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**DOES SUN-SAFETY MAKE A HEALTH PROGRAM OR A  
HEALTH PROMOTING SCHOOL?: A CASE STUDY OF  
CLIMATE, CULTURE AND BARRIERS TO BEST PRACTICE.**

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper is a preliminary workplace case study of the culture and climate of a small rural school, investigating issues surrounding the place of the Health Promoting Schools (HPS) model in Primary (K-6) schooling. Study of the culture and climate of Tip Top primary school (TTPS) opened up issues surrounding the application of a health promoting schools (HPS) model. Assumptions were that a HPS should assist teachers in their approach and delivery of the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) curriculum. However at TTPS the absence of key elements for a HPS revealed the major issue as 'barriers to implementation'.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Health Promotion and Health Promoting Schools**

The Health Promoting Schools (HPS) concept grew from the World Health Organization (WHO) conference in Ottawa 1987 when health promotion was adopted in the Ottawa Charter signalling a proactive new public health model of promoting health for all. The preventive approach on people and settings, rather than diseases, is significant for health education in schools and is based on the Ottawa Charter areas of action of healthy public policy, supportive environments, community action, development of personal skills and the reorientation of health services. It expands opportunities for the holistic approach to health in a school setting (Denman, Moon, Parsons, & Stears, 2002:18). The WHO aim is to increase the number of HPS across the world.

A Western Pacific group meeting of the World Health Organisation (WHO) discussed implementation of the HPS recognising that some schools with a “track-record of health education were transforming existing programs into the broader framework of HPS” (World Health Organisation, 1995). New South Wales schools have the resource ‘Towards a Health Promoting School’, a document intended to give practical advice to schools “wishing to become health promoting schools” (NSW Department of Health, NSW Department of Education, Catholic Education Commission NSW, & Association of Independent Schools NSW, 1996:i). The document stresses the importance of curriculum, policy/ethos and parent/community involvement working together to create the HPS. Further there is a statement supporting the role of the HPS in recognizing the importance of Health and Physical Education in the curriculum, the influence of policies and structures on staff and student well-being, as well as the valuable role which parents and community members can make to health (NSW Department of Health et al., 1996:i).

As part of a larger program of study the ‘lens’ of climate and culture were used to critique a professional workplace. A small rural school, Tip Top Primary School, (TTPS) was the placement for this analysis. Observations at TTPS occurred over a twenty week period, of one regular day each week, during which the climate and culture of the school was studied with particular reference to the place of health promotion in the school. Study of culture and climate revealed issues surrounding the application of a health promoting schools (HPS) model, particularly relating to the school Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) curriculum and assumptions as to what health may mean in the school. This analysis revealed a range of factors causing barriers to the adoption of a HPS model at TTPS.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Setting**

TTPS is a small state primary school on the extremity of a regional city that caters for children residing in the local area. Reasons for attendance at TTPS include the small size of the school, its emphasis on the creative arts and achievement of its stated aim as a caring, family school. “This school has a strong academic tradition and we are proud of all who contribute to its many successes” (School, 2005: introduction,np). It is situated in the middle to high socio-economic area and has seven teachers of kindergarten to year six, one non-teaching principal, a librarian and two administration assistants. The school

information booklet also introduces the general assistant, the school cleaner and the visiting support teachers of music.

Observation of the climate and culture of the school and informal discussion with staff, students and parents, enabled interpretation of aspects of curriculum, in particular the approach to health education and health promotion. The cultural studies approach interprets situations from a perspective which incorporates the structural and institutional factors with the subjective, cultural, symbolic and emotional ones (Medick, 1987 cited in Samier, 1997:417) instead of having the two perspectives set one against another.

