

THE NATIONAL SCHOOLS PROJECT

at

Bellingup Senior High School

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BACKGROUND

The National Schools Project (NSP) began in Western Australia about mid 1991 when a project coordinator was appointed. In November of that year arrangements were finalised for seven schools to participate in the project: one senior high school, one high school, two district high schools, and three primary schools. As in other states, the project was designed to be different from other school improvement reforms. By using a

system of 'waivers' it offered the seven project schools a mechanism to trial new types of work organisation currently prohibited by awards, regulations, and union and employer policies. Before 'breaking the rules', however, the schools had to develop proposals and submit them for approval to a State Steering Committee consisting of three officers of the Ministry of Education and three members of the Teachers Union Executive.

Early attempts to 'challenge the system' led the central project team and seven project schools to make a distinction between proposals and initiatives. Proposals outline changes that 'break the rules', that require approval from the State Steering Committee, and that are quarantined within the school submitting them. Initiatives are changes that can be introduced within the existing regulatory framework, that schools can implement without the permission of external authorities, and that are not quarantined.

Arguably, the NSP hinges on schools developing proposals rather than initiatives. Certainly, some people of the WA Ministry of Education believed that no matter how desirable initiatives might be, they fall outside the framework of the project. For instance, according to several Ministry officers (Chadbourne 1992, p.6):

One view of the project is, if you start to get schools to make changes within the current work organisation then inevitably down the track you'll get teachers wanting to talk to each other more about what they're doing and work organisation changes will flow out of that. I apply a more stringent test: if you can do it within the current form of work organisation then fine, do it, but it's not part of the project.

A key criteria of work organisation change is to ask, "In what way could this have been done without the project?" because if it could be done outside the project then the change is not significant enough to count as the type of work organisation change that the project is about.

These comments reflect the views of Employers nationally. A document on The Position of the Directors-General says:

Specifically we should ask the question, "Can the change proposed be successfully adopted within the current work organisation arrangements?" If the answer is yes it is not a proposal which falls within the boundaries of the Project, even though it may be a worthwhile proposal for the school to adopt. The point is that focusing on such proposals is unlikely to help us understand how changing work organisation can improve educational performance. Hence, changes to pedagogy which do not require changes in work

organisation lie outside the area of special interest of the National Schools Project.

This paper reviews the first year of the NSP at Bellingup Senior High (real school, fictitious name): that is, from October 1991

to September 1992.

1. For other reviews of the NSP see Angus (1993), Connors (1992), Independent Education (1992, Vol.22, No.3), McRae (1993), Susskind (1993), and Wallace (1993). Material for the review was collected from documents provided by the school and from interviews with thirteen staff, nine of whom were members of the school's NSP committee. A draft of the findings was then written and circulated for comment to the people interviewed. Their responses were incorporated in the final report (Chadbourne 1992a).

Of the seven Western Australian schools in the National Schools Project, Bellingup Senior High (BSHS) was the only one that participated in the Managing Change in Schools (MCIS) project conducted in this state between 1988 and 1989. The MCIS project also involved seven schools and was a forerunner of the NSP. At Bellingup, the NSP was simply known as the National Project or the project.

In 1992 the school had approximately 940 students, 70 teaching staff, and 14 ancillary and support staff. It provided education for a wide range of students, though most of them came from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Within the city of Bellingup the unemployment rate stood at 17%

PROPOSALS AND INITIATIVES

Throughout its first year in the project, BSHS submitted only one 'proposal' to the State Steering Committee. The school asked for permission to retain its temporary teachers in preference to having teachers transferred in from other schools. The Steering Committee rejected the request. Following that, a suggestion box was placed in the staffroom and staff submitted some thirty 'initiatives'. None of them were acted on in 1992. The school NSP committee formulated an additional initiative. It involved establishing an Alternative Year 8 program based on the principles of the systems work unit. Like the other initiatives it was not implemented in 1992, but it was put into practice early in 1993.

The lack of tangible results during the first year of the NSP at BSHS failed to reflect the considerable amount of work carried out by the school's project committee. For example, throughout that period, members of the committee: participated in three 3 day seminars; attended two 1 day retreats; held fortnightly meetings, each one spread over a double teaching period; addressed formal staff assemblies every month; published regular project bulletins for the staff; and read relevant literature. Much of that time and activity was devoted to developing a conceptual framework and using it as a basis for determining the suitability and significance of each of the thirty 'initiatives', rather than making decisions on them in isolation from each other and in isolation from some overarching rationale. The conceptual framework involved constructing a vision statement, framing a project motto, forming a school profile, identifying problem areas, and formulating principles on which strategies for solving the problems could be generated.

