievement in a *public* forum. The Roundtable was a major motivation to present high quality work. As he said, "I just want them to know, 'He can do it'." In order to prepare for his Roundtable presentation, David reviewed the documentation he had collected in his portfolio and reflected on the process and progress of his Exhibitions learning. This enabled him to recognise that he had improved his skills for independent learning, he had researched the topic well, it held personal meaning for him, he was confident that he had a good grasp of the area of knowledge and he had something to offer his audience. He was the expert. He was proud that his work was of a "high standard" and of what he had achieved. It was clear that pride and the potential for positive feedback had motivated him to perform well, and had fostered his engagement and the investment of his 'labour' in this final phase of the Exhibitions journey.

7:4:5. Support

Support is an important factor for successful Exhibitions implementation. The notion of support is considered at two levels, at the macro level in terms of how much

organisational support there is from supportive structures and by way of resourcing provided by the school and system for the Exhibitions program. These include teacher professional development, teaching team structures, collegial support, funding and the allocation and scheduling of time. Then there is support at the micro, pedagogical level, by way of interpersonal and scaffolding support.

Hargreaves (1997) describes "the heart of what a great deal of teaching is about: establishing bonds and forming relationships with students, making classrooms into places of excitement and wonder, ensuring that all students are included … This involves a lot of emotional labour for teachers …" (Hargreaves, 1997:ix).

As mentioned previously, the work of Barone (2001) illustrates, the "emotional labour" that teachers invest in their students and their learning. In this context, the *care* teachers have for their students *as people*, the high expectations and dreams for them, are an integral part of support for student learning and engagement. Further, the mutuality of *relationship* that arises from caring, affirms both teachers and students, and influences the personal time and effort they are willing to invest.

At Capital the student, Katerina, was conscious that new relationships with teachers had emerged in the Exhibitions context, citing when she "became … aware of [a teacher] and her life … Now we see one another in the corridor and we'll have a conversation. It really built on those weak relationships" (Katerina, Transcript, 2000:8). She also established "a communication line" and subsequent working relationships of mutual benefit with some "so-called popular people". "We went to do the Exhibition task and it brought out a different side to them" (Katerina, Transcript, 2000:11).

At Riverside there was time, effort <u>and care</u> invested by teachers in creating and implementing a program that explored different perspectives and levels of experience, and exposed students to *story* in a range of narrative forms, to engender deep response and discussion. Through this *mutual* human experience, the teachers and students gradually constructed shared meaning, and arrived, intellectually and emotionally, at intercultural understanding. This iterates with Evans' explanation of *meaning* comprising two central aspects, "*understanding*" (cognitive) and "*attachment*

to people and ideas" (emotional) as we strive to construct and preserve a coherent pattern from events and relationships in our lives (Evans, 1996:28). Thus it follows that support has both an intellectual and an emotional dimension, and that support relates strongly to engagement when teachers connect personally with students to engage them in learning, so central to the Slade and Trent (2000) research.

In this 'space' of shared experience, the support between teacher and students is also mutual and informs the notion of *agency* in learning. It resonates with the notion of authentic pedagogy (Newmann et al, 1996), which ensured that standards were consistent with aspects of constructivist psychology, emphasizing the role of students as "active constructors of meaning rather than as passive receptors of information", upon which I would elaborate, as active *co-constructors* of meaning (Newmann et al, 1996:48).

In all three case study schools, the students identified that, through Exhibitions, they "got to know" their teachers "as people", connecting to their personal biographies. That this increased *trust* between teacher and students, and between students at Riverside, is underscored by Crystal 'coming out' at this time, to acknowledge her indigenous heritage and identify as Aboriginal. Here there is evidence of "the interdependencies between teacher and students, of some of the ways in which they animate each others' lives" (Barone, 2001:105).

The micro, pedagogical level of *support* also attends to the way in which various 'scaffolding' strategies can improve student and teacher learning. *Scaffolding*, in the educational context, is taken to mean "the precise help that enables a learner to achieve a specific goal that would not be possible without some kind of support" (Sharpe, 2006: 212). Case study examples are where Falls student, Ian, requested help from his teacher to progress the programming task he had set himself, and appreciated that John's assistance was available *when he needed it*. Capital student, Katerina, sought out and received the help of a maths teacher who was not in the Exhibitions team, with statistical analysis, allowing her to interpret the survey that she and her friends had conducted as part of their Exhibitions tasks; although she does cite the occurrence of a fellow student being refused assistance because a teacher "wasn't involved in this Exhibitions thing and he wasn't going to help at all" (Katerina,

Transcript, 2003:4). Her fellow student, Jessica, also noted that “we formed better relationships” in the Exhibitions context (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:4).

Sources of emotional and intellectual support for student learning were made available within the realm of teacher/student relationships, and also between students, as well as within students’ immediate or extended families. This is illustrated by Jessica, who noted that “everyone in our group was sort of teachers to each other as well because we assisted each other more than we usually would”; while her relatives illuminated her understanding of the impact of drug use by sharing their stories (Jessica, Transcript, 2003:4&6). Tom, the Riverside student, received the close support of his family to connect with his grandfather and to produce the video of them working together.

It is integral to “the art and science of teaching” that teachers increase student engagement by designing tasks that “take into account the values and motives that students bring to the classroom”, so as “to ensure successful completion of the tasks and activities” (Schlechty, 2005:9). In this way scaffolding provides the broad context for work that is meaningful and worthwhile for learners, through to specific strategies that support learning “at the point of need” (Sharpe, 2006: 211).

System initiatives in schools “live or die based on the strategies and supports offered by the larger organisation” (Fullan, 2001:80). At the macro level the Exhibitions program had been generously funded during the developmental stage of the Pilot Exhibitions Program, and subsequently in the first few years of mainstreaming. This had enabled teacher ‘drivers’ to be released from teaching duties so that they could participate in system-provided professional development in the theoretical underpinnings and practice of an Exhibitions approach, and in collaborative planning and preparation at the school level. In this way, support took the form of funding which paid for the scaffolding support of teacher learning and for the time required for them to progress the Exhibitions approach in their schools. For example, through this funding, workshops on the underpinnings of Exhibitions were conducted by Viv White from the ANSN for Year 9 teachers at Capital High School; and underprivileged students at Falls District High Schools were provided with portfolios to document the process and progress of their Exhibition task.

Time ‘is of the essence’, as mentioned previously, to allow students the opportunity to engage with Exhibitions learning. Capital student, Katerina, who identified as a “not very strong” maths student, performed well with the maths element of her Exhibitions and enjoyed it, because she was not “under high pressure” as in maths class, and found that “when it gets too much”, she could “put it to one side, continue with something else and come back to it” (Katerina, Transcript, 2003:4).

Riverside teacher, Julie, made a similar point, “It’s got to be internalised. You’ve got to give them time to be able to dismiss and come back to it” (Julie, Transcript, 2003:3). As such it, of course, becomes an organisational issue, requiring supportive organisational structures. At the same time it is a funding issue, requiring investment in teacher release time for planning, mentoring of colleagues and students, and for the provision of teacher professional development in Exhibitions. Lingard and Mills emphasize the importance of whole school reform being about “supporting teachers through the provision of adequate time for reflective dialogue, collaboration and on-going professional development”. (Lingard & Mills, 2003:2) Time, as a function of support, is an important aspect of investment by schools in Exhibitions implementation, and as such is fundamental to the success of the Exhibitions program with significant implications for student learning and teacher renewal.

The three case study schools, each with their own unique structure, found different solutions to the issue of allocating time for Exhibitions. At Capital High School Exhibitions was accommodated when teachers downed tools for just two weeks. The drivers of Exhibitions had control over the design of the model and process for implementation, but not over the time frame, confined as they were by a traditional school structure and cyclical timetabling. There was no flexibility within the ongoing school-wide program, and no space made within the existing curriculum to accommodate Exhibitions other than to opportunistically appropriate the resources of the school to Year 9 for the period that Year 10 were out of the school on work experience.

While the Exhibitions teachers at Capital held that the intense two week block provided focussed, quality time for students to complete their Exhibitions task, it

could equally be argued that this disallowed students the opportunity to extend, clarify and reformulate their thinking and to achieve deep understanding. Also, while some teachers participated in workshops with Viv White provided at the beginning of 2002, the teachers supervising Exhibitions students had little explicit Exhibitions training and it was left to chance either that teachers engaged with students or had the skills to support them in independent learning. This does not detract, however, from the benefit reported by students, that the Exhibitions program had provided a unique opportunity for them to learn how to learn independently.

Falls District High School provided strong organisational support for Exhibitions. The school leadership invested heavily in time for teachers to experiment with the structures and implementation model that would best accommodate an Exhibitions approach, not only for Year 9, but for the whole school, in order to improve the engagement and learning outcomes of all its students. For example weekly staff meetings were devoted almost exclusively to teacher professional learning and dialogue about Exhibitions pedagogy and supportive organisation. As a small school, Falls District had greater flexibility to experiment with different structures than the larger high schools, reminiscent of the arguments put forward by Elliott Washer and other proponents of the “small school movement”, about more personalised learning and the greater responsiveness to possibilities in small schools. Washor maintains that the large size and archaic structures of traditional high schools alienate one third of a school’s student population, prevent meaningful relationships and real-world learning, and also impede substantial and fundamental change. (Washor, 2001-02:3) Similarly the QSRLS findings identified small school size as an important factor in improving across school pedagogies.

School structures were pivotal in allowing Exhibitions to go ahead with or without disruption to the rest of the school. The whole school approach taken at Falls DHS of ‘HOT electives’, embraced Exhibitions pedagogy, with organisational structures modified to maximize the opportunity for all students to succeed. Their approach embraced the worth of building positive relationships, student ‘control’ and efficacy to improve student self-esteem and engagement, and explored ways in which the school’s systems could be arranged to help meet student needs and improve their learning outcomes. Rather than taking a deficit approach to students, the approach

sought to recognize the strengths and talents that students brought to bear on their learning and by working from these, to build success, taking a ‘cup half full, not a ‘cup half empty’ perspective. Students were also given time in support of Exhibitions. As well as choice over which elective they would present at their Roundtable, Year 9 students had an extended period over the term for preparation, with ample opportunity to consult others and to refine their final presentation.

Organisational support in the form of flexible structures at Riverside allowed Exhibitions to be accommodated “without disruption to the whole school and without having to involve everybody” (Julie, Transcript, 2003:10). This contrasted markedly with Capital High where the whole school program was interrupted by the two week Exhibitions program. Capital High teachers were envious of their colleagues in “newer schools” where structures made this kind of flexibility possible.

At Falls District High School, teachers were actively engaged as constructivists in the planning and implementation of Exhibitions. The teachers took very much a ‘participant action research‘ (PAR) stance, by integrating international research into the first iteration based around HOT tasks, then examining the results and experimenting with a different structure, the electives program, as the second iteration. They experimented with new teaching strategies both to refine the whole-school education program and to implement Exhibitions, then supported the innovation through timetabling and structural changes to the school’s organisation, an important precursor to the successful employment of ‘disruptive’ innovations (Schlechty, 2005:65).

