

**Cut and paste, duck and weave, smoke and mirrors :
teacher responses to mandated change.(EDW99007)**

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As a teacher of some thirty years experience in the Victorian state education system, I have experienced numerous changes and initiatives in the secondary school curriculum. Some were greeted by my colleagues with enthusiasm (The School Improvement Plan, Disadvantaged Schools Program) others less so (compulsory, daily Physical Education for all students).

The extraordinary energy and commitment made by many people over many years to creating or resisting curriculum change was first made apparent to me when, as a lowly clerk in the Education Department in 1963, I was asked to stay back one night to serve the Inspectors of Secondary Schools tea and sandwiches while they discussed Ron Reed's (Chief Inspector of Secondary Schools) proposal to localise some elements of the secondary curriculum. Reed's argument was that the curriculum needs of a child in Richmond (then working class, inner suburb of Melbourne) were different to those of a child in Mildura (large country town, 400 kilometres from Melbourne, inland). The uproar was quite frankly frightening for this humble and obedient servant. These were normally ladies and gentlemen of education and polite demeanour, well-spoken and in suits. They were screaming and yelling at each other.

I little realised at the time how substantial Ron Reed's proposal was. I suspect, in retrospect, the Inspectors could see some diminution in their influence and the possible loss of a centrally set, inspected and tested curriculum. But where were the teachers in this? What part, what voice could they give to these deliberations? The teachers of course were in the schools. Other people were making decisions about teachers' work.

I cite these personal experiences of 1963 for they represent for me a view of teachers and their work which would appear to have changed little. Others are still making decisions about what teachers should or should not do in the classroom, on how they will report, on how they as teachers will be assessed, evaluated, documented and made accountable. The Inspectors have gone but the central surveillance is now systemic and apparently unavoidable.

This paper will attempt to present the initial findings of a three year study made at a large state secondary college in which the responses of teachers to centrally mandated curriculum change were tracked. I will be reporting what appear to be the emergent themes from the data while cautioning readers that the evidence is incomplete at this stage.

The Curriculum and Standards Framework (hereafter CSF) is a curriculum initiative which all P-10 teachers are required to work with and report on to parents and students, and schools to the Department of School Education. (hereafter DSE). In an Executive Memorandum from the DSE schools were advised that '*The assessment of student achievement against the CSF and the reporting of that achievement to parents should occur in English and Mathematics by the end of Term 2, 1997 and in the other key learning areas by the end of 1997*'. (Executive Memorandum, 96/021:3). Reporting these levels of student achievement

through the school's Annual Report was seen as *'an important aspect of a school's accountability to its community and to the DSE'*. It is so important that it is mandated. *'From 1996...all schools are required to use the CSF for reporting levels of student achievement in English and Mathematics in their annual reports'*. (DSE, Executive Memorandum 96/021:4). Claims were made for the CSF that *'for the first time in many years schools across the State will have a common basis and language with which to plan, review and develop a cohesive and systematic curriculum'*. (Board of Studies, 1995).

But the curriculum changes in the CSF were part of a much more wide ranging reorganisation of Education in Victoria which had its beginnings in the changes made to the bureaucracy of the Ministry of Education by the preceding Labor Government. Drawing much of its inspiration from the economic rationalist agenda of the Australian Labor Government in Canberra (Pusey, 1991), the Victorians had begun a process of devolution of some central responsibilities to the school simultaneously reducing the numbers in the central bureaucracy. But as Angus and Rizvi pointed out, *'The pattern of power relationships in Victorian education has not substantially altered despite some superficial administrative rearrangements'*. (Angus & Rizvi, 1989:15). From the perspective of the case study school, one member of the administration commented that *'Every time we have "restructuring" it is presented as improving service or efficiency. It's not. It's always about cuts. I have been through 6-7 restructures and every time it was the same. The reasons were simply transparent'*. If it is always about cuts and the retention of central power, how did the market get into education?

The Market Enters.

This adoption of the economic rationalist agenda into mainstream education by a federal and state government reflected world-wide movements which had as their reforming principles beliefs in the sovereignty of the market, competitive individualism and a desire for *'maintaining stable and predictable behaviour'*. (Marginson, 1997:57). This approach to education has its origins in the work of a number of authors generally characterised as the New Right. Hayek (1960, 1976) argued for the power of the market, Friedman (1962) promoted vouchers in education and believed that a laissez-faire market would increase efficiencies. Buchanan (1975) warned against "provider capture" or vested interests such as teacher unions capturing the education agenda and believed that therefore they should be excluded from decisions. Chubb & Moe's *'Politics, Markets and America's Schools'* presented the view that competition would force schools to greater efficiencies and effectiveness *'in response to what parents and students want'* (Chubb & Moe, 1990, 212). Endorsing this view Rinehart & Lee (1991) supported the market believing it satisfied our instinct for our own self interest.

Central to these proposals were the principles of corporate managerialism which *'consist of a cluster of techniques in which public services were codified as a form of economic production, and re-fashioned on the basis of competition and business practice'*. (Marginson, 1997:85). The threads of control were still in existence despite the apparent devolution of power and autonomy to the local. Accountability to the centre ran through central planning of specific targets and outcomes. This approach *'privileged quantifiable activities over intangible activities'* and silenced *'indicators of redistribution or other forms of equity'*. (Marginson, 1997:86-7). The outcome in Schools of the Future was that *'the definition of "quality" education, the purposes of schools and "the contexts, conditions and resources within which schools operate" remain centrally determined'*. (Marginson 1997:196; citing an unpublished paper by Terri Seddon, 1994).

Change and the nature of work.