The investigation of the place of 'health' at TTPS focussed on sun safety as a health related topic and used observation, informal discussions with staff and students, and structured questioning with staff. The principal and some teachers were interviewed informally using the questions from the HPS resource, (NSW Department of Health et al., 1996:20-27). Rowling (2000a) advocates that the principles to guide work with health promotion in schools should comprise consideration of the key health-promotion principles, including equity, consultation, collaboration, ownership and sustainability, linking these with some newer concepts, such as capacity building and social capital. These factors are proving useful in the development, monitoring and evaluation of Health Promoting Schools (Rowling and Jeffrey 2000a:117) and were observed during this study of climate and culture.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Description of the school through analysis of climate and culture**

The study aimed at discovering the place, understanding and interpretation of health education and associated relationship to the HPS framework. The study of climate and culture in a workplace (Samier, 1997) allowed interpretation of school life. Examination and observation of culture and climate, of the elements both present and absent through informal discussions and interviews with staff, students, and parents, built a picture of the current situation and place of health promotion at TTPS.

Climate is defined here as the emotional environment of the workplace. On entering this school the comfortable and welcoming atmosphere is obvious. The children are playing and at ease with visitors, the administration is welcoming and helpful and staff camaraderie is evident. TTPS has one class in each year of K-6, a non-teaching Principal, and relief from face to face teaching provided by the librarian. Music is well supported with peripatetic teachers coming to the school each day of the week to give small class sessions and individual tuition.

Organizations are defined as culture-producing phenomena where rituals, ceremonies and artefacts are distinctive and allow interpretation of school life (Samier, 1997:419). In the school office there are *visible* artefacts (Schein 1992:237) such as trophies, school photos and pamphlets (for example the most recent DET leaflets on being active and eating wisely) are available for visitors, parents and those enquiring about enrolment. The weekly newsletter is an important communication link with the community. It includes a collation of the Principal's Report and information from class teachers, extra notes to

parents about lost property, reminders of uniform pool sales, term dates, and short topical notes such as one recently concerning physical activity for health, taken from a DET pamphlet.

Analysis of a culture moves from observing artefacts and behaviour to discovering the underlying assumptions which actually determine how group members think and feel (Schein, 1992:239). TTPS is obviously proud of its heritage and the history of the school is well documented. History and language become both legend and myth perpetuating tradition and beliefs. The language used in historical accounts, newsletters and notices remains for others to see as people's interpretation of their environment. The ideology of the school motto, Honour before Honours, is a specific example of this (Samier, 1997:420). Children receive praise for all manner of positive accomplishments. These celebrations are mostly held at Friday assemblies when parents are invited to attend the presentations. Achieving to the best of one's ability is recognized and rewarded.

The school statement of purpose is that TTPS intends "to have children reach their potential by providing for individual needs and abilities, academically, socially and physically, with emphasis on values of honesty, respect, co-operation and care"(School, 2005: introduction,np). The language conveys the importance of the positive aspects of school life, however nowhere is health mentioned in any documents apart from PDHPE curriculum scope and sequence planning document for 2005. "The rules of ritualized language include the expression of ideologies or organizational myths elevated to inviolability such as team-work, high standards, consensus and academic freedom" (Durkheim 1961 cited in Samier 1997:420). This written interpretation of school standards and expectations is important in considering the beliefs of those associated with the school.

There are informal patterns of interaction such as the weekly morning teas and a football table competition. These informal patterns of interaction set a tone for the school for which the principal has the metaphor (Grady, 1993) of the 'happy family'. The staff, students and visiting parents would all agree with this, however, nowhere is concern expressed specifically for health needs of the school community. It is as though there is an expectation that there should be few health related problems as the metaphorical family overtly displays no need. Does this perspective include a broad holistic education?

### **The approach to HPS and health at TTPS**

What does 'Health' mean at TTPS and where does most health education come from? The health promoting schools approach recognises that educational programs will have greater impact if the curriculum, policies and school community combine to create a healthy environment, in an holistic approach to health issues. The Australian Health Promoting Schools Association (AHPSA) vision statement for all health-promoting schools in Australia is that "all children will belong to communities which are committed to promoting lifelong learning, health and well-being" (Australian Health Promoting Schools Association, 2001:14). An important element is the active participation and empowerment of individuals and the community through collaboration, participatory

decision-making and personal action (Australian Health Promoting Schools Association, 2001:87).