In terms of teacher preparation and resourcing the Riverside teachers were well-equipped by comparison with many of their colleagues in other schools. They came from Riverside, a new school established on middle schooling principles, within a unique, non-traditional K to 10 structure, prefaced on experimentation with innovative structures and programs. Their existing framework for the middle-school was founded in groundbreaking philosophical and pedagogical research emanating from the broad national and international educational landscape at the time, including the work of the *Coalition of Essential Schools* in the US, the *Australian National Schools*

Network (ANSN) and the *Queensland Schools Longitudinal Research Study* (*QSLRS)*. They were familiar with 'the territory' and committed to extending innovation into the senior years.

Significantly, since the inception of Exhibitions in 2001 with the pilot program, Riverside supported the participation of all members of the Year 9 Exhibitions team, in annual system-provided Exhibitions training, over and above the two positions funded by the department. This represented an investment of extra funding to cover the cost of teacher release, valued for its potential to reinforce "this huge team thing that was going to be happening" (Eric, Transcript, 2003:2). The team structure as an all-important, embedded feature of the culture at Riverside was reinforced in the context of Exhibitions through comprehensive teacher training and funding support.

Further, their experience of a flexible, non-traditional culture actively promoted teacher agency and shared responsibility as 'teacher-leaders' (Crowther et al, 2002). A well-established teacher professional learning community, founded on year level teams, encouraged 'risk taking', with teachers confident of the support of their colleagues when teaching beyond their area of expertise or experimenting with new ideas. Consequently the Exhibitions teachers were already comfortable with working in trans-disciplinary teams, were familiar with contemporary pedagogical approaches and were well positioned to respond to new initiatives including the Exhibitions program. Framed by the flexible organisational structure and transformative philosophy of the school, Riverside teachers had the time, the experience and the imprimatur to translate a model for Exhibitions to the Riverside context according to authentic design principles. This is consistent with the QSRLS findings whereby a sense of responsibility and efficacy was identified as "an important element of teacher capital that in turn is an important component of school organisational capacity" (Lingard et al, 2001: 4). The Riverside teachers also felt that they had needed and benefited from having the external, systemic support of an "outside mentor", the role fulfilled by 'office-based' Exhibitions officers (Julie, Transcript 2003:18).

At both Falls District High and Riverside Schools there existed a strong culture of shared leadership and teacher collaboration. Like Riverside, at Falls teacher training in Learning Circle protocols and their routine use as standard teacher practice, meant

that a strong teacher professional learning community had already been established. With a focus on continuous improvement, critique, professional dialogue and mutuality in learning, a robust culture of collaboration and innovation had been created. This had built the capacity of teachers to interpret new initiatives like Exhibitions within the context of their school and to 'make it their own'.

The case study illustrates that what is required is the time, support and resources for teachers to learn and confer about an Exhibitions approach, to design, plan and implement tasks, and to trial and evaluate programs. Extensive professional development, and significant adjustments to priorities and programs were made at FDHS to prepare teachers for Exhibitions development and implementation. The teachers were highly committed to adopting Exhibitions pedagogy for the benefit of students. This was achieved through the investment by teachers of considerable time. Importantly it must not be left to the good will of teachers to make up for shortfalls in allocations of time and resourcing to successfully implement the Exhibitions program. Hargreaves cautions, "Clearly time is more than a trivial problem for teachers. Shortage of time warps the course of innovation. And it drains the energy of teachers themselves" (Hargreaves, 1997:81).

Support at the micro level had a significant impact on the quality of the Exhibitions outcomes for students. At this pedagogical level, as discussed earlier, 'support' was both the scaffolding built in to the design of the learning task, and the scaffolding of the ongoing learning process. This scaffolding was specific to the needs of the learner and was intended to engage them in the learning, as well as helping them to achieve their goals.

Basic to support for students' Exhibitions learning is the responsibility of teachers to meet certain design criteria when developing the Exhibitions task. The Exhibitions task designed by teachers to suit their particular school context, was to take account of explicit design principles. Within the scope of the Exhibitions 'curriculum', the task would develop student critical literacies, promote community building, involve students in real life research and future studies, and enable students to access a range of cultural, ethical and environmental heritages.

As described previously, the design framework also set parameters for individual and group work, a trans-disciplinary approach, a high ICT component, a significant research element, local through to global content, a combination of teacher-designed and student-negotiated curriculum, and a common curriculum focus, differentiated to meet the individual needs, styles and interests of students. Ongoing support for students was to be an important element of the program, with teachers providing students with training in how to work independently.

Scaffolding is defined as an active process which consists of particular kinds of discourse and multi-modal strategies that support learning. It supports the meaning-making process and serves the function of "facilitating the collaboration necessary between the novice and the expert for the novice to acquire the cognitive strategy or strategies" (Palinscar, 1986: 95). It is an "act of connection, linking the needs of the students with the curriculum and with the particular task in which the students are taking part" (Gibbons, 2002b, unpublished seminar. Quoted in Sharpe, 2006: 213).

Thus, in applying the concept of scaffolding to the context of Exhibitions, I draw a distinction between the scaffolding put in place prior to Exhibitions implementation, which consisted of a planned, 'designed-in' approach to the task, and the 'contingent' scaffolding that operated 'at the point of need' of the learner during the learning process (Sharpe, 2006: 211).

Vygotsky's work on the 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD), a notion embraced by psychology and education, accepts that learning occurs within a social context. Vygotsky defines the ZPD as:

> "The distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers."
>
> (Vygotsky, 1978: 88-9)

As these definitions imply, dialogue is an important feature of scaffolding and learning per se. Mediation in the conceptual development of the learner occurs

through the ‘expert’, whereby the learner appropriates understanding. Clearly it is not enough through design and planning to set up an Exhibitions task, provide learners with a selection of activities and related resources, and to then leave them to their own devices without offering them contingent support.

At Capital High School ‘designed–in’ scaffolding was provided for students ‘up front’ through the information booklet which had the goal of promoting their independent learning. It set out the mandated activities and a smorgasbord of additional activities from which students could select, as well as organisational detail and the criteria for assessment. Without the sequential planning of activities, beyond the initial mandated activities, it was hard for students to build their skill levels by working through tasks of increasing demand and complexity. Also, with teachers relegated by timetabling to a supervisory role, they were prevented, other than in an incidental and sometimes ill-informed way, from providing important ‘contingent’ scaffolding that could have offered to students deliberate interventions, brokering students’ understanding and supporting the achievement of their learning goals. It was serendipitous as to whether or not the supervising teacher could or would offer this kind of support or whether it was available to students at home or from peers.

At Falls District High School scaffolding support was provided to students by teachers and peers, as in Ian’s case where “the teacher provided support when you asked for it” and a Year 10 classmate “helped him along the way” (Transcript 2003:1-2). Ian had enjoyed and succeeded in the IT programming task of creating a Menu with Options and its operational features, because, even though he was working independently, support was at hand and he was not overwhelmed by the challenge.

At Riverside the scaffolding period prior to students taking up their individual Exhibitions task was part of the Exhibitions ‘journey’. It recognised “the complexity and potential multiple layering of the process,” and took account of the “constantly shifting perspective of the task at hand”, as students became acquainted with the world of difference, assimilated new understandings and applied these to the more personalized context of their Exhibition task (Sharpe, 2006: 212).

Riverside teachers scaffolded the area of knowledge, devoting a whole term prior to introducing the Exhibitions task, to grounding students in the field. They built up to it, so that the field of experience was already very rich, and the students had a deep understanding of 'difference'. All the work in Term 1 focussed on identifying different sub-cultures including indigenous Australians, immigrants, refugees, people with disability so that when students came to choose someone for their Exhibitions task and to *Walk in Someone Else's Shoes,* they could see what it was like for them, they already understood what it meant to talk about 'difference'.

At a theoretical level, Riverside teachers understood their teaching and facilitation role for Exhibitions, while at the functional level they provided effective designed-in scaffolding for the task. They 'got it'. Following the design criteria for Exhibitions, teachers 'designed in' challenge, relevance and connection, necessary to support deep learning. They designed the Exhibition around 'big ideas', most potently through "posing …. problems of human beings in their relations with the world" (Freire, 1972).

Early in the process, they actively sought out information and resources, and selected and sequenced activities and experiences which would afford students wide exposure to the field, and build their conceptual understanding. Then the teachers explicitly scaffolded for students the information research process, by coaching them through the annotated task and giving them a supported practice opportunity before 'the real thing'. In the final stages, teachers provided contingent scaffolding, mentoring students as they requested assistance, so as to facilitate the completion of their independent research investigation and the preparation of its presentation at Roundtable.

At the critical level, through the learning experiences they provided for students, the Exhibitions teachers carefully crafted a refinement of the locus and meaning of 'difference'. Taking a multi-tiered approach like the rows of seating in a theatre, they gradually narrowed the students' perspective down, from the broad brushstroke of 'difference' at a global and national level, funnelling down through the local community level and finally to the deeply personal, placing family and self centre-stage. In so doing they developed incrementally the students' capacity for empathy, almost by stealth, to achieve deep knowledge and understanding in their students.

The process of Exhibitions was carefully mapped out and managed, to gradually 'hand over' responsibility for the learning to students. In the preliminary stages students were cast in the role of an apprentice undergoing an induction process. They were exposed to a broad range of learning experiences which were deconstructed and reflected upon, and which provided them with a general grounding in the field. Following this students completed an annotated task, 'a dry run' to provide a scaffold of the research process, which modelled for students how to structure an investigation step by step. In the final stages of Exhibitions, students were agents of their own learning. Most students conducted an original research investigation which followed the information process previously scaffolded in the annotated task, then analysed and presented their findings at the Roundtable forum.

This was illustrated by David's Exhibition 'journey'. Through careful designed-in scaffolding he had become immersed in the field of study on 'difference' and was able to apply his generalized understanding to the specific and personal circumstances of a peer, experiencing deep learning. The Roundtable presentation of his Exhibition task on *trauma*, reflected his emotional engagement, personal investment and profound understanding. His was not a superficial, objective examination. As the community member of his panel, I witnessed a well-articulated, well-constructed presentation that was both a highly reflective self-assessment and a truly authentic demonstration of his learning, for which he had taken complete responsibility.

While Tom's Roundtable was far less articulate than David's, his was a very successful presentation. He demonstrated strong empathy with the focus of his research, his grandfather, and engagement with the subject of wood-working. He was fortunate to have received strong support from his family for the independent stage of developing and implementing his Exhibition task *Walking in Someone Else's Shoes*. He states that he did not get any help from his teachers. This illustrates Julie's point that the teachers had been less successful in providing the ongoing support, or contingent scaffolding, that the less autonomous learners required.

Both designed-in and contingent scaffolding were in place to support students in their Exhibitions learning. Everything that students did in first term was designed to develop an interest in the topic, a sensitive and informed perspective, a sense of empathy, and a context for later work. When they came to choose a person as the subject of their research, they would make the selection against personally developed criteria and understand why they were making that choice. In this way, the students had prior knowledge of the topic before embarking on their Exhibition task, and the power to choose a subject in whom they had an intense, personal and intrinsic interest.

7:5. For Future Investigation

Other factors not investigated here but worthy of consideration in future work have emerged from this case study.