Despite all this work by the committee, progress at BSHS was much slower than that envisaged by the NSP staff in Central Office and by staff in the school itself.

REASONS FOR SLOW PROGRESS

Of the seven schools participating in the NSP in 1992, BSHS was

the only senior high. Senior high schools are vastly different organisations from primary and district high schools. For instance, they have strong internal sub-structures such as subject departments and curriculum frameworks that need to be taken into account. That aside, progress at BSHS was impeded by the following set of issues.

Consultation: Entering the Project

Bellingup entered the National Project as a result of the following sequence of events: the State Steering Committee shortlisted BSHS for consideration as a project school; the NSP team in Central Office consulted the union representative and the administration at Bellingup and both parties agreed that the whole staff be asked whether they wanted the school to join the project; a short staff meeting was held at which the school accepted the invitation to sign on; a second and longer staff meeting was held at which representatives from the Union and Ministry provided further details on what the project involved.

Even though the staff voted to join the project at a meeting for which advance notice was given, they did so under circumstances that left some of them feeling uneasy. From their memory of the

matter, the decision was made in about five minutes at the end of the day. Apparently a decision had to be made that day.

The feeling we had was that a small number of staff had decided we were going to be involved and then it became a matter of trying to convince the rest of the staff, but in a very quick way, that we are involved.

So when the decision went to staff, the staff were not totally conversant or informed about what was involved. Some staff still have only a vague idea of what the National Project involves.

The school became involved in the National Project with very little consultation with the staff. It was a decision that had to be made very very quickly and it was a decision that was made by people before it got to the staff and then it was more like a token thing mentioned to the staff, like, "There's this project. We've got to decide whether we're in it." It became very rushed. And then we simply found we are involved. It ended up just like another scheme being introduced without staff really having any say about whether they wanted to be in it or not.

What counts as "little consultation" can vary from one person to the next. Thus, another perspective on this matter was that:

A lot of consultation took place. This involved people such as Larry Hamilton, Kevin O'Keefe, Peter Hamilton and Ed Harken speaking to the general staff and the senior staff council.

I know that the decision was not made before staff were consulted about whether they wanted to be involved or not.

Representation: The National Project Committee

Having decided to join the project in October, Bellingup was asked in November by the Central Project Team, to choose a school project committee to attend a three day seminar. The request came at short notice. Nominations had to be called for and names submitted within 24 hours. Six nominations were received. Of these four were selected, not by the staff as a whole, but by the school administration and senior staff - an event which led one teacher to comment, "That was the way things were done anyway."

The seven person project committee consisted of the outgoing principal's nominee (the principal had been appointed to another school, starting in 1992), the incoming principal, the union representative at the school, and four other staff. In terms of

sex, subject and status, the committee was unrepresentative. Only two of the seven members were male -the new principal and union representative. Some subject departments had no senior staff and consequently were disenfranchised during the selection process. And all of the six nominations submitted for selection came from the ranks of the junior staff. Two ex officio members, the new principal and the outgoing principal's nominee (an acting deputy principal at the time), represented the administration but the committee contained no representation from middle management. To some extent, the imbalance was corrected during first term by the appointment of a male senior staff member to the committee. And, though a school development coordinator .6 time, the project coordinator held a substantive head of department position and thus may be regarded as also representing middle management. However, the fact remains that the males on the committee occupied 'required positions' (principal, union representative, and senior staff representative) while all the 'contested' positions were filled by females because only females nominated. The only female to fill a required position was the coordinator. As a result of these imbalances, according to one observer in the school,

The committee doesn't have the status it really deserves. The senior staff form an important communication link in the school. They understand school organisation, accept people's ideas and have the mechanism to implement them. Implementation is going to be more difficult certainly because of this and so is the process of gathering data.

Throughout first term (1992), tension mounted within and outside the committee. The committee had been hastily selected by the school administration and senior staff rather than democratically elected by all the staff. This undermined its legitimacy and status. In 1991, the outgoing principal appointed his nominee to the position of committee coordinator, a position which entailed a trip to the Eastern states. The trip, and the process of appointing rather than electing the coordinator, created further resentment. To make matters worse, when the committee was inducted into the project and proceeded to develop proposals, it was urged by project leaders and advisers to favourably consider a form of work organisation for the school based on team work, collegial decision making and collective responsibility. The inconsistency between this ideology and the way in which the committee was seen to be set up dismayed some members and hampered the development of a harmonious and productive committee.