Elements of the health promoting school can be recognized as partially working for sun safety at TTPS but not in regards to nutrition, drug education, sexuality education and other PDHPE syllabus areas. Schools select those topics for teaching and learning that relate most to the needs of the students and the school community. When staff are asked whether they promote health at the school the initial reaction has been around the issue of healthy eating, “but we don’t have a canteen so it is not really such a concern” (Pers. comm. 16<sup>th</sup> March 2005).

The staff agree that promotion of sun safety is something the school has done in response to the sun safe directive from the NSW DET in 1997 and since that time wide brimmed hats have been part of the uniform, more trees have been planted in the school grounds and the shade structure was erected. “The children and parents know they have to wear hat and sun-screen, it is part of the uniform. On excursions a note will remind them about sun safety” (Pers. comm. 16<sup>th</sup> March 2005). The HPS should be “a process for achieving many of the other goals/tasks they [staff] have set for themselves” (Queensland Coordinator, 1997: 5.3.1 ). However at TTPS it seems that in conditions conducive to the implementation of the HPS there remain major hurdles to be overcome.

### **Barriers to the implementation of a Health Promoting School**

Factors recognised as barriers to a HPS at TTPS are;

The demands of the bureaucracy, position of the principal, perceived time constraints and demands on teachers and teacher efficacy, lack of parent and community involvement, and the ownership of school health.

### **Demands of the Bureaucracy**

Hoy (2002) writes on enabling and mindful school structures, which ought to be useful in interpretation of the effect of bureaucracy on a school. Culture is a valuable tool in collecting evidence for analyzing aspects of school life. The formalized culture of the school such as written rules, regulations, procedures and policies (Hoy, 2003:88) and coercive formalisation, (for example the compulsory Basic Skills Test), forces subordinates to acquiesce and comply with formal routines. This can cause absenteeism, stress, alienation and it negatively relates to job satisfaction and innovation. These enforced procedures frustrate discussion of issues and concerns, leave no room for argument, cause problems to be seen as restraints and can lead to staff feeling mistrustful resulting in a group wariness of unexpected occurrences. (Hoy, 2003:89). Overall this however, is not apparent at TTPS and it could be argued that staff inability to implement a HPS framework can be attributed to other consuming pressures.

Teachers may use the bureaucracy as the scapegoat for not implementing new and additional aspects of school programs (Hoy, 2003). But bureaucratic features are necessary to assist organizations including schools, because they need appropriately designed formal procedures and hierarchical structures to prevent chaos and promote efficiency (Hoy, 2003:87-88). The bureaucracy provides documents, symbols, job-

descriptions, expected procedures, assemblies, meetings plans and record keeping all obviously part of TTPS. The negative reaction to a visit from the government auditor provided an example of the constant pressure to keep standards and practices along required lines for quality assurance, and reinforced argument of the diversion of energy from curriculum to bureaucratic concerns.

Bureaucracy can be described as the product of a style of social interaction, with its own values, beliefs, ideologies and day to day rituals (Samier, 1997:418). When interpreting the affect of bureaucracy on the school it is not only the obvious routine procedures and policies that have influence, but the 'State based testing procedures' enforced through the Basic Skills Testing program. It appears that the amount of formalized structure placed upon schools is creating barriers for implementation of programs, and perhaps more so to the opportunity for educators to take account and evaluate the use and support of new resources and models. Hoy argues that it is possible for the bureaucracy to actually increase satisfaction with supporting innovations, reducing role conflict, and diminishing alienation. Best practice should be using Hoy's 'enabling formalisation' which "helps participants find solutions to problems because here the rules and procedures are viewed as flexible guidelines that reflect 'best practices' rather than rigid rules" (Hoy, 2003:89). There are the two views of bureaucracy, first as a supportive mechanism and second as a time consuming interference. "It is the dark view, however, that is emphasised and demonised in education" (Hoy, 2003:88). Perhaps it is the current amount of formalized expectation that is stifling teachers, interfering with learning and teaching time, and their ability to be innovative with programs such as HPS.