Teachers will take risks if they are given agency and support, and are invested with trust, even when the early experimental phase may result in an initial drop in performance. This comes of leadership that "creates an emotional economy within the school that is supportive of teachers and students and encourages innovation and risk taking." (Lingard & Mills 2000:14) Trust was an important element of a successful Exhibitions experience, just as it is for any social contract. School leaders had to vest trust in teachers to succeed, treating them as professionals and constructivists, not as mere technicians. Teachers had to trust in the process. They had to trust the students to take the task seriously, to put in the work and to use their time well. Students had to trust in their own ability and in the support of their teachers, friends and families. Freire tells us to "trust in people and their creative power" (Freire, 1972). In a similar vein, Eva Cox maintains that "a truly civil society [is one] in which we trust each other and face our futures optimistically" (Cox, 1995:1).

Further the de-professionalising influence of policy that treats teachers (and students) as the objects of 'top-down' reform, rather than as the subjects and agents of change, is a waste of human potential and ingenuity (Lingard & Mills, 2003:2). With the benefit of quality professional development, a vibrant and supportive teacher

learning community, and tools such as the Quality Teaching framework, teachers can be empowered to carry the reform agenda. Like students, however, teacher capacity needs to be augmented from designed-in and contingent support to achieve these ends.

Through its middle-school approach, transformational educational philosophy and close affiliation with the ANSN and other educational research brokers, Riverside attracted new programs like bees to honey. The trialling of newly-developed programs was commonplace as teachers were encouraged to experiment with the latest educational innovation. Ironically, within this strong culture of constructivism, teachers may have been deterred from consolidating and building on previous initiatives, in favour of developing a new iteration of Exhibitions, one uniquely their own. In the extreme this could be an expression of professional jealousy and competitiveness.

At Riverside each iteration of Year 9 Exhibitions, rather than being a considered refinement of the previous year's model, departed radically in successive years when a different cohort of teachers experimented with a new raft of ideas. This placed Riverside at the opposite end of the spectrum from Capital High, where the same model was adopted in successive years, right down to the topic and resources used. The deficiency of the latter approach proved to be that teachers had no latitude for engaging with the Exhibitions approach in a formative, constructive way. With no chance to experiment with this new way of doing things, they were cast in the role of technicians and had limited opportunity for professional learning and growth.

The findings of this case study indicate how important it is for teachers to have a strong grounding in the underpinnings of an Exhibitions approach and to then work formatively with colleagues and students to create a model that has currency for the time, the setting and the cohort.

An effective student Exhibition depends on both designed-in and contingent scaffolding. The two are complementary in so far as support for student learning needs to be explicitly part of the preparation and conduct of the task, as well as a function of the learning process itself. Scaffolding support for student learning is

designed-in by the teacher and is integral to the set up of the program. The counterpoint to this is the support required by the individual learner which is contingent upon the direction the task takes. In such a student-centred process, learning needs may not be predicted at the outset, but often arise out of the learning as it evolves. In this way, it is not only **learning outcomes that may be unanticipated, but also the nature of the learning required to realise the task**. Aspects of the productive pedagogies, social support and intellectual quality particularly, are implicit in scaffolding.

Of the factors operating in a school setting which impact on the uptake of an Exhibitions approach (alongside teacher reflexivity, agency over its implementation, personality etc), there is the **'serendipity** dimension'.

That in some circumstances, through no deliberate manipulation, things come together brilliantly, while in others, conversely, the best laid plans are foiled. For example Judy considered that all the conditions were in place for the successful implementation of an Exhibitions approach at her school, yet it did meet expectations.

Is it the serendipity dimension at work that things went awry, or were there predictable contingencies that the implementation plan for Exhibitions had failed to consider such as generational change, a sense of collective responsibility, a climate open to new ideas?

7:6. Conclusion

In 2002, *Exhibitions* as an opportunity for students to conduct independent, autonomous learning, is demonstrated to be a valuable learning experience in all three case study schools. Students and teachers who participated in the three schools reported significant levels of engagement and achievement by the whole range of learners, except perhaps for the most 'at risk' students, in response to which they have refined the model further.

Participants benefit most when they are closely involved in Exhibitions implementation, have responsibility for and control over the process, understand and derive meaning from the approach, are conscious of their progress and self-critical of their practice, and receive organisational and pedagogical support. The school benefits when it not only accommodates Exhibitions but transforms its organisational structures to support the approach, in recognition of the impact that structures have on time, teacher teams, pedagogy, core and elective curriculum, and assessment. This removes the 'institutionalisation' of these elements of schooling and allows for greater differentiation, flexibility, and responsiveness to innovation per se.

The Riverside model promoted an Exhibitions 'journey' that produced profound learning for many of its participants. This is in part attributable to the carefully constructed 'designed-in' scaffolding, which prepared students for a whole term prior to implementation of the Exhibition task itself, building both their cognitive understanding and emotional experience of the field, through a variety of texts and activities that appealed to a range of learners and styles of learning. It was also a product of the nature of the task itself. *Walking in Someone Else's Shoes* demanded much more than a superficial, 'academic' examination of difference. It was about something substantial, and exemplified "education as a mutual, world-mediated process" (Freire, 1972).

The task accessed alternative knowledge and valued it, rather than discounting it as irrelevant. It engaged students by connecting with a sense of alienation, of being on the margin, which is a common and real human experience, particularly for young people trying to make sense of the world. By working within the narrow paradigm of hegemonic experience, schools often give the message that alternative knowledge is irrelevant in the 'mainstream' classroom. This is a failure to recognise that 'the mainstream' classroom is a myth, as in every classroom the students represent many different sub-cultures, including families with single parents, culturally, linguistically and racially diverse backgrounds, low socio-economic status and many more nuances of 'difference'.

The success of the Riverside model for Exhibitions in terms of producing deep learning for most students in this instance, is attributable to the engagement of the

teachers who had themselves been 'invested in' collectively as part of a new school culture. They had previously developed a profound conceptual understanding of collaborative culture and a strong ethic of mutuality and respect as a whole-school professional community.

The Exhibitions topic also fostered mutuality in the learning process between teachers and students, and engaged them together in critical thinking and "the quest for mutual humanization" (Freire, 1972). Similarly, the leadership at Falls District High had engaged teachers in a proposal to extend an Exhibitions approach to all of the students in the school from Year 7 to Year 10 with the HOT tasks and then the HOT electives. The whole staff were engaged in the discussion and experimentation that followed, with a mutual sense of responsibility for raising engagement and achievement.

Further, with innovation, flexibility and change already a dimension of the Riverside School agenda, its teachers were more open to the new pedagogy of Exhibitions and better placed through the experience of shared leadership to manage the reform initiative. They were already agentive, not restricted by organisational structures nor tied to a formula as the Capital High teacher drivers appeared to be. This helped the Riverside teachers to do the thinking required to transform theory into practice, and to have their model for Exhibitions implementation iterate with the ongoing needs of the students, in contrast to the 'hands-off' approach to the Exhibitions process at Capital. Unlike Capital, the flexible structures at Riverside meant that Exhibitions "could work … without disruption to the rest of the school" (Julie, Transcript, 2003:10).

As a context for learning, Exhibitions in 2002 nurtured relationships, both in the classroom and immediate community, and in society generally. It was characterised by meta-cognition, reflective practice, interaction between learners and mentors, more so than was usually experienced in high schools at the time. The pedagogy took into account adolescent development theory, and entered the affective domain to explore the development of the whole person, unlike the traditional intellectual, academic, 'keep the emotions out-of-it' approach. The real world came into the classroom and entered the lives of students and teachers alike. It not only improved

relationships of itself, but it modelled for teachers and students a more humanistic approach to functioning in a high school setting.

Hargreaves (1997) argues that "change strategies must … be directed more towards making schools into workplaces that recognize and support teachers' emotional relationships with their students as a vital foundation for learning and, in the form of emotional intelligence, as a central aspect of learning itself" (Hargreaves,1997:ix). My research demonstrates, I believe, that Exhibitions as a vehicle for school reform, provides the forum and the space for this to happen, as well as a model for initiating and implementing change.

As Australian educators grapple with the needs of student youth who want increasing independence and meaningful involvement in their own schooling, it is hoped that educators take the path of comprehensive reform, involving *all* the key partners, as the cornerstones of change initiatives. In the ACT Exhibitions has, at best, driven high school reform or, at least, raised consciousness about looking for better ways to 'do' school. We need to be cognisant of the nature of this particular change initiative, as a *journey* rather than as a *blue-print*, and that "specific organisational achievements are always only approximations of what was intended" (Vaill, 1989:78).

The tendency in the 90's had been to 'blame the kids' for the disruptive nature of classrooms, and to focus on behaviour management to fix the problems of high schools. We have come a long way from that standpoint. As revealed by this research, the Exhibitions approach has not only illustrated a shift in focus to the need for curriculum relevance and more appropriate, effective pedagogical approaches, but it has also provided the means and agency, sanctioned by the education department, for teachers and students to experiment with and influence alternative visions of how school can be.

It has been demonstrated in the three case study schools that the Exhibitions program has achieved the purpose of creating a space (varying in extent) in the curriculum, the structures and the culture of the school, for young people to be agentive and productive. It has also contributed to broadened notions of the purposes of schooling, shifting the focus to "education as a means of becoming

social, as an investment in being human" and "education as engagement in knowledge and knowledge production" (Brennan, 2000:3). It has provided a model for alternative approaches and a platform, aligning with Hutchinson's view, for young people potentially to "maximize the capacity to build new knowledges and address the significant problems of our world in practice" (Brennan, 2000:3).

The research upon which the initiative was based, was predicated upon the premise that "school reform needs to be concerned with achieving more equitable educational opportunities and better academic and social outcomes for all students" (Lingard & Mills, 2003:1). Done well, in the spirit intended, it does achieve these things. The factors which I have identified that support successful Exhibitions implementation hold true for any reform. While presenting the virtues of the reform may encourage sceptics to embrace it, advocates do well to remember that, "The most innovative and empowering changes do not have lives of their own; these changes must be appropriated each year by teachers and administrators. The hard question is 'How?' " (Hargreaves, 1997:41). One response to this question, is through the investment of on-going learning and steadfast commitment by those entrusted to effect change.

Returning to the purposes of schooling - of the civic, the instrumental and the social, Schlechty (2005) contends that "what we need are schools that ensure that most students learn at high levels" and that much of what they should learn involves the "study of academic disciplines and development of the skills and attitudes needed to think and reason well and in a disciplined way." To achieve this, "schools must be redesigned to nurture commitment and attention" (Schlechty 2005:17). Despite the disruption, he warns, this transformation requires "changes in systems as well as changes in the technical skills and understanding of individual men and women", otherwise innovations will be "expelled" or "domesticated" (Schlechty 2005:19).

Thus when reform faces resistance or the threat of appropriation, the substantive response is to "identify more powerful and sensitive strategies to help instigate the learning and commitment that is necessary for actual implementation and sustained impact" (Fullan, 2001:100). Indeed the recommendations coming out of this research in support of Exhibitions provide just such strategies to build the learning and to grow the commitment, as the means for successful and sustainable reform.

Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, has advocated a more world-mediated, mutual approach to education that allows people to be aware of their incompleteness and strive to be more fully human, and which uses education as a means of consciously shaping the person and the society (Freire, 1972). In just this way, Exhibitions can serve the young people in their current lives and for the future society as a powerful 'investment in being human'.