Contestation: The April 10th Blow Up

One of the criticisms the staff levelled at the committee was that it seemed to be doing nothing. So the committee decided to make a major presentation of its work to the staff assembly on the last day of first term (April 10). Far from allaying staff dissatisfaction, notice of the meeting intensified hostility towards the project. At the meeting this hostility erupted into a major blow up which occupied most of the session. The strength of feeling caught many by surprise. In the words of several committee members:

I wasn't aware of the depth of negativity.

I didn't realise how much heat there was.

I knew it was there - discontent - but I didn't think it was going to be so big. It took me the whole school holidays to get over it. It was quite traumatic.

At the meeting it became clear that the staff were dissatisfied not with the committee itself, but with the way it was formulated and with the decision making structure that had been established over a number of years. For example:

The staff weren't upset with the people on the committee. They were upset with the process they went through to get there. The coordinator was doing a good job but people saw she had been manoeuvred into this position. That's really what people were upset about.

What made us angry was that the committee weren't representing the staff. They were representing a small group of people who decided they wanted to get into the scheme.

The whole thing just blew up. It was really fiery, really a backlash against things that had happened for five years before.

Staff didn't feel they were part of the project. A lot were still living in the past because the past meant for them a former administration making decisions they weren't involved in.

Voicing these feelings cleared the air. It also created a need to ask whether the school still wanted to remain in the project. In the event the staff reconfirmed its commitment, though as one participant observed, "No one said no but this doesn't mean there would not have been some abstentions." The meeting then decided to disband the committee and elect a new one, consisting of ten members. After lengthy discussion on appropriate voting

procedures, a new committee was elected with all but one of the first committee members being returned to office. The April 10 meeting also agreed that the project coordinator at the school be elected by the new committee, not the whole staff. The new committee did that. It re-appointed the coordinator from the first committee. According to one member of the new committee,

Now we've learned, we've developed skills. Now we are able as a group to be more equal, calm, less confrontationist.

The 'blow up' exposed the need for a more acceptable form of consultation. That need was responded to. Before the end of the semester, two drafts of a participative decision making policy were produced and circulated to staff and by second semester a third was on the way.

Communication: Involving Staff and Others

During most of the first six months, the committee made considerable efforts to inform the staff about the project. This entailed placing regular written bulletins in staff mail boxes and presenting progress reports at staff assemblies and subject department meetings. Some committee members held reservations about the success of these processes.

I don't think everyone has been kept fully informed, partly because it's very hard to do.

Senior staff can't keep up with informing staff in subject

department meetings of things like the systems work unit, active learning, student centred learning etc because they have enough of their own subject matter business to attend to. That is why the National Project will take a long time, because of the backlog of agenda items for senior staff and departments to get through.

The committee gets things in place and then members have a reticence to be forward in presenting these ideas because of the nature of the group. They generally aren't in senior positions and therefore don't see themselves in a position to have a high profile.

When the committee present material at staff assemblies, they do it in a nice way, not a leadership way. Instead of saying, "This is where we're going, it's exciting, it's important, follow us," it's more like, "This is what we've done so far and we hope you like it."

Towards the end of second term, the committee decided to go beyond involving staff at the level of providing information. It set up five sub committees and invited staff to participate in them. However, explained one teacher, it was "an horrendous two weeks - marking exam papers, end of term etc - so the sub committees have not made an impact."

Imagination: The Struggle to Think of Proposals

One of the assumptions underlying the NSP seemed to be that teachers have heaps of ideas about how their work could be better organised but are prevented from implementing them by the regulatory framework that governs the way schools operate. According to this assumption if only teachers were freed from the regulatory framework then "a thousand flowers would bloom"; or, if the cage door were opened, teachers would fly out and untapped reservoirs of talent would find expression. So far that has not happened in WA, despite the encouragement to challenge the rules and the undertaking to waive them (Chadbourne 1992b).

At BSHS, the committee knew that the State and National architects of the project expected proposals rather than simply initiatives. But, as different committee members commented:

We're finding it very hard to challenge the rules. We haven't come up with any major proposals which require assistance from the Ministry or the Union because our initiatives are radical enough in our own setting to cause a major change.

When people were told, "You can break the rules, you can do what you like," they said, "Oh well, I'd like to do something about this." But there was nothing stopping them before; most of the suggestions were things they could have done in the school anyway. People tend to be blinkered and they just carry on. They might say, "This is no good, it could be better" but they don't do anything about it.