### **The School Principal**

TTPS as a government school with a bureaucratic background is characterised by a hierarchy of authority and division of labour based on the roles of the principal, teaching staff, administration staff and grounds staff. This situation upholds impersonality, objective standards, technical competence, and rules and regulations (Hoy, 2003:87). But in a small school the personal interactions may over ride the bureaucratic hierarchy to a degree and it is not the bureaucracy alone that provides the climate of TTPS but rather the people making a difference through their attitudes and abilities.

This is metaphorically a 'happy family' with the principal as family head who has an authoritative leadership style (Grady, 1993). The principal strongly endorses music in Creative Arts, and he is proud of the school hall where numerous trophies won by choir, band and recorder groups reinforce its importance. "Creative Arts is important at this school, the parents expect us to do well" (Pers. comm. 16<sup>th</sup> March 2005). Sporting achievements are recognised on assemblies and trophies adorn the school foyer. The principal values achievement and effort, and the weekly assemblies are an opportunity for him to recognise a wide range of students in front of their peers and invited parents. He believes in the importance of reinforcing the school motto that states the importance of achievement. Teams and individual sport champions are recognised on assemblies and in News Letters that along with Creative Arts supports team building, performance, confidence building and self-esteem. All can be linked strongly to personal development

outcomes in the K-6 PDHPE syllabus but are not formally recognised in TTPS PDHPE curriculum programs.

The principal's main aim of the school is to have 'happy children' who want to be at school able to be taught, and for his school to be highly successful in the state basic skills tests. He encourages happiness in the staff through the structures of morning teas, free newspapers, and football draws. He also shares in the routine jobs such as playground and bus duty rosters. The principal is responsible for implementation of policy and formal organizational structure of the school and as Hoy points out "organizational structure is inevitable" (Hoy, 2003:90). The principal's position is set by the Department of Education hierarchy and has the stamp of authentic authority in the formal cultural definition (Hoy, 2003:89). He is able to use this power in determining the formal structure and ritual to be followed and can decide how much of the power to share with his staff and the community in making decisions. Hoy describes the amount of sharing and collaboration as a position of enabling hierarchy (Hoy, 2003:90).

The teachers are established, experienced and capable educators who have worked long term at the school. The principal of TTPS was the youngest member of staff when first appointed and subsequent to that time there have been two new staff members who are younger and currently only three years out of university. Using contrived social structure the principal has stamped his authority through informal structure of staff and parent camaraderie, as well as that already handed to him in the bureaucratic formal structure (Hoy, 2003).

Sweetland and Hoy (2001) in their paper on "varnishing the truth in schools" use a conceptual framework to explore the communication culture in schools. The Principal at TTPS could be placed in the category of *Civility: showing and hiding thoughts*. (2001:284). He receives copious amounts of mail each day, much of it educational 'junk mail' along with various teaching kit flyers, booksellers pamphlets and Departmental policy and procedure notices. Watching the sorting of the mail gives some insight into his priorities and concern for the teaching staff.

In the informal banter and staffroom discussions about the amount of extra work that teachers are being asked to add to their already busy schedules the comment that "Schools are expected, yet again, to fix up society's problems" (Pers. comm. April 2005) has been made more than once. Some of the daily mail is for resources to assist staff in delivering programs but additional teaching matter is not particularly welcome in a crowded school curriculum. A poster advertising an Anti-smoking competition and video resource, 'The Critics' Choice 2005', to be sent free to schools requesting a copy, was binned as "just another extra to fix up society" (Pers. comm. 16 March 2005). This example fits well with the perception of the principal 'spinning the truth' as by hiding these opportunities from his staff he has good intentions and is trying to protect them. He is deceiving others to keep the system working, to make life easier for his busy staff, but in doing so he is not allowing them to make decisions on use of the resources.

Sweetland and Hoy (2001) point out that deception can be functional, (which the principal believes in this case), or dysfunctional, in that this deception means that the choices of his staff to collect, appraise and use some resources are being controlled and limited (Sweetland & Hoy, 2001:283). Is happening because of the personal opinion and values of the principal or because of an overcrowded curriculum?