My research contributes to the broader educational landscape by providing insight into the paradigm shift reflected in greater teacher constructivism and growing student agency over their own learning; and indicates the value of the Exhibitions approach for teacher renewal and improved student learning outcomes. This research integrates and elaborates on commentary about learning and educational change. Successful implementation of the Exhibitions program, as with any innovation, is supported by, and is a function of, the conditions operating systemically and in schools. Having examined what the theorists of school change would predict are the important factors, I offer fresh perspective on existing theories about the conditions necessary for successful implementation. The work offers insight into the conditions that have been necessary for a successful Exhibitions program which others involved in implementing school reform, may emulate and re-create.

By revealing the interface between praxis, and the school culture and apparatus, in three different educational settings, the record provides useful models for evaluation by prospective implementers of Exhibitions. Most significantly the analysis identifies the kinds of processes and conditions that have helped to progress innovative curriculum development in the case study schools. *A shared sense of purpose*, *collaborative activity, a collective focus on student learning, de-privatised practice,* and *reflective dialogue* - it is agreed that these dimensions foster personal meaning for teachers, build their professional capacity, and comprise social conditions of change.

"The subjective reality of the implementer is crucial to successful innovation" (Evans, 1996:17). Change is a journey rather than a blueprint, and is an emerging outcome of a process of implementation that enables people "to really make [the innovation] their

own” (Evans, 1996:17). This research has come to inform the notion of investment, while the implications of positioning, with respect to implementation, have also emerged as key to reform. Imagery and metaphor from dialogue with participants has been important in illuminating the feeling, the depth and the quality of the journey, to build first-hand, our understanding of school change.

8. Appendix A

Format for Mapping the Task

1. Title

The title can be interesting, even quirky, but should give some indication of the topic/field area and be easily remembered, including by students.

2. Summary

The summary should be approximately 100-150 words, suitable for teachers and students to use as a precise of what is included in the task, including focus area, nature of task/s, role for students and any others involved, student activities and scope for choice/negotiation.

3. Task Parameters and advice for implementation

This section deals with implementation issues and should include coverage of:

- KLAs directly and indirectly involved in content
- Resources required in and out of school
- Recommended time frame
- Performance and Roundtable elements, including specifications for a portfolio and evidence of meeting the credentialling assessment criteria: student as researcher, student as active learner, student as reflective learner and student as presenter
- Assumed teacher/school organisation needed to make it work
- Major sequence of activities and the milestones towards the assessment through the Roundtable.

4. How task addresses the 4 essential learnings and the 'Productive Pedagogies'

This description needs to analyse the task in terms of how its teaching and learning arrangements and activities provide possibilities for the full range of students. It should show:

i) how the task furthers particular aspects of the four essential learnings:
   1. Critical literacies: reading the world;
   2. building community: learning to live together and with others;
   3. real life research and futures study; and
   4. accessing a range of cultural, ethical and environmental heritages; and

ii) how the task aims to address all four categories of the Productive Pedagogies: intellectual quality, connectedness to the world, social support and recognition of difference.

Figure 1.1

Figure 1.2

The Ideal Exhibition Task

The task should be a major piece of student work, lasting normally for a full school term (10 weeks), involving outcomes that are trans-disciplinary, of at least two Key Learning Areas.

It should target all four dimensions of Productive Pedagogies in designing teaching and learning strategies and engage knowledge from at least two of the four essential learnings.

Students should have a significant capacity to negotiate or design research, project directions and extension activities, and make connections with their own interests and the broader world.

The task should be designed around important and worthwhile areas of knowledge involving both depth and breadth.

It should recognise and encourage diversity among students in ways of learning, interest, expertise and values.

The tasks need to be written in as clear and unambiguous style as possible to communicate to students all requirements and be able to be successfully achieved by the full range of students.

The outcome should be able to be reflected upon by students and presented by them in a publicly accountable performance or Roundtable to a panel of three to five members that would normally include a student, a teacher and a parent or community representative to assess their performance at Roundtable.

This model of an ideal Exhibition was reached by teachers who were involved in the Pilot project

9. Appendix B

Australian Capital Territory
EDUCATION & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Year 9 Student Exhibitions Program

DECS Assessment Report

Assessment Outcomes	Achieved	Not Achieved
Student as Researcher		
Collects data and selects information for identified purpose		
Analyses, interprets information and evaluates sources		
Organises ideas and information using a range of Information Literacies (arranging, representing, formatting, storing, retrieving, processing, transmitting, receiving, displaying data)		
Student as Active Learner		
Sets goals, priorities		
Accesses outside resources, manages time		
Implements plan		
Works independently, takes responsibility		
Works with others and in teams to achieve group goals		
Poses and solves problems		
Student as Reflective Learner		
Identifies key issues of Exhibition		
Explains and reflects on process of learning		
Monitors, evaluates own progress and identifies future directions in learning		
Transfers understanding to other areas of learning, predicts future possibilities		
Student as Presenter		
Communicates Exhibition effectively at Roundtable		

Year 9 Student Exhibitions Program DECS Assessment Report

Supporting Document

What evidence might indicate achievement of outcomes?

Outcomes	Possible Evidence
Student as Researcher	
Collects data and selects information for identified purpose	Has clear purpose, integrates new ideas and information
Analyses, interprets information and evaluates sources	Identifies key ideas, explains and interprets findings, makes judgements based on evidence
Organises ideas and information using a range of Information Literacies	Arranges, represents, formats, stores, retrieves, processes, transmits, receives, displays data
Student as Active Learner	
Sets goals, priorities	Project management eg sets priorities, creates timeframe, maps tasks
Accesses outside resources, manages time	Uses initiative, accesses human and material community resources
Implements plan	Creates and follows a course of action, monitors performance in relation to goals, makes adjustments, improvements; applies action research
Works independently, takes responsibility	Completes work on time, performs roles effectively
Poses and solves problems	Identifies, frames problems, describes strategies of response
Works with others and in teams to achieve group goals	Incorporates opinions, information provided by group; shows leadership; describes group process which created group ideas, solutions
Student as Reflective Learner	
Identifies key issues of Exhibition	Supporting Letter/ Portfolio: collecting organising selecting presenting evidence
Explains and reflects on process of learning	Reflection on Exhibition process, outcomes; Reflective Journal
Monitors, evaluates own progress and identifies future directions in learning	Engages in substantive conversation; asks questions, makes modifications, incorporates input from others; compares knowledge, skills, understanding before and after; identifies strengths, weaknesses, future learning needed
Transfers understanding to other areas of learning, predicts future possibilities	Relevance/transferability of learning
Student as Presenter	
Presents Exhibition at Roundtable	Supporting Letter, selected work samples from Portfolio

ACT Year 9 Student Exhibitions Program

Roundtables Design

The 'Roundtable' is a public demonstration of student learning. Students are required to communicate their reflection on the learning process through demonstrating their ability to successfully collect, organise, select information and/or material to reflect upon the task or tasks.

The Roundtable provides an opportunity for feedback to students about their learning aimed at assisting with continued student self-assessment. The process allows teachers to consider the teaching and learning relative to the authentic nature of the task.

Panel
Students present their Exhibition to a Roundtable panel, the composition of which is determined by the school according to student needs, personnel and resources available etc (see recommendations)

Composition Recommendations
* 3 to 5 members -student peer
-teacher (involved in Exhibitions/mentor support)
-community member eg local identity, non-teaching member of the school community
* one student per panel (not a group presentation)
* duration 20 to 30 minutes

Evidence
Prior to the Roundtable, students need to produce:
*a Covering Letter (Summary) based on scaffolding provided in class
*a Portfolio of work samples including drafts and other evidence of the process of learning, as well as finished work in written, graphic, other form
*a Reflective Journal as part of their Portfolio to provide insight into their personal learning journey

Preparation
Students need to be prepared for Portfolio assessment and Roundtable presentation through scaffolding, modelling and practice opportunities provided in class.

Students need to be briefed during the introductory phase of their Exhibition as to expectations for the Exhibitions process and criteria for credentialling so that they can plan accordingly.

Roundtable Assessment Rubric

Questions	Outcomes	Possible Evidence
Student as Reflective Learner		
Using examples from your portfolio describe the key understandings or issues you learnt about in your Exhibition.	Identifies key issues of Exhibition	Covering letter/responses: Collecting, organising, selecting evidence cited from portfolio.
What steps did you take to learn this?	Explains process of learning	Reflective Journal: Reflecting on Exhibition process/outcomes.
Which parts of the Exhibition were most successful for you? *Which parts would you improve on? Explain.*	Evaluates own progress in learning	Identifies strengths and future learning needs, future directions
How could you use what you have learnt in other projects, your career or other aspects of your life and future?	Transfers understandings to other areas of learning	Relevance/transferability of learning
Student as Active Learner		
How did you incorporate input from others?	Working with others and in teams	Incorporates opinions and information provided by others; shows leadership; describes group process which created group ideas, solutions
What problems or difficulties did you have? *How were you able to overcome them?*	Solves problems	Identifies/frames problems, describes strategies of response

Figure 1.3

Student as Presenter		
What resources and equipment did you use to complete the Exhibition? *Explain your choices.*	Presents learning in appropriate ways	Appropriate choice of resources/ equipment
	Oral communication skills	Ease of expression Quality of voice Quality of language Use of notes minimal
	Structure of presentation	Introduction Body of ideas Conclusion Logical flow of ideas
	Responses to questions	Able to address questions Clarity of responses Support for argument
Conclusion		
What do you value most about your Exhibition experience? *Is there anything you wish to add?*	Personal response	Identifies core value

Figure 1.3

10. Appendix C

Table 1

Authentic pedagogy CORS (Newmann et al)		**Productive pedagogy** QSRLS (Lingard et al)		**Quality pedagogy** NSW Quality Teaching (Ladwig & Gore)	
Authentic Instruction	Authentic Assessment Tasks	Productive Pedagogies	Productive Assessment	Classroom practice	Assessment practice
Construction of knowledge		Intellectual Quality		Intellectual Quality	
Higher-order thinking	Organization of information	1. Higher-order thinking	5. Higher-order thinking	1.4 Higher-order thinking	
*Deep knowledge	Consideration of alternatives	2. Deep knowledge	Depth of knowledge: 7. Disciplinary content 8. Disciplinary processes	1.1 Deep knowledge	
*Disciplined inquiry		3. Deep understanding		1.2 Deep understanding	
Substantive conversation	Elaborated written communication	4. Substantive conversation	9. Elaborated written communication	1.6 Substantive communication	
	Content	5. Knowledge as problematic	Problematic knowledge: 3. Construction of knowledge 6. Considers alternative knowledges	1.3 Problematic knowledge	
	Process	6. Metalanguage	18. Metalanguage	1.5 Metalanguage	
Value beyond school		Connectedness		#Significance	
		7. Knowledge integration	2. Knowledge integration	3.3 Knowledge integration	
		8. Background knowledge		3.1 Background knowledge	
Connections to the world beyond the classroom	Audience	9. Connectedness to the world	Connectedness: 10. Link to background knowledge 11. Problem connected to world beyond classroom 12. Audience beyond school	3.5 Connectedness	
	Problem	10. Problem-based curriculum	14. Problem-based curriculum		
		Supportive classroom envt		Quality learning environment	
		11. Student direction	1. Students' determination of assessment task	2.6 Student direction	
		12. Social support		2.4 Social support	
		13. Academic engagement		2.2 Engagement	
		14. Explicit quality performance criteria	13. Explicit quality performance criteria	2.1 Explicit quality criteria	
		15. Self-regulation		2.5 Student self-regulation	
				2.3 High expectations	
		Recognition of difference			
		16. Cultural knowledges	4. Cultural knowledges	#3.2 Cultural knowledge	
		17. Inclusivity		#3.4 Inclusivity	
		18. Narrative	15. Narrative	#3.6 Narrative	
		19. Group identity	16. Group identities in learning communities		
		20. Active citizenship	17. Active citizenship		

11. Appendix D

Attachment 1(a)

UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA

Division of Communication and Education

School of Teacher Education

Researcher: Anna McKenzie (M. Ed. Student) Supervisor: Dr Mary Macken-Horarik
Email: amac@grapevine.net.au Contact Phone No.: 6201 2973

Exploring Productive Pedagogy - A Case Study of Year 9 Exhibitions

CONSENT FORM

I _____ have read the information form and understand what the study is about. I give consent for my child to participate in interviews for the study, and accept that s/he is free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

I understand that s/he will have the opportunity to review transcriptions of tape recorded interviews for this study. I agree that research data collected for the study may be published on condition that it would not identify my child.

