THE MICRO-POLITICS OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM: Teachers and Policy in NSW and England

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NOT TO BE QUOTED WITHOUT PERMISSION

Abstract  This paper is a report of research-in-progress. Comparisons will be made with parallel research in England. The study began in 1989 as a pilot investigation into decision-making by the first group of Leading Teachers appointed to secondary government schools in the Hunter Region preliminary to the 'Schools Renewal' programme. The field of study is relevant to the conference sub-theme "Teachers in Today's Climate" with particular reference to the Scott report (1990) view of 'school-centred education'. The research findings present qualitative and quantitative data collected on what a group of executive decision-makers actually attempted in the management of change. This experience was mediated by the LTs own sense of self, by the culture of their setting, and by wider social and political contexts. This paper thus aims to present an instance of the process of policy implementation and the micro-political interactions derived from managing reform.

There are a number of critical parallels between contemporary English (Ball, 1990, Ball and Bowe, 1990) and Australian (Crump, Cocklin and Maley, 1990; Crump, Monfries and Berry, 1990) research into school community responses to political reforms imposed on the organisation of education in both countries. The best representation of these reforms is to be found in the legislation which empowered and legitimated their implementation: the "Education Reform Act 1988" [ERA] for England and Wales and the "Education Reform Act 1990 No.8" [ERB] for New South Wales [NSW], Australia. These research parallels suggest an international 'touchstone' which, as we hope to demonstrate in this paper, provides educators and policy-makers with a powerful source of information about the efficacy of these reforms and the future direction of the management of schools.

We coined the term 'research touchstone' to refer to shared elements of complementary investigations. We have adopted the
use of 'touchstone' (Lakatos and Musgrave, 1970) to describe the international common ground shared between the research projects of the University of London [UL] team and University of Newcastle [UN] team. Both projects are investigating politically-driven educational reforms, particularly those related to school management. Our search for 'touchstone' is based on a view that the growth of knowledge is a problem-solving activity. The problems are those perceived by key decision makers and the solutions are the practices and coping strategies which depict a response to specific leadership problems. While there are clear differences between the various problem-solution repertoires under the spotlight of the UL and UN research projects, there are -perhaps surprisingly - many shared contexts and problem situations. These commonalities are the 'research touchstone' we wish to explore as one way to understanding the micro-politics of educational reform.

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RESEARCH TOUCHSTONE
The NSW project began in 1989 as a pilot investigation for the Hunter Region (NSW) into decision-making by the first group of Leading Teachers [LT] appointed to secondary schools as one of the early concrete reforms of the recently-elected Liberal government. The project is part of a broad research program on the occupational culture of teachers headed by Prof. J.C. Walker, University of Canberra. The UN project began as an ethnographic case study into the implementation of policy related to educational administration. The project expanded in 1990 to include broader research strategies built on initial findings and increased the sample to include the second wave of LT appointments in the Hunter. We are currently negotiating the participation in the project of the region's Cluster Directors [CD] appointed in April this year. The LT and CD positions were completely new management positions, the LT (Dr. Metherell's idea) within certain schools and the CD (Dr. Scott's idea) across a network of about 3 secondary schools as well as the relevant feeder primary schools.

Dr. Metherell built up the idea of the Leading Teacher position from innovations in the United States:

My recollection is that some of the Premier's staff had been with him as Leader of the Opposition to the States not long before I became Shadow Minister.
They'd brought back the usual crate load of documents (...) but amongst that was some material comparing various reform initiatives in the States since the early '80's and references to the Leading Teacher concept, and the various states' attempts to trial that or something comparable with it, and that just struck me as a useful change agent, a useful catalyst in the struggle to get better leadership in schools. So quite unashamedly we borrowed the concept. It came with a different name, I think, from the States (...) We changed it to Leading Teacher because we felt that had the leadership element to it, but it didn't have some of the perhaps more elitist feel that the American phrase had to it.