The principal was apologetic in his discussion about Health in the curriculum when explaining that he regularly monitors the teaching programs for English and Maths but the other subjects are to be kept up to date by the teachers. They are not regularly checked. The Social Science syllabus was mentioned as one that should be more carefully planned and put in place, but programs for PDHPE are not a priority, causing a major barrier to implementing the HPS model.

### **Perceived time constraints and demands on teachers and teacher efficacy**

It emerged that the school displays conditions favourable to the HPS model in some respects, but neglects the PDHPE curriculum in favour of teaching sufficient literacy and numeracy to ensure that the teachers and students are prepared for an optimal performance in the state Basic Skills Tests, (BST). Morgan and Bourke (2004) in their study of the relationship between generalist teachers' curriculum preferences in the primary school compared to other areas of the NSW primary curriculum, found that PE was ranked fourth behind English, Maths and HSIE in terms of relative importance. In general, respondents would prefer to teach other Key Learning Areas to PE (Morgan & Bourke, 2004:5) showing that some areas of curriculum are more privileged. At TTPS teachers do not participate in a whole school daily PE program. It is seen as time consuming and taking time away from the morning, "the best time of day for teaching" (Pers comm., May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2005) confirming this research.

Observation suggests that time constraints and frustration cause changes to curriculum and stifle innovation and creativity in teaching. The demands of the Basic Skills Tests in Numeracy and Literacy hold the most power while other subject areas suffer by being compacted or omitted. There is a common thread of complaint about the amount of work expected of teachers and the lack of time to achieve all that is asked of them and all that they as creative professionals would wish to achieve (Morgan & Bourke, 2004:11).

Teachers accept the pressure of the principal's reliance on high achievement in the government basic skills tests. As one teacher remarked, "The school concert takes up a great deal of time preparing our class item and organising costumes etc. then we still have to spend two hours each day on English and Maths. There's not much time for other subjects" (Pers comm., May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2005). The document for schools 'Towards A Health Promoting School' (NSW Department of Health et al., 1996) is found in the TTPS library but it has a clean borrowing slip.

In a school, where academic excellence and achievement is so strongly valued, the Basic Skills Tests over ride many other school activities. "The common thread running through all these criticisms is human frustration with unresponsive structures, rigid rules, and mindless policies" (Hoy, 2003:87). During terms one and two teacher remarks about other curriculum areas such as PDHPE and Human Society in its Environment (HSIE)

are apologetic comments on how it is unfortunate that these subjects cannot be covered in any depth, or at all, at this stage because it is imperative to have the children prepared for the tests.

Staff values and attitudes towards Personal Development Health and PE may be attributed to a lack of teacher efficacy in health education. Morgan and Bourke found this to be so in the case of PE where reasons provided for not wishing to teach PE included insufficient training and lack of personal experience (Morgan & Bourke, 2004:5). Health is not a single topic that can be organised learned and tested in traditional ways, and the outcome is difficult to measure as the health knowledge and practice may not be evident for many years and may only occur later in life.

“There are misconceptions about the nature and scope of health education as a discipline. Forced feeding of facts about the diagnosis and treatment of diseases has resulted in limited and simplistic concepts of what health education involves” (O'Connor-Fleming & Parker, 2001:169).

Staff comments on the difficulty of teaching some health areas such as sexuality and drug education were common. “There is a problem finding good resources for these areas. The children are a bit young for sex education, our kids are immature” (Pers. comm. 11<sup>th</sup>, May 2005). Does a lack of training and resources for generalist primary school staff cause a low level of teacher efficacy in health education? Rural schools lack the networks and support of the city and insufficient opportunities for in service training is an ongoing problem for more isolated schools. When asked if they had been to health education courses the TTPS staff was able to name only a PDHPE course for Fundamental Movement Skills.