I agree that my child may participate in the study described and understand the consent form.

(Student's Name) _____

(Parent's/Carer's Signature) _____Date _____

I wish to receive any publications that come from this research. YES/NO

If YES please provide an Email address. _____

PLEASE ENCLOSE IN THE ENVELOPE ATTACHED AND RETURN IT TO THE SCHOOL FRONT OFFICE

With thanks,

Anna McKenzie

Attachment 1(c)

UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA

Division of Communication and Education

School of Teacher Education

Researcher:.Anna McKenzie (M. Ed. Student)
Email: amac@a1.com.au

Supervisor: Dr Mary Macken-Horarik
Contact Phone No.: 6201 2973

Exploring Productive Pedagogy - A Case Study of Year 9 Exhibitions

Dear Parent/Carer,

Thankyou for agreeing to your child being interviewed as part of a research project to be conducted at _____ School by me in 2003.

Please read the information sheet attached to this letter of introduction so that you and your child are acquainted with the purpose of the research and the nature of the interview with me about their experience of Year 9 Student Exhibitions in 2002. If you are happy for the interview to go ahead, please sign the consent form attached.

All information your child provides about their Exhibitions experience will be treated with confidentiality and respect. For the purposes of the research your child's anonymity will protected through the use of a pseudonym and the school will be renamed. Your child is free to withdraw from the interview process at any stage. S/he will have the opportunity to read the transcript of my interview with them and may veto any information which they do not wish to be made public.

I look forward to discussing Exhibitions with you should you need any more information.

Yours faithfully,

Anna McKenzie

Attachment 1(b)

UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA

Division of Communication and Education

School of Teacher Education

Researcher: Anna McKenzie (M. Ed. Student)
Email: amac@grapevine.net.au

Supervisor: Dr Mary Macken-Horarik
Contact Phone No.: 6201 2973

Exploring Productive Pedagogy - A Case Study of Year 9 Exhibitions

Information Sheet for Parents

This study investigates how schools have developed the use of Year 9 Student Exhibitions as a form of Productive Pedagogy (Lingard et al 2000), and how this has helped to improve teachers' approaches to curriculum development and teaching, and also to improve learning outcomes for all students in ACT high schools.

(Lingard, B. et al (2000) School Reform Longitudinal Study, Education Queensland)

Background, outline and purpose of my research:
In 2001 I worked as the Project Officer for the Pilot Year 9 Student Exhibitions Program, one of five research projects in the ACT High Schools for the New Millennium initiative.

I have been awarded a Teacher Research Fellowship by the ACT Department of Education, Youth and Family Services and the Australian Education Union which I am using to find out:

- how Year 9 Exhibitions has been applied in ACT high schools;
- how effective the Exhibitions approach has been in providing for teacher renewal, curriculum innovation and improved student engagement and learning outcomes.

Having seen evidence from the Pilot of the potential of the Exhibitions approach to enhance student learning and teacher renewal for education in the 21st century, I have a philosophical and professional interest in their successful implementation. I want to discover what about Exhibitions is most useful, what conditions facilitate or frustrate its success and how achievable an Exhibitions approach really is across ACT schools.

In order to achieve this, I will examine how an Exhibitions approach fits within your school's philosophical framework for curriculum development, teaching and learning and student assessment. I will also investigate the more practical dimensions of school structures such as timetables, key learning areas and how teaching teams are arranged to support the implementation of Student Exhibitions for Year 9.

Of the range of school indicators that we can look at to analyse the positive impact of Exhibitions, I will focus on curriculum innovation, school organisational support, teacher renewal and improved student learning outcomes. In this study there are two important elements to investigate within this broad framework. Firstly, I will document the opportunities

provided for teacher learning and how this has improved the teachers' approaches to curriculum development and teaching in your school. Secondly, I will examine the extent to which your school has enhanced learning processes and outcomes for students through the Exhibitions experience. For example, I will document the process of designing, supporting and implementing the Exhibition task, and the processes for students to demonstrate their learning through Roundtable assessment.

What I plan to do/Your child's role

These are the ways I plan to collect data in your child's school:

- I will collect and analyse the school handbook, and Exhibitions planning and implementation documents.

- I will arrange to conduct individual interviews with students at your child's school through the Exhibitions coordinator. The interviews would last up to an hour and would be audio-taped to allow uninterrupted conversation. The questions I ask will focus on how Exhibitions has been used and supported in your child's school; how different the Exhibitions approach is from usual classroom work; and how valuable students feel the approach has been. A list of the kinds of questions I will ask is attached for your reference. I may need to contact your child again to clarify or follow up on any points made at the interview.

- I will not be accessing any information that will provide me with students' individual results from standardized testing, as this is not part of my study.

Use of the data and consent

In asking you to agree to this research, I guarantee that any information provided to me by your child will be treated as privileged. I will adhere to strict ethical considerations in any publications I produce. All data collected will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and all participants are assured of anonymity. Your child will have the opportunity to review transcriptions of tape recorded interviews and will be provided with a report prior to the final write-up of the research. Approval to proceed with the research has been given by the School Principal and the Department of Education, Youth and Family Services and the University of Canberra. The research project has also been approved by the University of Canberra Committee for Ethics in Human Research.

If you wish to view reports on data collected or to speak with me about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

Anna McKenzie

12. Appendix E

Attachment 3

The following dimensions have offered categories for questions in the Semi-structured Interview Schedule:

ES External Support

SC School Conditions

TC Teacher Community

SL Student Learning

Attachment 4

Semi-structured Interview Schedule

Teachers

ES/SC: *What do you think of Exhibitions as a system initiative and policy direction?*

How did you find the Exhibitions staff development and support materials provided at the system level? What about at the school level?

Was it similar or different to the kind of PD you have had before?

How did you find the Research Circle construct?

What worked? What resonated?

How well did the system and/or school training prepare you for the work of designing and implementing an Exhibitions program in your school? In what ways?

Has there been productive parent and community involvement? Any more than usual? If so, can you give an example?

How did you find Exhibitions translated to the entire Year 9 cohort?

SC/TC: *How would you describe your school? (eg philosophy, culture, structures, organisation, teacher professional learning community, leadership practices; priorities, policies, curriculum, programs, classroom practices, assessment and reporting; teachers, admin. staff, students, parents, demographic; recent history)*

What is the dominant philosophy of the school?
How does an Exhibitions approach sit with the philosophy of your school?

What changes if any have been put in place to accommodate Exhibitions?

What impact did they have, if any, on school organisation in the short and longer term?

Have there been any shifts in roles and relationships between colleagues because of Exhibitions? In what way?
(eg new partnerships/ recognition/ emerging expertise & skills/ trust/ respect/ parallel leadership/ professional learning community)

Have you changed your vision of teachers in schools? If so, how?

Has your school's Exhibitions team grown as a teacher professional learning community? In what way? How about the whole school staff? (eg because of school-based PD/ sharing work/ mentoring/ common purpose/ collaboration/ collective responsibility)

ES/SC/ *How valuable or not have you found the Exhibitions program?*

TC/SL: *Have there been any significant outcomes of this work? If so, would you describe them?*

Do you believe that the approach is sustainable? How? Under what conditions? (eg a reasonable workload by sharing responsibilities)

TC: *Was it hard to design the Exhibition task? If so, in what way?*

Were you satisfied that your task met the design criteria and provided a rigorous curriculum focus, using productive pedagogy and authentic assessment? In what ways in particular?

(trans-disciplinary, problem-based, negotiated, real-world connection, research/ futures focus, critical literacy, scaffolding, student agency; intellectual quality, relevance, supportive classroom, recognition of difference; explicit criteria, assessment of process and products of learning, demonstration of achievement)

How would you do it differently, if at all?

Did you change your approach to teaching while you were doing Exhibitions? Do you see things in a different light? If so, in what way? What about in the long term?

Have you become more reflective in and on your own practice? In what ways?

Did you discover more about yourself from doing Exhibitions? If so, what did you discover?

How did Exhibitions affect your relationship with students? Any shifts?

What have you learnt about your students from doing Exhibitions?

Were there any pivotal moments during Exhibitions, any realization points?

Do you have an 'emotional memory' of Exhibitions eg Do you feel good/bad/exhilarated/tired/proud/nervous/cynical/happy about it?

What was the best thing about Exhibitions for you?

What was the most difficult thing about Exhibitions for you?

SL: *What impact has Exhibitions had on student learning?*
Were there any significant differences for low and underachievers?

What have been the benefits or otherwise to students of the Exhibitions program during the process?
What about in the long term, a year on down the track?

Do you think an Exhibitions approach caters for the learning needs of the range of students? If so, how?

Have students been able to assume greater responsibility for their own learning?

Have their achievements been enhanced? If so, how?

Were students more engaged? Can you give an example?

Was this particularly so for any group of students?

(eg low and underachievers?)

Were there any unanticipated outcomes, any surprises?

If so, what were they?

Semi-structured Interview Schedule

Students

SC/TC/SL: *What did you expect from Exhibitions? Was it as you expected?*

How was Exhibitions different from the way you usually do school?

Did you prefer the Exhibitions way of working? If so, in what ways?

What did you think of the topic, the way it was organised, the way it was assessed?

How was your role different? How was the teacher's role different?

Was there more community involvement than usual?
If so, was this a good thing? Can you give an example?

Were you able to negotiate tasks and assessment?
Did you have much say, much choice? Can you give an example?

Did you feel supported in preparing for and implementing the task?
If so, how?

What did you learn about your teachers from doing Exhibitions?

Have things changed at all at school since Exhibitions?
If so, in what way?

SL: *Were you engaged in learning more than usual because of Exhibitions?*
Can you give an example?

Did you come to school more?

Was it easier or harder doing Exhibitions? Did you achieve at a lower or a higher level? Did you try less or more than usual? In what way?

At your Roundtable presentation last year, you were asked about how you worked as a researcher, active learner, etc.?

One year down the track, I'd be interested to see how you feel about those questions now:

Which part of Exhibitions was most successful for you?

Which part did you think you could improve on?