On the other hand, the project stimulated the development of initiatives. It helped change the prevailing culture by making staff believe they had 'freedom' to advocate initiatives and that they would be supported by the system if they did so. It also provided staff with time release from teaching to undertake strategic planning. According to several staff:

The license to form proposals makes people start thinking about how to make school a better place to be in.

The NSP has freed people up in their thinking to consider more initiatives. It's been a very healthy process.

When we ask for proposals we get initiatives, but if we just asked for initiatives we wouldn't get any.

The Bellingup experience raises several questions. If the project can succeed in stimulating desirable 'initiatives' in situations where they otherwise would not be forthcoming, then should its success be judged predominantly in terms of the development of 'proposals' ? And if, when given the opportunity and incentive to 'break the rules', 70 staff can not produce 'proposals', does this suggest that they do not feel as constrained by the regulatory framework as the project rationale assumes?

Preparation: Reflection Before Action

From the outset, many staff wanted the project to be carefully planned and soundly based. They warned against a quick fix, knee jerk approach and certainly did not want to be bulldozed into change that smacked of manipulation. In response to these concerns the committee decided to spend the first year establishing a strong, shared philosophical base and postpone the implementation phase until the second year. The staff as a whole endorsed that timeline when presented with it at the beginning of the 1992.

However, before first term had run its course, the committee was confronted with a widespread demand for results. Staff complained that the committee did not seem to be doing anything, that there was too much reflection and not enough action, and that it was about time proposals were implemented. As the following comments indicate, this conflict of views existed not only between different members of staff but also within individual staff - on and off the committee.

I feel continual frustration that things are so slow, but I realise things must be ironed out and that we can't afford blunders.

Some people on the staff still think, "What have you been doing all this time."

I sit and think, "We've had a lot of meetings, we've talked all this stuff, but what are we doing?" I'd be there (at a project seminar in Fremantle) for three days and when we came back I'd think, "What the hell did we do there?" It seemed all relevant while I was there. When you get back there's 20-30 kids waiting to be dealt with and all that (three days at Fremantle) falls into insignificance.

Now we've come full circle; people are asking, "Why aren't you implementing it?" They forget the first day back this year when they endorsed the go slow approach.

Staff understand that the first year is for theoretical preparation, but there is still frustration. (Why?) Because how much time is warranted on a theoretical framework, particularly given the money involved - for example, 10 teachers out means \$1000's.

We have the teachers' proposals but we haven't released a public list. Therefore the staff are critical because they are not getting decent feedback and their proposals haven't been marshalled properly so there's been a decrease in submissions.

The staff think their proposals have fallen into a deep dark hole. But only action will convince them. They will believe it when they see it.

Several committee members explained the reasons for the "go slow" approach in these terms:

The staff want to see results because they put in their submissions and think nothing's happening. We say, we are getting the big picture together so we can allocate resources carefully and can make decisions on the basis of good information having considered all factors.

It's one thing for the committee to come up with vision, it's another to share it with the staff and develop a strategic plan to implement it. We're finding it's already too late to implement a number of our areas of thought in next year's timetable because the timetable has to be finalised by the end of this term - so we're only making minor work organisation changes for 1993. So ideas will be developed this year, the strategic plan developed in 1993, and implementation in 1994. It's a longer process than we thought.

There is no real resistance to the ingredients. Most agree with the philosophical base. But unless we look at the whole picture it's going to disadvantage some and advantage others and that would produce resistance. The only way to avoid that is to have the big picture established and have such a significant change that ideally everyone benefits - that is, not bit by bit, not reform on the run.

Once we make decisions, they eat into resources and commit us to long term programs that might be in conflict with other things we might want to do anyway. With limited resources we need to be

very sure where we focus these.

Saturation: Other Projects Before the NSP

At Bellingup, the NSP was just one of a range of projects competing for a place on staff agendas. To change the metaphor and be more specific, if a league ladder were to be drawn up at Bellingup at the end of second term, the NSP may not have featured in the semi-finals. At the end of first term, if sessional activities were permitted entry, then the NSP might have been relegated to the second division. According to some staff, the league ladder about half way through second term was something like this:

1. Student Centred Learning and Active Learning
2. Participative Decision Making
3. Monitoring Standards (Bellingup's version)
4. Goal Setting
5. School/Industry Links
6. School ball, school production (musical)
7. Exam results, reports
8. P.D. programs, counselling courses, inservice courses
9. NSP

The following comments help account for the relatively low position of the NSP on the league ladder, as perceived by some staff:

Something that is happening takes precedence over the National Project because it is only in the background. If the conceptual framework is on back burner, it will need a kick start to rekindle enthusiasm. At the moment, for many people, the National Project is the last thing on their mind. They only

think of it when it comes up at a staff meeting or if they've put in a proposal.