We judged this development to be worthy of research and accepted as a working hypothesis the government's expectation that fast-track promotion on merit would allow these people to become a different and, by inference, better educational leader than previous generations. Further, these people were viewed as a change agents sent on a mission to reverse the degenerating culture of many government secondary schools. By researching the processes of LTs in the micro-political context of their practice in managing change we are attempting to understand how LTs, and now Cluster Directors, operate in new leadership positions in an environment which requires new leadership practices. In becoming elite decision-makers, LTs and CDs accepted an elevation in employment status which required adaptation to increasing responsibilities, often in an hostile setting. Dr Metherell foreshadowed the LTs role in his policy document, written while shadow Minister, "Education: The Facts":

Up until now, outstanding teachers have been promoted to administrative positions within our schools or to Head Office. By introducing the Leading Teacher program (...) excellent teachers have the option of remaining in the classroom - providing encouragement and an example to fellow teachers and students alike. (1987, Fact Sheet No. 12).

Leading Teachers are appointed with the salary and status equivalent to a Deputy Principal but are responsible for teaching classes, providing leadership in improved classroom techniques, school in-servicing and professional development, development of probationary teachers and school-based curriculum development. There were 53 LTs appointed to schools in 1989, 50 in 1990 and 47 appointments are approved for 1991. In the above quote, Dr Metherell openly acknowledged that the LT role is to be part of the vanguard for changing the culture of schools towards a more responsive, entrepreneurial and reformist disposition, one which has the potential to change the social purposes of schooling. Cluster Directors are responsible for a 'cluster' of about 16 schools and they are expected to spend about 70% of their time in schools providing educational leadership and supporting principals in promoting excellence, equity, quality and accountability in the schools'
operation. They are also expected to assist with the management of financial and human resources, be available to speak to parent and community groups, and oversee regional and central policy implementation. In March 1990, 149 Cluster Directors were appointed as a new administrative position within the restructured NSW Department of School Education. Cluster Directors will eventually be located at an Educational Resource Centre which will provide local access to educational aids and be a shopfront for Departmental curriculum documents.

While this makes LTs and CDs carriers of the ideology of the 'New Right', our data suggests that - as for policy - the ideology of the economic marketplace is recontextualised through the processes of implementation, contestation and in the face of solving the practical problems at each school site. What we identify is an instance of Deweyan pragmatism at its best. At the heart of the School-Centred Education Report is a view that problems are best solved at the local level. If, by turning this rhetoric into reality, LTs and CDs succeed in stirring up the sleeping giant of the NSW educational bureaucracy, in redressing the chronic lethargy of most NSW government secondary schools (and perhaps indirectly challenging the even more myopic private system), and in democratising the hidden decision-making of school management, then the ideology of the 'New Right' will have been a useful resource for reconstructing education in a way perhaps surprising to those who began the process.

There are significant similarities between the research of the UN and UL projects. The University of London team is investigating four comprehensive secondary schools [called Flightpath, Parkside, Pankhurst and Overbury] in two LEAs [Westway and Riverway] in England which are in the process of implementing the Local Management of Schools, comparable to 'global budgeting' in NSW. Each school is being treated as a case study involving extensive ethnographic research strategies. Comparisons are made between cases to detect themes for extensive analysis. This project is an exemplar of policy ethnography, basing itself on the premise that policy implementation is highly problematic and is subject to mediation and recontextualisation. There is a significant degree of touchstone between the data collected in England and NSW, a touchstone which informs a sociology of policy as well as insights into the political context of decision making by key school-level personnel.

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL TOUCHSTONE

Theory and method share significant ground both within the individual research projects and between the UL and UN projects. We agree that knowledge grows in response to practical problems, that is, when hypothesised solutions are applied to actual problems. We also acknowledge that changes in the environment create new problems which must be dealt with in practical ways. As J.C. Walker suggests:

... views and values - whether cultural or strictly
personal - develop and change only through problem-solving activity. This can include, of course, reflective thought outside the immediate practical problem context, in which new views and values are perceived as relevant to practical problems. We can revise and rewrite our programs without having to be simultaneously testing the revisions; and we can anticipate and prepare for possible future problems. (Walker, 1988; 35)

The implication for research into the reform of school management is that key decision-makers are likely to develop a variety of problem solving responses according to each situation. In order to research these responses, the UN team employed a variety of quantitative (Social Avoidance and Distress Scale [SAD] and Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale questionnaires) and qualitative (interview and observation) research strategies to provide different perspectives on the complex culturally-based problem solving repertoires of those who are required to lead schools through the contemporary array of reforms.