The TTPS PDHPE lessons in sun safety are programmed for years K, 1, 2, not in 3, 4, 5 and perhaps could be included in year 6 under the lessons on “modelling fair and safe behaviours” in term 4. Year six students told me that they “did a poster on sun safety, Slip, Slop, Slap in Year 5” (Pers comm., May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005). Discussions with the staff revealed that although the program exists they have not had time to address most (if any in some cases), of the lessons on sun safety. Rather a common remark was that the sun safe message is an ongoing thread that is always present. Comments included; “PDHPE has really important areas that should be covered but even if you want to teach it there is no time” (Pers comm. June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005).

The PDHPE program of TTPS is one taken from a resource for primary schools (Tamworth National School Drug Education Strategy Cluster, 2001). It is available for use and is a handy resource. Hatton (1988) in a study of teachers’ techniques describes some as ‘bricoleurs’ who tend to use those materials easily ‘to hand’ and “how they might be used to complete, or approximately complete, the project” (1988:338). With limited time and concerns of effectiveness PDHPE is frequently cut back.

### **Lack of parent and community involvement**

The most visual evidence of parental involvement is their attendance at the weekly school presentation assembly on Fridays. Students give a class performance and achievers are

honoured. At times parents also assist with reading programs. The kindergarten teacher organizes a gross motor program each Wednesday for thirty minutes and two or three parent helpers regularly attend as supervisors on activities. However parents are not involved in the curriculum planning of the school as the principal feels that teaching is the preserve of the staff. "The parents expect us to do the teaching" (Pers comm., March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2005). In discussion with parents about sun safety their opinions were that the children knew the wearing of a hat and sunscreen was important. In particular information for excursions parents are informed that a hat, sunscreen and no singlet shirt is expected. These parents were very unsure about other health issues being addressed at the school apart from a comment in the newsletter earlier in the year about packing a healthy lunch.

It is acknowledged that parents contribute significantly to school effectiveness and to students' success. "Schools constitute ethical environments...(they) provide their students, employees and other constituencies with a set of guiding moral values. In addition, schools also set an ethical-educational mode of conduct and sometimes even preach morality in the classroom" (Rosenblatt & Peled, 2002:350). A school climate characterised by caring for parents as well as students, was related to increased parental involvement (Griffith 1998 cited in Rosenblatt & Peled, 2002:350). The principal commented, "parents are a great help on the P&C [parent body] where they can raise money and organize working bees but the staff are responsible for school programs and make teaching decisions" (pers comm., March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2005). In 1999 the School Council was disbanded and it appears that TTPS places boundaries on parental and community involvement.

Parents can make a contribution to their child's education leading to improved student outcomes and achievement, which in health areas is particularly relevant. Generally this approach views parental involvement as based on shared goals and cooperation but the norm at TTPS limits involvement to raising money, planting trees, other working bees and helping teachers in classroom activities. Parental involvement has been one of the most prominent indicators of school effectiveness and since parents are typically part of the school's surrounding community, their values should be closely linked to the school ethical environment (Bourne and Snead 1999 cited in Rosenblatt & Peled, 2002:351).

Is the effect of a higher economically strong community affecting the lack of parental involvement in the school? The school waiting list and people who 'book in' their babies, gives the school the opportunity to be selective of clientele. The school is generally economically well positioned with a clientele from middle to upper socio-economic class families who expect the school to teach their children to high levels of literacy and numeracy. Most households have two parents and both working so during teaching time interaction with the school is inconvenient. According to Arfwedson (1979 cited in Zeichner & Gore, 1990:340) school conditions are dependent on the local society surrounding the school. This view suggests that schools serving high and low socio-economic populations can be thought of as providing quite different working situations for teachers, and parents can be seen as exerting either direct or indirect influence on teachers and the school. In high-status schools, the influence is seen to be exerted directly

by parents whereas in low-status schools, it is thought to be carried most frequently through the agency of the children as representatives of their families, their social class and its interests. TTPS aims to please parents with good results in literacy, numeracy and music. Is higher socio economic status, along with the attitude of the school to parent involvement, creating a barrier to the HPS at TTPS?