Were you able to work with others to solve problems?

Has this been useful to you? How?

How valuable did you find the Roundtable and the panel feedback?

TC/SL: *How valuable or not have you found the Exhibitions program?*

Were you able to bring more of your life skills and experience to the task? Was your learning more true-to-life? If so, give an example.

Did you discover more about yourself and how you learn from doing Exhibitions? If so, what did you discover?

Were there any pivotal moments during Exhibitions, anything that happened which made you realize something like 'a blinding flash'?

Do you have an 'emotional memory' of Exhibitions?
eg Do you feel good/ bad/ happy/nervous/ proud about it?

What was the best thing about Exhibitions for you?
What was the most difficult thing about Exhibitions for you?

Do you think your experience of Exhibitions has influenced your view of your peers, your teachers, school?
Do you see things in a different light? If so in what way?
Were there any surprises for you in Exhibitions?

If you were to do Exhibitions again, would you do it differently?

If so, how? What advice would you give current Year 9's?

Do you think they should keep on doing Exhibitions in Year 9?

If so, what are the benefits of doing Exhibitions?

How has what you learnt from doing Exhibitions been useful to you since then? In what ways?Has your experience of Exhibitions influenced your view of your future directions in any way? If so, how?

Semi-structured Interview Schedule

Leaders

ES: *What do you think of Exhibitions as a system initiative/ policy direction?*

What were you trying to achieve with Exhibitions?

Were you successful? In what ways?

How valuable is an Exhibitions approach?

Has there been evidence of greater parent and community involvement and productive partnerships?

How has the system supported schools with the design and implementation of Exhibitions?
Was this an effective model? How?

What factors helped or hindered the planning and implementation of Exhibitions?

Would you do it differently? If so, how?

What more needs to be done to continue the momentum of this initiative?

ES/SC/TC: *How did you feel about the Staff Development and mentoring you provided at a system level, at the school level?*
Did the teachers 'get it'? In what ways?

How did you find the Research Circle construct?
What worked? What resonated?

How did you find the innovation translated to the mainstream ie the entire Year 9 cohort?

Do you believe that the approach is sustainable? If so, under what conditions?

SC/TC: *Were there any pivotal moments during Exhibitions, any realization points?*

Do you have an 'emotional memory' of Exhibitions eg Do you feel good/bad/exhilarated/tired/proud/nervous/cynical/happy about it?

How valuable or not have you found the Exhibitions program?
What was the best thing about Exhibitions for you?
What was the most difficult thing about Exhibitions for you?

Did the teachers create meaningful tasks which met the design criteria and provided a rigorous curriculum focus, using productive pedagogy and authentic assessment? In what ways in particular?

(trans-disciplinary, problem-based, negotiated, real-world connection, research/ futures focus, critical literacy, scaffolding, student agency; intellectual quality, relevance, supportive classroom, recognition of difference; explicit criteria, assessment of process and products of learning, demonstration of achievement)

Did the teachers find the task difficult to design? How?

I believe that in the last ten years, while teachers have remained committed and participated in discipline-based professional development, there has been a decline in high schools of teacher capacity for curriculum innovation and pedagogical change.

What impact do you believe Exhibitions has had on building teacher capacity for curriculum reform and pedagogical change?

Do you believe Exhibitions principles have informed subsequent curriculum development and pedagogic choices by teachers?
If so, can you give an example?

SL: *What impact do you believe Exhibitions has had on student learning and engagement?*

How rigorous was the learning? Can you give examples?

Do you believe Exhibitions principles have improved learning outcomes for the whole range of students? If so, how?

ES/SC/ *Were there any surprises for you in the uptake of the initiative by any of the schools? Can you give examples?*

TC/SL: *What impact has Exhibitions had on high school reform?*

How far does Exhibitions go towards addressing the needs of our young people in the 21st century?

What impact has your experience of steering the Exhibitions program had on your view of public education and school reform?

Do you see things in a different light?

13. Appendix F

Table 2. Investment Matrix **Student: Jessica** **School: Capital High** **Exhibitions Task:** **Drug Free Canberra … ?**

	Proximity	**Agency**	**Engagement**	**Reflexivity**	**Support**
	close without responsibility for implementation/ distant	responsibility for construction and/or implementation	emotional engagement as a learner/ compliance labour	theory - what is to be learned practice - how it is to be achieved action research cycle metacognition	social & organizational time, effort funding team, peer teacher professional learning community structures, approach
S T U D E N T		+ve: Getting to choose what they researched. -ve: Preferred "normal school" because it's really hard to learn on your own" p2 dependent learner (*peer/teacher support absent, learner needs to be facilitated not abandoned!)*	Expected 2 weeks off – not true. "I did actually have to work" p2 New role: . assisted each other more . asked more questions of teacher . "more mature" in researching & actually doing the learning ourselves, not directed by teacher. p4 . Easier/ appreciated not having "teacher breathing down your neck", "felt happier to have choice " p7 "Do the work get the points, then it will be over" p8	.choice .real-world connectedness .learning process requires time for getting prepared/ getting up to speed/ understand what's required/ 2 weeks involved no time for this p9 . 2 weeks discrete program,"2 weeks out of class researching something" . scaffolding or prescription (booklet) . Topic: Drugs and how that affects people. The bad side & the good side of drugs, not negotiated. Choice: quite a few topics to choose from, broad topic p14. Purpose: p1 "You had to try & accumulate points," "points that was good" p3 *(How about learning something deep and meaningful?)* Explore ideas etc . elements of task = portfolios, letter of intro; summary, compulsory topics and discretionary for extra points. Interview at end.	-ve: random grouping not with any of her friends. - not based on interest either. "First week I didn't really work that much because it was a new environment & not used to not being pushed … usually the teacher pushes you to do this …" p1 Change in teacher support (*from directive/didactic to neglectful?*) *Balance b/w structure and support?* *= not inclusive (ref the Dem. Schooling)* *high stakes assessment not inclusive of S-A-R* . "how to …" booklet . no new relationships with peers or teachers. p9

Investment Matrix **Student: Jessica** **School: Capital High** **Exhibitions Task:** **Drug Free Canberra … ?**

	Proximity	**Agency**	**Engagement**	**Reflexivity**	**Support**
	close without responsibility for implementation/ distant	responsibility for construction and/or implementation	emotional engagement as a learner/ compliance labour	theory - what is to be learned practice - how it is to be achieved action research cycle metacognition	social & organizational time, effort funding team, peer teacher professional learning community structures, approach
STUDENT				. More like real life because you get to choose p11 . "better indication of real life than normal school" p11 <u>Metacognition</u> Self awareness re working all the time "have to have breaks … otherwise I'll get too stressed and not cope with it." p8	

Table 3. **Investment Matrix** **Teacher**: Julie **School:** Riverside **Exhibitions Task:** ***W**alking **i**n Someone **E**lses's **S**hoes*

	Proximity close without responsibility for implementation/ distant	**Agency** responsibility for construction and/or implementation	**Engagement** emotional engagement as a learner/ compliance labour	**Reflexivity** theory - what is to be learned practice - how it is to be achieved action research cycle meta-cognition	**Support** social & organizational time, effort funding team teacher professional learning community structures, approach
SCHOOL	School leaders participated in Roundtable panels	School leaders gave teachers the imprimatur to design and implement Exhibitions, according to teacher training and judgement			Support from school leaders for PD, funding. School structures flexible, "could work … without disruption to the whole school …" p10
TEACHER	Little feedback from Executive was disappointing for teachers who had shown great commitment No real evaluation of their implementation model p5		Disappointing that some teachers in some schools are not "invested", just paying "lip-service" to the initiative "Such a big task but once you're half way, because it's such a personal experience, you can't stop." p18 "working, running our nose to the ground" p22	"I feel very strongly about it being a journey …" p4 Reduce content by 20% because a whole new concept being introduced Conceptualisation of WISES meets all Exhibition criteria p 1,2 especially accessing alternative knowledges, recognition of difference, & the processes used; not hegemonic – minority/ alternative knowledges accessed eg so Crystal identified heritage Critical of next model for Exhibitions at Riverside, but still flexible p5	Teacher role as facilitator p5 Need an "outside mentor"p18 Can't be over in 3 weeks, time needed for scaffolding Teachers planned together but still work individually using their own experience to develop it p9 David ALSO needed time to select a topic, dismiss it, finally choose one, time for realisation

Investment Matrix **Teacher**: Julie **School:** Riverside **Exhibitions Task:** ***W****alking* ***i****n Someone* ***E****lses's* ***S****hoes*

	Proximity close without responsibility for implementation/ distant	**Agency** responsibility for construction and/or implementation	**Engagement** emotional engagement as a learner/ compliance labour	**Reflexivity** theory - what is to be learned practice - how it is to be achieved action research cycle meta-cognition	**Support** social & organizational time, effort funding team, peer teacher professional learning community structures, approach
STUDENT		Some students were not comfortable with agency and wanted more teacher direction: "A couple of very bright kids were unable to make decisions about their learning" p21 Others "had taken their idea and run with it … instead of having everything presented to them" p22 "They can have input which is what it's all about." p21 When "negotiation starts … you have them being validated in the classroom." p21	Personal engagement in researching chosen topic "annotated task first … made it possible for them to approach the rich task from a personal point of view, researching a topic of their choice" p9 Not "cerebral" but "affective learning; "unquantifiable"; "I wanted them to feel it. I didn't want dates, I didn't want land rights, just empathy." p2 It "depends on the dynamic of the group and how responsive they are" p9 From 'walking in his shoes' Sam derived empathy for Michael Jackson, recognised the mistreatment & marginalisation: "Being able to understand where he was coming from has changed my life." p18 Through multiple intelligences, more students engaged: "hands on", "empowering" p20 personalised learning p12	Students asked to explicitly recognise new approaches, use of productive pedagogies Self-monitoring and reflection guided by teacher, "Where is this question taking you?"	"validates kids' learning" p12 addresses different learning styles - "So many kids lose interest in school because they don't have their ideas and needs addressed" p12 Students need time to internalise, dismiss it, come back to it p3 Quote Student-to-student support such as students' experiences, interests & backgrounds used as a source of primary research evidence, for 'insider' perspective eg Pakistani, Korean boys in class interviewed by peers re immigrant experience p6

Table 4. **Student: Jessica** **School: Capital High School**

Big Realization: "Yin and Yang of Freedom"
Best Thing "The freedom of having our own choices was definitely the best thing" p12
Hardest thing " Trying to cope with that freedom if you have your own choice but with that comes much more responsibility to make the right one and that was the hardest thing" p12
Emotional Memory "It sort of pains me. … It was like I had to go through the whole process in order to be a better person, specifically in how to learn." p11