Second, both teams accorded a priority to qualitative research strategies on the basis of credible scientific principles developed through earlier work in naturalistic settings (Ball, 1981; 1985; Crump, 1985; 1990b) with the UN study developing an approach drawing on the differing expertise of the researchers. The UL and UN projects display strong similarities in their theoretical stance and analytical procedures, concentrating on cultural aspects delineated by the practical issue of implementing imposed political reforms. Both projects suggest an analysis which discerns the direction of conflict and power in the new and changing social relations of the school community. Both projects began with four differing comprehensive secondary schools, across two Local Education Authorities [LEA] in England and within a single education-system region in NSW.

Third, both projects explore the interpretations of policy by some of the policy makers, through instances of senior school management and in specific staff reactions. Both teams argue that the findings provide powerful commentary on the process of implementing educational policy reform. The UN team adds that the establishment of international research touchstone empowers the relationship between qualitative research and policy decision-making. This point takes us neatly back to the starting point of our theoretical and methodological touchstone: we accept Walker's (1989) proposition that policy making is a problem solving, hypothesis testing process, or - as Ball (1990) presents it - policy making is what individuals and groups actually do and say in the arenas of influence in which they move.

CONTEXT TOUCHSTONE
There is an international effort currently under way to measure and assess the nature of imposed political reforms to
state education systems; "international" as this effort has so far been reported in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, United States of America, Britain and Western Europe (Beare, 1989; Blase, 1988; Brown, 1990; Brown, P., 1990; Ditcher, 1989; Farrar and Connolly, 1990; Frutcher, 1989; Grace, 1990; Jones, Wilson & Winser, 1989; Lightfoot, 1983; Miller and Leiberman, 1988; Murphy, 1983; Reynolds, 1988; Vandenberghe, 1988). Much of this research in England has concentrated on the impact of the introduction or development of a national curriculum. However, there is a growing body of research on the impact on school cultures of the English "Education Reform Act". Research is just beginning in NSW into the impact of the Scott "School-Centred Education" Report (1990) on the renewal of the management of the government school system, the Carrick Report into schooling in NSW and the "Excellence and Equity" (1989) statement on curriculum reform.

The NSW "Education Reform Act, 1990, No.8" [ERB], was intended to address the political problems inherent in the "Education and Public Instruction Act" of 1987 which was a major legislative reform of the previous Labor government. Both pieces of legislation represent the increasing intensity of imposed political reform. We realise that reform has been politically imposed, in NSW for example, since at least the Peter Board Report of 1910; however, it is the emphasis, pace and nature of the contemporary imposition which attracts our attention. As Beare (1989) recounts, the new breed of elite public servants of state and national educational ministries lack empathy with educators. More importantly, the legislation alluded to above gives significantly more power to the Minister than Director-General, a development reflecting further international touchstone as policy changes in education increasingly reveal the extraordinary commitment of the responsible Minister to their reform programme.

Yet our response to the NSW reform program is equivocal. As I argued elsewhere (Crump, 1990a), Dr. Metherell had every right to be `ideological' and I commended the way he provided open access to policy documents. Further, he accurately targeted the systemic and classroom problems, which - if we are honest - teachers and their unions had bemoaned for decades. While I remain less sure of the viability of planned curriculum reforms, the final Scott Report released in May this year provides a reassuring account of mistakes made in England and offers recommendations on maintaining teacher participation in curriculum development (Scott, 1990, p. 127) which counteract the devaluing of school-based courses as outlined in the "Excellence & Equity" document (p.24).