Bellingup is not relying on the National Project to raise its ethos and profile. The National Project could fold up and the ethos of the school would remain intact. The National Project is seen as just a matter of some people doing some work over there. It's as simple as that.

The National Project as a distinct entity isn't getting a high profile because people's professional timetables are blocked out.

However, while the NSP may not have scored highly it did assist some of the other programs gain prominence and in so doing advanced its claim to come off the reserve bench.

For example, School/Industry Links - I doubt whether I'd have agreed to allocate two days of PD time for teachers to go to industry if it were not for the National Project. Likewise with Student Centred Learning; I've given it a high profile - I attend all workshops and I helped to organise the weekend seminar at Jarrahdale and got sponsorship in.

When the National Project slots into one of these busy activities and helps further the aims of the activity, then it gets a higher profile. But on work organisation alone, independent of all these things, it's just not happening.

Enervation: Working Harder, Not Smarter

A tension existed between the NSP architects' view that educational gains can be made by working smarter rather than harder, and the traditional teachers' view that meaningful reform is not possible without additional resources. Most of the committee agreed to accept the 'working smarter rather than harder' principle as part of the project's philosophical base. They considered it legitimate to expect that improved student outcomes can be produced by reorganising teachers' work in ways that do not require extra funds. However, the committee found it difficult to accept that setting up the project, generating proposals, and overseeing their implementation could be done within existing resources. They pointed out that the NSP used up more of the school's resources than meets the eye.

For example, materially, the NSP imposed a cost upon the school through the use of photocopiers, fax machines, telephones, computers, and stationary. And at a human resource level, the activities of the committee required someone to:

- organise relief teachers for the seminars, retreats and fortnightly meetings of the committee
- cover for the principal and project coordinator while they undertake project work

- record proceedings and type up minutes
- convene and chair the five sub committees
- provide, collect and send information required by the National and State bodies sponsoring the project

On a broader scale, the NSP placed demands on the human resources of the school by taking up staff time:

- at staff assemblies and school development days
- in the five sub committees

in the evaluation of the project (for example, attending

interviews and responding to draft reports).

The staff met these demands by working harder - by going beyond the call of duty, and by drawing upon reserves of goodwill and a sense of professionalism. Meeting the demands by working smarter might have meant acting upon suggestions such as: replacing one deputy with three clerical staff; combining the five SDP sub committees with the five NSP sub committees; reducing the size of the National Project committee; and using teacher relief money to conduct meetings after schools hours. During 1992 none of this happened. But the ideas were there. On the other hand, there was considerable regret about the professional cost that the NSP imposed upon the staff.

"Work smarter not harder" I find hard to believe. People are working smarter, but they're also working a damn sight harder.

It's nice to be a member of the National Project team but that person has to prepare lessons prior to a day, half day or even two period session and colleagues very often are sharing that burden - that's one of the cost factors.

I'm concerned about being away from my classes by going to the National Project meetings because it's contradictory to say we are concerned in the National Project with student outcomes and then leave our classes. It doesn't sit well with me that I lose contact with my classes.

It's a lot of money - eight people out of the school for three day seminars.

No one said to me they resented going off for three day seminars, but apparently that was said around the place: "There's ten people out of the school again." Fifteen relief teachers causes a lot of problems with the kids we've got. It's disruptive for them. People see that as a problem.

Look at the time (the coordinator) spent planning meetings and the time (the principal) spent. It's probably a day a week and there's no time relief for them.

I'm not interested in pay for meetings after school. I like to go home and do my things at home. I'm not interested in getting extra money.

Conservation: Preserving the System and Teacher as the Units of

Change

Some staff at BSHS expressed concern that the NSP could be used by the Ministry as a way to introduce enterprise bargaining and downgrade teachers' hard won conditions of work. For them, from an industrial perspective, the system had to remain the key unit of decision making. A similar line was taken by staff who were sceptical of the NSP's capacity to spearhead a significant breakthrough in educational reform. In their view, the traditional top down approach remained the most viable strategy. Several of them commented that:

My role (as union rep) on the Committee was to see that nothing was done to erode the conditions that we've got. That's the way the Union see it as well, not just me. That's the way they put it to me: "We want you there to look after our interests." That's still the same.