Teacher Renewal	**Improved Student Learning Outcomes**	**Kudos / Credibility**	**Spinoffs**	**Negative Returns**
. *teachers seemed neglectful/impotent under this model for Ex* . student agency misinterpreted as teachers relinquishing responsibility for learning process p7 - teachers not gaining professionally / pedagogically	Interview at the end: " I found that was really good. It really built up my confidence" p1 " informing for me to be in an interview situation " p2I p9 *(jobslots/ vocational not intellectual, reflexivity, ideas)* ."after the interview we basically got out folders back and then that was it. We just went back to normal classes. I didn't hear much after that about it." p2 . normally don't get to choose what they want to research so "more interesting than normal class" p2 . learnt more also about drugs than usual p10 . '"thought a bit about people in uni who have to structure their own learning" p2 (*modelled tertiary experience / showed what they had to do)* . most successful part of Ex; "learning how to learn" p9 - self motivation - interview process . learnt to do it in steps	+ve: . gained confidence from RT . positive experience p12 . "What I appreciated was the spotlight, the attention that was being put on you" p10 Part of justification for Ex with parent community, that Ex = a vehicle for giving students vocational experience		" teachers didn't seem to care at all. It didn't seem to matter anymore after that" [getting portfolios back] p5 . teachers weren't actually teaching us at all p5 . didn't get to know the teachers (rostered) "if we had just one teacher the whole time, then it would be sort of structured learning; the teacher would be able to help us, we would get to know them" p2 . "I don't have what it takes to structure my own learning. I need someone else to tell me what to do." ."marks for diff tasks not made comparable" ."no recognition for all the work that we did" p4 ."no motivation for actually learning yourself "

Student: Jessica **School: Capital High School**

Teacher Renewal	Improved Student Learning Outcomes	Kudos/Credibility	Spinoffs	Negative Returns
	. Learning how to learn p8 . Self-motivation . "Realized that interviews are hard" p10 . *meta-cognition* "my learning patterns" p11 . "I didn't know what to expect either and it did build up my confidence to show that I could do it" p10 . RT oral feedback . "other people aren't just black and white" *.Insight, interpersonal, emotional literacy.* " Quite valuable therefore it taught me different way to learn" p10 . " It put me in a strange situation with different people" p10 ."learning differently" p15 *= challenging/ out of comfort zone = a benefit* . different life skills P11 . confronted issues . learn more about family and friends, "got to know them in a completely different way than I would have otherwise"		Altered views of schoolp13 " restructured" learningp15 . broad topic, subsequent choice . two weeks (3 if you count RT) . more resources in the classroom . everyone with at least one friend to "grow on each other's ideas p14 . don't stress about RTp11 . 2 weeks is not long . don't worry about extra points – doesn't matter in the end . "it matters more about how you've gotten (points) how you learnt …, not how many points you get" p15 . separate programs for on task / off task students p15 . " give year nine 9 Ex more recognition " p16 Formal acknowledgement of journey eg ceremony film publication p11 " other students … weren't actually stereotypical like I thought " p13	. "took me ages to figure out (how I need to do it) " p9 . RT no one "realized how much work I put into it" p10 . felt "duped" p13 . "I was surprised afterwards. It … didn't matter anymore. I thought because they were making such a big thing out of it beforehand …" "and then nothing after that." p13-14

14. Appendix G

Capital High School Summary: Preparation for Exhibitions		Table 6.1
Topic and task design	**Teacher preparation and resourcing**	**Organisational support**
Purpose: • Exhibitions focus on health messages surrounding drug issues. • Topic 'drugs' chosen by teachers as relevant, to engage students • To be introduced to students in a novel way through a 'market day' • Students involved in independent learning through researching and presenting activities from grid designed to cater for the range of learners. • Students to be assessed on their social skills, communication skills, decision-making skills, goal setting abilities, ability to work independently, self discipline and the ability to discuss their learning at 'the interview'. Reference: *Model for Exhibitions; Student Booklet 2002*	• Model developed by 2 teachers from 2001 pilot program, grid activities by Exhibitions committee, presented to staff at implementation stage • Training in Exhibitions approach provided at system level for leaders and school level for teachers at workshop, staff meetings; guest presentations in drug education • Experimentation with innovative approaches restricted to faculties eg Science: Conceptual Mediation (Harry Lyndon 2000)	• Ex program Term 2 Weeks 4, 5 & 6; 3 weeks duration (2 week Task, 1 week Roundtables) • All Year 9 students work exclusively on Exhibitions task at the same time for 2 weeks • Whole school cyclical timetable suspended for two week task period • Week 6 students participate in Roundtable presentations in school hall • Students allocated to 7 Exhibitions groups of 25 'outside friendship groups' • Teacher teams rostered to supervise Exhibitions groups • Exhibition groups each given a dedicated room, box of printed information and scheduled time for Library/ Computer Lab • 2 teachers attended system-funded Ex PD

Capital High School Summary: 2002 Exhibitions Implementation		Table 6.2
Introducing the topic and task	**Supporting student learning for task implementation**	**Supporting student learning for Roundtables**
Topic: *Drugs, a real-life issue confronting youth* Task: • To choose activities from the grid of learning experiences based on Bloom's Taxonomy and Gardner's Multiple Intelligences in *Student Information Booklet*, as a focus for research. • To accumulate points with 5 mandated activities to12 point value, plus choice of extra and negotiated activities, to minimum total of 24 points.	• Canberra Times articles about teen smoking & self-harm common stimulus for discussion • Each student given *Student Information Booklet* containing grid of activities re drug ed based on Bloom's Taxonomy/ Gardner's Multiple Intelligences providing a range of complexity and variety of form • Booklet explained independent learning process, Ex. requirements, study hints. • Market day with counsellors, health providers, lessons, print information, internet/ Library access • Explicit items and criteria for assessment; Roundtables information & protocols 'up front'	• Students provided with assessment rubric, informed about panel - a teacher, a student peer (Year 8 or 10), a community member • Presentation approx 20 minutes, questions and feedback from panel • Members of Roundtable panel provided with *Panel Information Booklet* & training about principles, purpose, process of Exhibitions program, assessment rubric, supporting Exhibition students, group norms, questioning, feedback, affirming learning.

Capital High School Summary: 2002 Exhibitions Outcomes – Participant Evaluation	Table 6.3
Topic and task	• Students had no choice in the overall topic but liked choosing what they wanted to research • Teachers and students believed topic was real-life, relevant • Teachers and students saw task as a positive experience for most students • Teachers and students saw less value in topic, more in new approach to learning
Support for student learning	• Students received "moderate" support from school (resource box, internet, information booklets), less from staff • Students found support from family and friends useful and worthwhile • Teachers observed at market day students engaged in pertinent, high level, individual questioning of experts • Teachers saw the two weeks as "quality time", allocated to Exhibitions so that students could "delve deeply" • Teachers and students agreed grid provided starting point, structure; for different interests, learning styles, abilities
Student and teacher learning	• Students valued highly '"the new way of learning" • Students: success from being more motivated; needs-based learning, reflection, personal responsibility, choice • Teachers: success from scaffolding, scope of grid, condensed time frame, students consistently in one place • Teachers believed task and grid catered for whole range of students • Teachers believed that for most students achievement was enhanced • Teachers and students saw value beyond school of self-management, process skills; interview skills & confidence
Roundtables	• Students felt RT provided incentive to achieve well; were responsible for their own outcomes and to audience • Students felt under pressure but a positive experience • Students found panel feedback was constructive, affirming • Teachers and students saw Roundtable provided students with excellent job interview experience for the future
Organisational, relational and pedagogical change	• Students liked the different learning environment and approach; inspiring and enjoyable; freedom to choose • Students collaborated, gained insight into others • Teacher Exhibitions committee enjoyed team planning, although Exhibitions teams functioned discretely • Teachers valued curriculum differentiation and assessment criteria • Teacher leaders emerged and were supported • Teacher team leaders understood Exhibitions pedagogy, other teachers less so • Exhibitions leaders benefited from dialogue with other schools • Teachers observed that students were more mature; took more initiative and greater responsibility for learning • Teachers found whole school disrupted for 2 weeks; hard work for teachers, but still valuable for Yr 9 students • Students found teachers more approachable esp. low/under-achievers with 'attitude', more likely to get help • Students found learning more real-life, used different life skills • Students learned how to learn and to manage the learning process; gained confidence, connected with family • Teachers and students observed change in teacher pedagogy, student perspective on teachers & vice versa • Teachers and students appreciated improved teacher-student relationships, negotiation

Capital High School Summary: 2002 Exhibitions Outcomes – Participant Critique	Table 6.4
Students	• While student agency was appreciated by low/middle achievers, it was confronting for high achievers • Students perceived that Exhibitions did not provide a broad range of learning ie across the subject disciplines/ KLAs
Teachers	• Teachers perceived that the accumulation of points distracted students from focussing on the learning • "That style of learning" is difficult to incorporate into the school because of its organisational structure • Teacher transitory, supervisory role disallowed genuine interaction with Exhibitions students • Exhibitions program disruptive to rest of school • Exhibitions generated extra work for teachers "on top of what we already do" • Large workload for Exhibitions organisers
Students and teachers	• Some from the rostered team of teachers were disassociated from the Exhibitions process and the students • Exhibitions approach sits apart from routine practice • "The learning process" is the enduring benefit of Exhibitions • Teachers and students concur that Exhibitions achievement was not valued by the school because "nothing happened after it", it "didn't matter any more", "it's just a project" • No lasting change at school following Exhibitions

Capital High School Summary: Participant Recommendations for Exhibitions	Table 6.5

- Students enjoyed the independent approach to learning, this is “how they should learn all the time”
- “Meld the two together” combining routine approach of KLAs or electives, then present best work at a Roundtable at the end of semester
- Longer time for Exhibitions task, two weeks not long enough
- More resourcing of time, remuneration for community presenters, more resources in classrooms
- Constant Exhibitions teacher to perform a mentoring role, instead of rostered team often disassociated
- Marking of free choice tasks needs to be consistent, more marks for individual initiative needed
- Year 9 Exhibitions deserve more recognition
- All student should have at least one friend in their group to “grow on each other’s ideas”
- Future Year 9 Exhibitions students should not stress about the ‘interview’ just do your best; nor worry about the points, how you learn is more important
- The main benefit of Exhibitions is learning how to learn all by yourself and the ‘interview’ which gives you confidence to present in front of people
- Students in every year in high school should have some role in Exhibitions
- It is the Exhibitions learning process that should be incorporated into the curriculum

Falls District HS Exhibitions Summary: 2002 Preparation for Exhibitions		Table 7.1
Topic and task design	**Teacher preparation and resourcing**	**Organisational structures**
Purpose: To engage students in a topic and task of high personal interest, at an achievable level, in a preferred mode of learning; so that they could experience motivation, the learning process and a sense of efficacy; and receive positive and affirming feedback at Roundtable, to build their achievement, future learning and success. Focus: HOT Tutorial/ HOT Electives (all year levels) Tasks One task selected by each Year 9 student to present at Roundtable. Selected from a range of tasks covered over a semester in different areas of learning. Assessment: ongoing, Assessment Rubric	• Model developed by shared leadership • Experience of non-traditional • Faculty-based approach but with whole school planning enabled by a small school structure • Strong professional learning community • Exhibitions leaders trained in Exhibitions approach at system-level workshop • Whole staff provided with ongoing professional learning to provide background in productive pedagogy, authentic assessment, Learning Circle protocols etc at staff meetings, PD days over previous years • Exhibitions 'tasks' emanated from 'normal' class program, chosen by students from work completed in electives classes (or tutor classes in some cases) • Teacher Learning Circles a regular feature of staff meetings • Common proformer for HOT task outline	• Experimenting with a variety of structures from Year 7 to Year 10 • Measures to build success for students-at-risk eg small groups, flexible school days, reduced school hours, predictable routines, privileges, pastoral care groups, community outreach workers, liaison with wider community, work experience, apprenticeships etc • Different models for constructing the curriculum • Teaching teams, support networks