The British "Education and Reform Act 1988" was the most far-reaching educational legislation for England and Wales since the "Education Act" of 1944. There is a growing list of publications on how the ERA came about (Flude & Hammer, 1990; Fidler & Bowles, 1989), on local management of schools (Davies & Braund, 1989) or about learning to change (Clough, Aspinall & Bibbs, 1989) as well an assessment of the broad political context (Ranson, 1990; Dale, 1989; Chitty, 1989). In England,
while the effects of the ERA are not as a whole progressive, nor benign, Ball (1990, p.136) argues that the deliberations surrounding its implementation have allowed the possibility for expressing what Ball terms a 'new progressivism'. This position is currently articulated from within mathematics and science education circles and gives emphasis to problem solving, investigations and applications, an epistemology akin to Dewey's principles of education. J.C. Walker, (1989, p.4) also argues that there is no point at which policy making stops and implementation begins, providing some reason to be positive about the 1990s. J.C. Walker (1989) is encouraged that:

the numerous reports on education are advocating conditions to provide incentives for teachers and educational administrators to be creative and enterprising. This in itself (...) concedes the point about organisations and their members being part of the solution as agents and contexts of action. (...) Now that the point is conceded we can ask that it be applied as widely as possible (p.11).

One would be 'making history from theory' if one simply read off negative effects of the ERA and ERB without collecting the type of empirical data achieved in the UL and UN projects. It is Ball's (1990) Politics and Policy Making which provides the first sophisticated theoretically-based critique of the construction and implementation of the E.R.A. based on Ball's (1987) seminal micro-political theory on school organisation. Ball (1990) suggests that the internal conflict in what is a multi-interest organisation often mediate, in surprising ways, the projects of politicians and policy makers. It is precisely these processes which our complementary studies endeavour to investigate.

The UL and UN teams have established that policy is not a frozen text and that policy and legislation are capable of more than one interpretation as many models imply. School-level interpretations of policy and legislation constantly shift, differ between power bases and opportunistically exploit contradictions and gaps between policy documents and/or legislation. In NSW, despite a well-planned reform agenda, there are significant spaces between the management reforms of the Scott Reports and the curricular reforms of the Carrick and "Excellence and Equity" document. Policy thus becomes a resource for teachers and the school community which they can apply to their own social and educational context. Policy-in-use [school-level reaction / resistance / contestation] does not equal intended policy [what Dr Metherell, the Reports, some segments of the bureaucracy wanted], nor actual policy [the documents and legislation]. This rest of this paper will demonstrate some instances of this analysis.

DATA TOUCHSTONE
In the final section of this paper we wish to tease out a number of specific parallels in the data collected by the UL
and UN teams. These parallels apply at a number of levels and we will present them in a sequence which tracks macro-systemic parallels through micro-political school levels to parallels between individual personnel. In doing this, we will indicate how the touchstone between England and NSW vividly illustrates shared perspectives, practices and concerns. The account is mainly descriptive at this stage as the UN project is two years behind the UL project as the ERB is two years behind the ERA. However, we are making a number of propositions which attest to the viability of the project and which provide food-for-thought for those, in Australia or England, currently engaged in doing what we are describing. The first parallel undoubtedly depicts an international issue.

1) Schools in NSW have not yet approached the extent of market-oriented decision-making as identified by the UL team at Flightpath where a number of pro-active strategies were promulgated in response to the directives of the ERA. These strategies included:

* setting up a Marketing Group;
* floating a private loan to build a school gymnasium with the loan partly offset by profits from a licensed bar;
* establishing an Academic Performance Group;
* participating in commercial advertising with a computer company;
* consulting a public relations firm to improve the school's image;
* offering private health insurance as a recruitment incentive; and
* seeking industrial sponsorship.

Yet the generation of this level of business ethos within school organisations is part and parcel of the NSW reform agenda. I have argued elsewhere (Crump, 1990c) that this process is likely to engender inappropriate values and increase internal conflict, a fear echoed by a senior teacher at Flightpath when he commented to the UL team:

I'm worried about this gap that is growing between teachers and teacher management (...) It is increasingly becoming a situation where a small group at the top, if you can use that phrase, are telling or encouraging, by any means they can employ (...) other people to actually do things. Now, as I understand it, schools are different to industry, I mean I have this egalitarian view, that the people I am trying to encourage to change, cajole are my equals. Yet in industry that isn't necessarily true. (Ball & Bowe, 1990, p. 27-28).