If the Ministry wants to do this, it can't do it without spending

money. The only way to get change is for the central body to initiate the change and radiate it out to schools, not vice versa. The MCIS project was a terrible waste.

Advocates of the system being the key unit of change often argue that the teacher makes more difference than the school. For them, 'good teachers make good schools' rather than 'good schools make good teachers'. And, they argue, the system can do more than the school to support teachers - industrially and professionally. Improvements in the quality of learning, they say, are best promoted by improvements in the working conditions of teachers and the professionalisation of teaching at the system level. Some staff at Bellingup had thought through this issue and came down on the side of the teacher, rather than the school, as being the key unit of change. They saw reform from the viewpoint of an individual teacher and classroom approach and were critical of attempts to produce improvements by restructuring the school. For example:

I don't feel constrained by 'rules'. I'm the old work type. I feel my job is in the classroom and anything outside of that impinges on what I'm supposed to be doing. What happens in the classroom is most important to me; other things are secondary to that. The National Project is secondary. I don't feel constrained. The National Project doesn't affect what I do in the classroom. Teachers are held up by a lack of resources and over sized classes. The structure is less important than the teachers themselves. What I find annoying is teachers breaking their necks to get out of the classroom. It disadvantages the

kids. Most of the things in education should be done by teachers in the classrooms. What's happening is that external things are having an effect which they shouldn't be. It's the quality of teachers rather than the external forces. We need good teachers in the classrooms.

The tensions between these two perspectives on the key unit of change were reflected in the diversity of initiatives that comprise the NSP at Bellingup. The teacher as the key unit was represented by the emphasis on Active Learning, Student Centred Learning, the learner focussed philosophy, and the temporary teacher proposal. The school as the key unit was represented in the project motto (SYNERGY - the power of people working together) and the Alternative Year 8 program based partly on a systems work unit model.

Arguably, the systems work unit forms the basis for a third perspective. In a small school, the systems work unit may be the school itself. In a large school like BSHS, multiple systems work units might be envisaged, in which case the systems work unit rather than the school could become regarded as the key unit for improving the quality of teaching and learning.

EMERGING POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

This paper has reviewed the NSP at Bellingup from the time it began in October 1991 to the end of September 1992. During that period the project committee combatted the recurring themes of dissent, frustration and struggle. Much of its work involved preparing the ground and clearing the air - for seemingly little result. However, towards the end of the first year in the project there were signs that the work of the committee was beginning to bear fruit. The following list documents a range of positive developments throughout the second half of 1992 for which the project might claim varying degrees of credit.

1. A 'core group' of teachers continued to meet and describe some innovative approaches to their teaching based on the philosophy of Student Centred Learning. They decided to create a register of Student Centred Learning teachers and provide opportunities to visit one another's class in order to observe, coach and share ideas.
2. The Participative Decision Making policy generally became well accepted. A process was set in place that enabled all staff to be involved in a decision within a three day/stage process. This process empowered the silent positive majority, allowed issues to

be raised, and offered a structure conducive to the type of critical analysis that improves the quality of decisions.

3. The School/Industry Links initiatives resulted in a greater awareness and co-operation with industry and the community:

many teachers developed a greater affinity with the workplace and established valuable contacts with industry following a two day teacher/industry exchange

industry sponsored a seminar on Total Quality Management so that the process could be used more extensively in the school operation

some senior staff attended a workshop on Total Quality Management

the three members of the Alternative Upper School team attended a six week Total Quality Management course.

4. The school conducted a review of its post compulsory program, focussing on the 70% of students who did not aspire to tertiary education.

5. The timetable for 1993 at Year 8 level was re-examined with a view to accommodating teams of teachers operating within systems work units.

6. The school accepted an invitation to consider becoming a "Carmichael School" - to consider incorporating the features of the Carmichael report.

7. Competency Based Assessment became an increasing focus within the school. A computer program was installed to facilitate this innovation and allow the Alternative Upper School and an Alternative Lower School class to experiment with its implementation. It was used in the INSTEP program with reasonable success.

Even so, during 1992 the project could not easily be regarded as a flourishing enterprise. There were still intellectual arguments to be won, industrial issues to negotiate, and professional interests to accommodate. The emerging positive developments listed above, however, suggest that at Bellingup the seeds of the NSP did not fall on stony ground.

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