Falls District HS Summary: Exhibitions Implementation		Table 7.2
Introducing the topic and task	**Supporting student learning for task implementation**	**Supporting student learning for Roundtables**
Topic: Open, negotiated between student and teacher Task: Open, negotiated between student and teacher 'big picture' curriculum	• Electives are often where children are doing their best work – engaged, more likely to succeed, maximizing chances of success. • Option of group presentations but with individual assessment • Lots of time to prepare over a semester	• Conducted ,simultaneously • panel members selected by student, including staff member, supportive, non-threatening • carnival atmosphere during Roundtables • parents delighted to have positive approach to reporting to parents • RT conducted in Week 9 • Wrote letters of introduction to panel members in class, no pressure • Well-rehearsed, Year 10 mentors

Falls District HS Exhibitions Summary: 2002 Exhibitions Outcomes - Participant Evaluation	Table 7.3
Topic and task	• Best thing
Support for student learning	• Well scaffolded
Student and teacher learning	• collaboration on tasks led to connections with wider community to opening up of friendship group • Student self-directed learning • Staff engaged intellectually
Roundtables	• More open to change • Everyone included in training at staff meetings across school so understand pedagogy • Convinced of the value of Ex. from positive response to Pilot program • really positive, euphoric • a chance to shine • good model for job interview • affirmed student learning, self-esteem
Organisational, relational and pedagogical change	• Loved Roundtables • changed model of HOT task for HOT electives • Built a positive experience for students and parents

Falls District HS Exhibitions: 2002 Outcomes – Participant Critique	Table 7.4
Students	• Roundtable presentation process high-stakes nature of the experience, a lot of pressure on kids • One student unhappy with not having a specific topic • Had expected Exhibition to be assessed in the usual way with marks etc, not rubric with 'completed' yes/no
Teachers	• Needs to be incorporated in to the school program • Need funding to provide excursions etc • Concerned that mobility policy may disrupt plans and continuity
Students and Teachers	

Falls District HS Exhibitions Summary: Participant Recommendations for Exhibitions	Table 7.5
• soften high-stakes nature of Roundtable experience by allowing students to select the members of the panel from preferred teachers, student peers, parents, siblings, community members etc, with as few as two eg a teacher and a best friend	

Table 8.

Riverside School Summary: 2002 Preparation for Exhibitions		Table 8.1
Topic and task design	**Teacher preparation and resourcing**	**Organisational support**
Purpose: For students to explore and empathize with the experience of different social and cultural groups. For students to learn how to conduct independent research. Focus: To examine immigration and refugees, Indigenous Australians, disabled people, elite sports people, children, people with mental illness, elderly, terminally ill people and prisoners of war through different genres. Assessment: Students to be assessed on an anthology of work, Exhibition task portfolio items, reflective journal, Roundtable presentation Reference: *Terms 3 and 4 Exhibition Unit of Work 2002*	• Model developed by 4 English/SOSE teachers from 2002 Year 9 teaching team • Experience of non-traditional K to 10 structure, middle-schooling, experimentation with innovative structures & programs • High school (Years 9 & 10) team-based, not faculty-based structure • Strong professional learning community • All Exhibitions teachers trained in Exhibitions approach at system-level workshop; background in productive pedagogy, authentic assessment, Learning Circle protocols etc at staff meetings in previous years • Functional and critical scaffolding designed into Exhibition unit planning by Exhibition team	• Ex program Term 2 Wk 1-10, Term 3 Wk 1-3; 14 weeks duration (5 wks prelim. experiences, 6 wk Task period, 3 wks Roundtables) • 4 out of 5 Yr 9 classes involved; teacher choice • Flexible structure; whole school not affected, except Library N/A for 2 weeks of Roundtables • Exhibitions accommodated by English & SOSE teachers taking same class for both KLAs • Exhibitions across English & SOSE, usual class time of 8 hours per week on Ex task • Exhibition teachers free to experiment • Yr 9 used dedicated homeroom, scheduled time for Library/ Internet/ Computer access • Extra funding from school for whole Exhibitions team to attend system Exhibitions PD • Yr 9 team gave collaborative/ logistical support

Riverside School Summary: 2002 Exhibitions Implementation		Table 8.2
Introducing the topic and task	**Supporting student learning for task implementation**	**Supporting student learning for Roundtables**
Topic: *Walking in Someone Else's Shoes – Appreciating Difference and Valuing Diversity* Task: • To complete prescribed *Anthology* of sub-tasks • To complete an independent, negotiated, creative Exhibitions Task focusing on a related topic of student choice. • To display what students are good at (drawing on multiple intelligences) • To integrate student skills from across the curriculum Reference: *Terms 3 and 4 Exhibition Unit of Work 2002*	• Selected multi-modal texts, variety of genres to span field of 'difference' and understand issues • Students given unit outline with summary of Ex. unit & task; understandings, planned learning experiences & instruction, key knowledge & skills; info. re Reflective Journal, negotiating task; Ex timeline, study inventory & planner. • Exhibitions classes 8 hours per wk, common texts to build empathy, internet/ Library access • Designed-in functional and critical, sequenced scaffolding included learning experiences, key knowledge, enquiry skills, annotated task as a model; ongoing contingent support as required • Checklist of sub-tasks with due dates, explicit items and criteria for assessment; Roundtables information, protocols 'up front'	• Students provided with assessment rubric, informed can negotiate panel including a teacher, a community member/parent/peer • Students provided with Roundtable practice, feedback, mentoring support from teachers, peers (pairs, groups) • Presentation approx 20 minutes, questions and feedback from panel • Members of Roundtable panel provided with protocols, Roundtable assessment rubric

Riverside School Summary: 2002 Exhibitions Outcomes – Participant Evaluation	Table 8.3
Topic and task	• Students found Exhibitions to be "a great program" and "a good experience" • Students liked choosing what they wanted to research for their independent Exhibition Task, found it motivating • Teachers thought task was "a really positive thing" and "it really worked" • Teachers thought some students, who they did not expect to, excelled; tasks were "absolutely stunning" • Teachers and students believed topic was really engaging and gave real-life purpose and relevance • Teachers and students saw task as a positive experience for most students
Support for student learning	• Students appreciated "the freedom in it", "being able to go and do it ourselves" • Students appreciated being able to "run it at a comfortable speed", time to "do it well" • Students able to get teachers' help when needed; thought teachers were accessible, responsive • Teachers conscious that guidance, monitoring, contingent scaffolding was important to support students • Teachers observed preliminary activities "really brought out that empathic response" • Teachers observed Annotated Task scaffolded students well for independent research and understanding global issues • Teachers thought high expectations and the process implemented supported students to succeed • Teachers & students thought project milestones, "the way it was set out", effectively structured and supported student learning • Students found portfolio, journal, practice opportunities helpful in preparing for Roundtables • Teachers saw it as "more than a process, it was a journey"
Student and teacher learning	• Students aware that success came from being more motivated, clear expectations, reflection, personal responsibility, choice • Teachers appreciated the role and value of assessment for the process of student learning • Students and teachers valued highly '"the new way of learning" • Teachers and students believed that Exhibitions program helped students to gain new insight and empathy, to value connectedness • Teachers and students believed for most students achievement was enhanced, including under-achieving and low-achieving students • Teachers and students saw value for the future and beyond school of self-management, process skills, interview skills and confidence
Roundtables	• Students felt RT provided incentive to achieve well; liked expert role; were responsible for their own outcomes and to audience • Students felt "nervous" and under pressure but a positive and affirming experience, "happy that people liked it", proud of their achievement • Students found panel feedback was constructive, affirming; added credibility • Teachers ensured students were ready before they went to Roundtable eg flexible approach to date for presentation, composition of panel • Teachers found Roundtables were "the best thing" about Exhibitions, "the epiphany"; genuine responses, authentic achievement • Teachers and students observed Roundtables provided students with skills and confidence to present in public forums in the future
Organisational, relational and pedagogical change	• Teacher Exhibitions team achieved high professional standards of effective planning, implementation, Exhibitions pedagogy, mentoring • Teachers valued change in teacher role, less didactic, more facilitative; validated student learning • Teachers observed some students took more responsibility for learning • Teachers found virtually no disruption to whole school from Exhibitions program • Teachers believed that their approach to design and pedagogy for Exhibitions at Riverside had been affirmed • Students found learning more independent, individualised, interesting, relevant, contemporary; with freedom, choice, responsibility, agency • Students learned how to learn independently and to manage the learning process • Teachers confident to apply new strategies trialled during Exhibitions in the future eg high-interest curriculum, relevance, cater for all learning styles – especially for 'students-at-risk' • Students learned information from their teachers beyond usual subject area, personal experience; increased their respect for them

Riverside School Summary: 2002 Exhibitions Outcomes – Participant Critique	Table 8.4
Students	• Students reported that not all students responded well to the pedagogical approach of Exhibitions, and found learning independently and having agency difficult
Teachers	• Teachers would have liked from school leaders specific feedback, acknowledgement for students and a formal evaluation identifying strengths and areas for improvement to the benefit of future programs • Teachers observed some students abrogated responsibility for learning others, wanted to be directed • Teachers observed some students had poor time- and project-management skills and were ill prepared for independent learning in spite of scaffolding provided • Teachers concerned about the high-stakes nature of Roundtables • Teachers observed long term focus of Exhibitions task hard to sustain, especially with some low-achieving students, contributed to student low self-confidence and task-avoidance during Exhibitions process, exacerbated by undue “pressure” to present at Roundtable • Teachers felt that developing and trialling Exhibitions program ‘on the run’ was overwhelming • Teachers found the heavy commitment required for Exhibitions program hard to sustain • Teachers believed monitoring student progress was difficult to achieve and needed to be improved
Students and teachers	• Teachers and students believed that monitoring of student progress and mentoring support for students was insufficient

Riverside School Summary: Participant Recommendations for Exhibitions	Table 8.5

- Mentoring system where students “sign up” to a teacher from whole school staff in area of expertise required by negotiated task for mentoring support
- Extra staff would also allow closer monitoring of student progress and for more contingent scaffolding
- Students enjoyed “a different way of learning” which “breaks the term up”
- Teachers suggested modifying to a project-based approach for low-achieving students. Complete a series of discrete tasks of increasing challenge, linked within an overall theme. Cater for different learning styles, particularly kinaesthetic and visual learners. All so that they get short-term feedback, experience success, and can see their own progress.
- Every year students should be scaffolded towards Exhibitions in Year 9 eg in Year 7 & 8 an individual *Annotated Task*, for an in-class oral/visual presentation
- Aspects of Exhibitions approach can be easily accommodated into routine practice
- Must be a “journey” with time and scaffolding for ideas to internalise before creative task initiated
- Independent learning process, and confidence from high standard achievement, are enduring benefits of Exhibitions which inform future learning
- Change at Riverside School following Exhibitions leading to further innovation eg G-Tech
- An open-ended approach that produces creative, “out of the box”, unanticipated outcomes which is acknowledged as necessary but otherwise hard to achieve
- Teachers should be provided with individual, system training and PD program extended, to incorporate “generational learning” and more inter-school sharing.

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