Mr Smith's view is not only egalitarian, it is also an empirical point: assistant and executive staff share similar professional qualifications, much more so than managers and workers in industry and business. The LT at Bridgetown (NSW) understood that there are different factors to take into
account in the management of social organisations. S/he explained:

The least qualified person we have here is a graduate, a university person. You're not talking about an untrained, uninterested, uninformed workforce. You're talking about working with intelligent, professional people. (...) I think you have to believe that people are doing a good job and then find out that they aren't.

2) Underlying the economic imperative of our first parallel between the data of the UL and UN projects is an understanding that there is a difference between policy rhetoric and practice and that policy formation does not end with the legislative moment (Ball & Bowe, 1990). In the UN study, one LT suggested at a Staff Development Day on designing school-based action plans, that the staff take up the policy rhetoric to achieve their own ends: if the policy trumpets 'school-centred education', then power could be devolved to schools and teachers should seek every opportunity to turn that rhetoric into local action. In the UN project one LT wanted to use a general staff meeting to discuss the possibility of similar issues arising from the implementation of the Scott Report. She told us:

I wanted to talk to staff about the implications of [the Scott Report] if accepted. (...) [ask them] 'What are the implications for you as a classroom teacher?'. I was told 'No'. My principal did not want the Scott Report mentioned at all. I thought that was a shame. It is probably the most revolutionary document that teachers are going to come up against in the next three years. If they don't have time to talk about it, to (...) have an informed opinion, then I believe the idea of staff development and professional responsibility is just empty words. (...) My feeling is that the principal was reluctant because he wasn't confident enough to manage the comments - and there could have been a number of very negative comments (...) Now I don't think a professional body of people, if you treat them as responsible adults, will react like that. I think it's important for them to have that safety valve, to be able to jump up and down and say 'Look what they're doing now!' then, after they've had their cathartic experience, say 'Now let's look at how it may affect us..' [LTaF1: 2/8/89. Key: 'LTa' = 1989 appointment; 'F1' = name code; followed by date of the interview].

The LT aimed to facilitate a mood for change, but the Scott Report itself was not the main impediment. One problem this example illustrates is the advanced age bracket of most leaders in the NSW government system which is the outcome of decades of promotion on "seniority" rather than merit. We
suspect that LTs, and their equivalent in England, make rapid progress in learning about the relationship between implementing change and the social/political sub-cultures in their schools, or fail. Before exploring that dimension, we have also detected an alternative "leader".

3) The "maintainer" (don't rock the boat) administration role assumed by, for example, the principal of Pankhurst (England) offers a contrast to the roles played by LTs yet resembles the approach found in the senior administration of Lakeside in NSW. Interestingly, Pankhurst and Lakeside share similar socio-economic communities and a notably conservative staff. Lakeside serves a very middle class and affluent area. There was a feeling, however, that the school had not been achieving high results in the Higher School Certificate [the external matriculation exam given at the end of secondary school, Year 12]. The LT noted:

My first impression of the school and the place (was that) we have got teachers here who have been teaching in excess of 25 years, very experienced staff, no first-year-out teachers. (...) That's the nature of the place and once people get here they're very reluctant to leave. (...) [so] I tried to find areas [to change] that would be least threatening to the staff, areas which were obviously in need [of change] (...) and to steer clear of the more sensitive areas. (...) It turns out that I was wrong [laughs] and that all [original emphasis] matters were sensitive even if there was an acknowledged need. Moving in deeper to actually do anything in any area was viewed with grave suspicion by a lot of the staff. [LTaF3: 7/9/89]

While the LT at Lakeside was very aware of external forces and educational issues, s/he had trouble arousing a sense of commitment in the staff towards change. Some schools exist in a time-warp, banking on the not unrealistic hope that policies and/or Ministers will change before they have to! While Dr Metherell is no longer responsible for the Education portfolio, Virginia Chadwick [appointed Minister for School Education, Youth and Womens Affairs in a mid-year (1990) cabinet reshuffle] appears to be committed to the implementation of his policies before the next election (by mid-1991), while putting considerable effort into consensus building and reassurance work, a strategy also adopted by Kenneth Baker's successor (Ball, 1990, p.148). If the 'head in the sand' strategy has worked in the past, we doubt it will in the future as communities take a closer interest in their school, especially when they see neighbouring schools set up as technology centres, centres of excellence in specialist subject areas, and embarking on completely new ways of staffing and financing their institution.