The school has few outside agencies coming into contact with the school apart from an asthma talk over a year ago, and no visiting police, fire officers, or health officers have been at the school this year. Whereas the central characteristic of the HPS is a whole school community approach to health education allowing students to develop skills and make informed decisions about their health. “When communities are actively involved in health education both the outcomes and processes are more likely to become sustainable over time” (Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health, 1996:np. intro.).

### **The ownership of school health**

It is not the Department of Education that has responsibility for HPS in NSW but the NSW Department of Health that has been handed the brief of assisting the implementation of HPS. Partnership building between the two sectors (Education and Health) underpins HPS with these are two extremely large bureaucracies and workplaces both requiring something from the partnership. Rowling highlights the importance of the two working together in implementing new policy, the necessity of ensuring the outcomes will be ‘promising’, and the importance of adopting a clear evaluation framework. Schools are instigators and owners of change (Rowling and Jeffreys 2000a:118) but the ownership of HPS by the NSW Department of Health appears to create a barrier in rural health areas where the priorities for a HPS appear low. In the context of a school setting the educational goals for health may be different to the community health agent’s perspective.

“Context and the individual affect each other, define each other, and belong to the same configuration of factors they inform, produce and reproduce each other. In HPS multi strategic practice is needed to focus on structural and organisational change and school community action. HPS is not one tangible intervention so it is essential to have a collaborative reflective stance and analytical approach, combined with a variety of evaluative activities that continuously act to influence the development of the school as a health promotion setting” (Rowling and Jeffreys 2000a:119).

Parental and community support for health in schools appears to be imperative if the program is to be effective, and this is barely present at TTPS. Parental involvement should assist the school and similarly assist in building social cohesion, creating greater social capital and developing community empowerment (O'Connor-Fleming & Parker, 2001:194).

The local Community Health office has not contacted TTPS and community health area priorities are community based and not school oriented. By comparison on the Central Coast of NSW there is a vibrant health promotion program in over a hundred schools

supported by a specialist officer from the Department of Health who liaises with education. Health Education has national education policy support through the national curriculum framework. But the HPS has been channeled through state systems, largely via targeted vertical projects based on a risk factor reduction orientation and funded at local area health level. Much of the advocacy and information exchange within the HPS movement has been through the Australian Health Promoting Schools Association (AHPSA) and there are contradictions between NSW DET, Community Health and HPS (Rowling and Jeffreys 2000a:118).

### **Proaction and Reaction**

The HPS model is proactive and promotes empowerment and wellness as in new public health whereas the study found that TTPS practices the risk factor approach, allied to old public health and a 'disease' or problem prevention. Schools that do not understand the HPS model are more likely to be reactive than proactive in health situations. An example is a recent bullying episode at TTPS where the principal followed school policy and disciplined the bully. There was informal discussion of the incident by staff and reaction by some teachers to immediately hold class discussions with their students on problems of bullying.

A health promoting schools model would use policy, curriculum, school ethos and community involvement to build a supportive environment and have strategies in place to effectively deal with bullying issues in the school (NSW Department of Health et al., 1996:5-12). If there are preventive programs such as adherence to sun safety policy and practice they may be partially health promoting, but the holistic proactive HPS does not exist.

### **CONCLUSION**

There is little doubt that the whole community can benefit from a HPS. The study of climate and culture at TTPS has revealed that barriers exist for implementing the HPS framework even where the situation appears conducive to practicing health promotion.

Unless many of the barriers such as those at TTPS are overcome, implementation of HPS will remain difficult. Increasing awareness and providing opportunities for schools to understand the benefits of the HPS may create wider acceptance, however, Rowling states that implementation of the program in Australia has been inconsistent and further suggests "there are some concerns that health promoting schools do not work" (Rowling and Jeffreys 2000a:117). The study at TTPS displays a range of difficulties facing implementation of the health promoting school model.

Is the study of climate and culture able to discover sufficient evidence to assist in developing more effective practice towards implementation of health promoting schools? Questions of the value of the HPS to school and society, the amount of support that a HPS is able to give to PDHPE, recognition of the ability of the health promoting school in building social capital and improving the health of the wider community, are all complexities for consideration.

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