4) Finally, as a cautionary note to our analysis, there is a sense of personal failure shadowing LTs and senior staff in the UL project. This sense of failure is one dynamic in the
A member of the senior management team at Flightpath observed:

I think the school is very much over-reacting. We keep shooting ourselves in the foot. It's a bit like Salvador Dali's paintings. We could do ourselves a lot of damage because we are creating a lot of our own stress. We've had people on the senior management team, you'll have spoken to them, who are really worried, they see it as their personal failing, their responsibility to actually make sure that these things happen (Ball & Bowe, 1990; p. 31)

The Principal at Flightpath expressed the following discontent with the pressures on everyone's time:

Once upon a time we used to have a paper brought to this body [the SMC] and then everything was dealt with. Now, we're so pressured to do forward planning and such like that we don't have time. That means people aren't trained to do those jobs and the basic things aren't being organised properly. (Ball & Bowe, 1990, p. 38).

The contribution of socio-cognitive theories to our understanding of the psychology of occupational pragmatism is that it allows us to examine the unexplored connection between employment status and the self-esteem of the upwardly mobile. In becoming elite decision-makers, these teachers accepted an elevation in employment status which required adaptation to increasing responsibilities, often in an hostile environment. This change in occupational status not only required the restructuring of self-evaluations of self-worth influenced by the social evaluation of peers but also the implementation of coping resources. The combination of individual and social review of performance, we suggest, altered the nature of the occupational subculture of these senior managers. Thus, individuals' cognitive judgments of self-worth tend to be translated in the context of a change in work environment and through micro-political interactions derived from managing reform.

In the UN project, the LTs in their second year suspect that they are not achieving the enormous task set for them by the role description. One part of the UN project was to explore the cognitive processes involved when a person is confronted with the idea or reality of possible evaluations by others and how people attempt to control the images they project to others (Monfries, 1990). There is an interesting tension between the practical and structural aspects of problem-solving and ones belief in ones capacity to solve them. This tension reflects the ways of perceiving problems (dispositions) and this phenomenon is well-suited to Walker's (1988) cultural analysis model. Monfries notes that anxiety can arise when an individual perceives that s/he either can or will not make the desired impression and that this is more likely to occur when the motivation to create the desired
impression is high (Monfries, 1990, 14-16) as in LTs and CDs who are, by the nature of merit selection, fast track promotion, and the public expectation as a "Super Teacher", a high flier. Monfries suspects that people who worry about performance tend to be perfectionists; however, a certain level of anxiety can facilitate performance while excessive levels impede performance. LTs in the UN project showed little fear of negative evaluation and the Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) scales suggest LTs maintain their high ideals irrespective of the judgments made by peers.

Often when people face demotion or unemployment they experience levels of anxiety and a drop in self-esteem. The FNE was used to assess the interpersonal aspects of anxiety: apprehension about others' evaluations and expectancies of negative evaluation in a social climate. SAD measured cognitive styles and an individual's proclivity to be publicly or privately self-conscious. Public self-consciousness refers to the habitual attentiveness a person displays to overt aspects of the self that others can observe and evaluate while private self-consciousness makes people particularly susceptible to what happens in social situations; especially when there is scrutiny or confrontation. Conversely, private self-consciousness people are presumed to know themselves better and this makes them resistant to being fooled or coerced. Monfries (1990) suggested that private self-consciousness, when coupled with a high FNE, has a protective effect on the development of social anxiety and, consequently, it is generally regarded as a positive trait. Preliminary analysis indicates that LTs are low in FNE and high in private self-consciousness. This suggests that LTs are not overly concerned with others' views of their actions and are self-reliant. A self-discrepancy measure which assesses self-esteem in terms of perceived consistencies between actual attributes and ideal and ought' attributes was also completed by the LTs. Consistent with the previous findings, preliminary analysis indicates that LTs have high self-esteem and perceive their personal attributes to be very close to their notion of 'ideal' and 'ought' attributes. Consequently, it appears that these quantitative measure show that LTs are not experiencing any cognitive components of anxiety as a result of a change in employment status.

However, the qualitative has detected a number of interesting contrasts to the LTs stated position on the questionnaires. At Surfside, the UN team conducted extensive interviews with a number of staff nominated by the LT as "significant others", people with whom s/he had worked with in carrying out LT roles. All of these contacts reported an acceptance of the person as against acceptance of the actual roles of the LT position. They acknowledged that staff who had not worked with the LT were less positive and felt that the 'Super Teacher' tag was a slight on their own competence. There was also a difference between the "significant others" and staff who had little professional contact with the LT in their perception of the LTs impact on the school: "significant others" felt that the LT had contributed to curriculum development, assisted
faculty organisation, defined the school's goals and aims, and had done extra work in areas that had been neglected in the past and that the LT directed the staff's energies in a more efficient way thus easing the pressure and providing support and encouragement. They concluded that the LT received criticism because s/he was inducing change on a group of "staid teachers who don't like change". They concluded that the LTs main achievement was achieving improved morale and in maximising excellence in the educational setting.

Teachers in less direct contact with the LT resisted the changes introduced by the LT: they felt that s/he was just using the school as a stepping stone for fast-track promotion, that the LTs goals were brought in at the wrong time when they had too much to do already, and that s/he was really working towards personal goals, that s/he was not involved enough with the pupils, that the LT role was not all that relevant as a lot of the items addressed were really decisions an individual could make and that, as they had been in the school a long time, they do not need classroom supervision. Both groups in the school did agree that they did not want the LT to become a business manager and that financial responsibilities should go to the principal or to a bursar, someone with financial qualifications.

The LT at Surfside was not insensitive to the ambiguity of his position, acknowledging the hostility but viewing it as coming from people who still felt threatened by his role though not so much on a personal level. The LT at Lakeside met a more entrenched hostility:

The first day was fairly challenging (...). I very thoroughly prepared myself with some very amusing overheads which I hoped might break the ice (...). One of the overheads was a picture of a caped crusader with the stars and spangles, a woman of incredible qualities who had a cape. I had written across it "A Leading Teacher" and then underneath (...). "This is what I'm NOT". I started with that because the idea of a Super Teacher was very much in the minds of everybody at that time. I really thought that nobody could live up to the expectations that were being put on us and the sooner that was laid to rest the better. [LTaF3: 7/9/89]

Other LTs felt boxed in by the roles they were supposed to fulfil as it excluded them from management areas which require a quick fix and thus allowed them to demonstrate their abilities. The LT at Minesville felt the roles were too rigid and explained how the staff were very positive in their end-of-year evaluation of the LT position but asked to see the LT play a role in student welfare. S/he explained:

It's amazing that just the fact that they can ask me to help with a concern that they have with one of their students - and I can do something about it
almost instantly - then the pay off is that when I ask them to be involved in something that's fairly long term (....) they participate willingly in staff development and curriculum development [LTaF1: 30/4/90]

The LT at Newton sensed how:

A deputy is accepted and really valued by the staff of a school because he has handled a particular thing, or a child, or in the playground, or with rolls - things like that pay off straight away. Our position doesn't allow us to do that. [LTaF2: 22/8/90].

The LT at Alberton observed how peer perceptions changed after s/he spent time as relieving principal:

I think my periods down there [in the principal's office] when we've had a few crises to manage - and the fact that I did manage them - certainly enhanced my standing in the eyes of my colleagues. I've shown that I can do that but my role is different and I keep stressing that the role isn't as consistently public. (...) I suppose you could call it a problem. I've just got to keep convincing myself that I'm doing a good job and doing what's required of me and keep people informed. [LTbM3: 10/8/90].

Other coping strategies include playing for time. The LT at Surfside altered course a little at the beginning of 1990. S/he told us:

My view is that I've played a bit of a waiting game this term, just consolidating and doing the basic important planning within the school that had to be done. (...) My view about Term 1 was to consolidate, get the planning done at the school level to avoid the hiccups of last year. [LTaM1: 12/4/90].

Finally, the LT at Dalesville told us:

There are a lot of cynics out there who feel we've been shunted to a siding now that the initial after the initial flurry of development (...) and some Leading Teachers, many Leading Teachers, are feeling unwanted both by their schools and by the region. It's a very hard to do the job that they're doing let alone consider going further in the Department. There are some quite horrific stories about the way LTs have been treated particularly in schools but also in regions. [LTbM2: 30/7/90]

Our early data suggests that individual cognitive judgments of self-worth are translated by a change in employment status and
through the micro-political interactions based in the management of reform. While a degree of 'fear of negative evaluation' is a component of the LT profile identified in the qualitative data, the quantitative data suggests that LTs are able to maintain high self-esteem.

Our data thus suggests that leading a school through educational reform is a genuine micro-political minefield. It is a personal human experience which, for all the rhetoric, will only enable a change in the culture of schools if those conflicts and power struggles which do occur are ones worth winning. Otherwise, we risk falling morale among school leaders and that must be avoided if there is to be any change of deep, lasting, progressive reforms.

REFLECTIONS
We hope to have indicated a number of aspects about school leadership in this paper. However, our starting point is to suggest that if a number of schools, half the globe apart, have experienced the same micro-political conflicts, a phenomenon overcoming all the variables associated with systemic, cultural and social differences, then case studies can speak to a wide audience. Whether or not our findings are generalisable is an issue we will explore in another paper. At the very least, we have demonstrated a cross-paradigmatic dialogue within the UN team and a cross-cultural conversation across international barriers. When teachers in an inner city London school articulate almost verbatim the same concerns as teachers in a small rural town sheltered by the Great Dividing Range in NSW, then this suggests an international research touchstone which could provide coherent and valid data to increase the problem solving potential of policy and decision makers in education. We echo Miller and Leiberman's (1988, p.15) sentiment that:

If what we are seeking is full understanding of the phenomenon of school change, then we need to draw on both the quantitative and qualitative traditions to provide that understanding. The power of the qualitative study is that it presents a human face to school improvement. It helps us see the process as slow, complex, non-linear, untidy and unpredictable.

Second, the UL and UN projects also help us to understand that leadership must be an educational task. The qualities needed to bring about these changes are viewed variously by different actors in the policy making process. Yet, as Evers (1987) observes, leadership is more than a set of social management skills and more than behaviours found in an executive team of an institution or system. Rather, to be educative, leadership "is concerned with an active analysis of the way things are, the way they are seen to be, and with the creation of preferred ways of doing things". In this respect, the senior managers of many of the schools researched by the UL and UN
team have something to offer the business world. The Hunter Leading Teachers were educative in the way they initiated change, negotiated shared views and in the way they acted to both manage and lead (Fraatz, 1990). The approach adopted in most situations was what we would like to call 'principled pragmatism' (Walker, 1987; Crump, 1989). This is not the pragmatism usually associated with opportunism but rather a disposition, or set of actions and behaviours which reflect a philosophical and moral approach to negotiated and representative authority.

Yet the danger is that Leading Teachers and Cluster Directors face an impossible task if, a) they are not given the resources to be efficient managers as well as effective leaders; b) if the models they use are ambiguous and are not consistent with the practical context of organisational politics; and c) if, in bargaining and persuading their way through the micro-politics of their reform agenda, they contribute in ways which are more likely to promote stability rather than change. One option is to ensure that leadership styles, organisational structures and resources, communication procedures and policy decision making provides and maintains a school climate supportive of reflective practice - for executive, assistant and general staff (Hayes and Ross, 1989). As Brammar (1989) argued, significant creative input from employees is one of the distinguishing features of a world class company and employee involvement is 30% of the cost advantage enjoyed by Japanese car manufacturers. In this era of economic rationalism, this is one lesson education systems should not forget. Given the rhetoric - and probable intent - of the NSW Scott Report, we can suggest that school-centred education will mean micro-political interactions of the most interesting kind during the 1990s. Further, we predict that the policy contestation which our research already identifies, will find spaces and gaps which can be plugged with a new progressivism, one offering the chance to change the miseducation of our youth.

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