Views proclaiming the efficacy of the market for the good of education are not without their critics. Some believe that one of the results for teachers of the self-managing school has been a greater intensification of teachers' non-teaching tasks. (Seddon, 1992; Preston, 1992). Smith and Sachs regard such implications as the natural corollary of capital accumulation and '*the attendant system of political and social regulation*'. (Smith & Sachs, 1995:227). Similarly McLaren (1997) cites Handy (1996) who surmised that 51% of the workforce in England were not in full-time work, McLaren suggesting that employability not employment was the determining factor in a market-driven economy. This was reflected in the growing use of contract and short-term replacement teachers in the Victorian education system (The Age, 14 April, 1997; p.5) .

Associated with such views of the nature of work are implicitly views as to the nature of change and the responses of individuals to change. A plethora of texts have explored the elements, processes, dangers and promises of change. (Champy, 1996; Robbins & Finley, 1996; Drucker, 1998, Senge, 1999). Chaos theory now informs management theory (Waldrop, 1992; Price Waterhouse Change Integration Team, 1995) and the new entrepreneurial, corporatised organisation/school is advised to operate in an environment of constant change encouraging both flexibility and adaptability in its members. (Wheatley, 1992; Sagawa et al, 1999.) Some manuals for change management adopt a quasi evangelical tone speaking of visionary leaders and mission statements where '*corporate mystics with their feet on the ground*' are portrayed. (Hendricks & Ludeman, 1997).

Such presentations of the current dynamics of the business world which emphasise their global, holistic, eclectic approach to growth, change and profits have prompted some revisionings of the world order ranging from McLaren's (1997) vigorous attack on the power of transnationals and the threat to society posed by capitalism's '*quest for accumulation*' to Ohmae's (1996) and Strange's (1996) belief that the nation-state is in decline and that regional economies represent the future direction of business activity. Change is thus presented as rapid, complex and difficult to plan for and beyond the control of the individual. Certainly in Victoria changes were being made to the state education system which reflected the managerialist view of schools and teachers.

Meanwhile in Victoria.

In Victoria in April 1998 the Minister of Education announced a further extension of Schools Of The Future program when he advised that schools would be given greater powers to establish business partnerships for training courses and programs. Schools were invited to become Schools of the Third Millennium which could involve them in establishing

' links with major sporting clubs developing in partnership training facilities and programs. They may also coopt outside experts on to the school council' and 'enter into partnership with business, TAFE (Technical and Further Education) and other institutions'. (News Release, 8 April 1998; Minister of Education).

This initiative had its origins in the Business Advisory Committee on Education established by the Minister of Education, Phillip Gude, in 1997 to develop recommendations for the future operation of the Victorian education system under the title of Schools of the Third Millennium. All three groups under the Committee were chaired by a member of the Business Advisory Committee on Education.

These initiatives both overseas and in Australia have been challenged for their vision of education as a commodity (Browne, 1996), of schools as training organisations dedicated to meeting the needs of business and industry and of teachers as technicians (Smyth, 1996) lacking a knowledge of the real world and business acumen and for implying that these visions are indisputable if real reform of education is to take place. Concerns over ethical and ideological differences between schools and corporate sponsors and the perceived dangers in this movement have been aired by (among others) Gintis (1991), Lee (1993), Yeatman, (1993), Kenway et al (1994) Gewirtz, Ball and Bowe (1995), Howard & Coulter (1995), Harris (1996), Marginson (1997), Leggett (1997), Welch (1998) and Ryan (1998).

Indeed the culture of corporate management would appear to have informed the Victorian Department of Education in its Strategic Directions 1997-98 statement. *Accountability processes, consumer choice, competitive markets, world class standards, quality management techniques* – such terms found their way into a statement by the Department of Education in its plan for the development of education in Victoria. (Department of Education, Victoria, 1997). There is not a single mention of social justice or equity.

But the corporate ideology is not without its own hidden dangers whereby as Willmott tellingly argues , *'Instead of producing committed, enthusiastic, self-disciplining subjects, a possible effect of corporate culturist programmes is a reinforcement of instrumentality amongst employees who comply with the demands without internalizing their values'*. (Willmott, 1993:536). This sort of apparitional response by teachers to the CSF will be evidenced below.

Purpel finds there is an *'almost obsessive concern for productive competition and selectivity'* and that *'The code word for this renewed energy for using the school to sort and weed is "excellence", and the basic technique for implementing the policy is testing'*. Within this context therefore he believes that *'excellence has come to mean high scores on normative standardized tests'* and he condemns *'the professional in psychology, sociology and education who participate in this "nonsense"'*.

'These professionals participate indeed contribute to and shape a public dialogue in which education is reduced to a concern for passing tests of dubious validity, thereby bypassing the serious and perplexing questions of what should be taught, for what reason, and for which model of humanity and community. By avoiding these serious questions professionals not only trivialize their work; more importantly, they neglect their responsibility to focus public dialogue on central issues'. (Purpel, 1989: 18)

Such scathing criticism of professionals lending themselves to the orthodoxy of testing regimes speaks directly to the classroom teacher in a managerial world where accountability, outcomes, 'world's best practice' and customer satisfaction are built on objectively quantifiable testing to validate teacher behaviour. Critics of the managerialist view of testing argue that it *'does not lend itself to empowerment. The assessment of programs against "objective" performance indicators often appears to dismiss experiential evidence of those who are "targets" of the programs'*. (Sawyer, 1989:151). The experiential evidence of the teachers who are such targets will be presented shortly. Firstly, the context for such innovations such as the CSF needs to be established in order to frame the teachers' responses to centrally mandated change.

The Changes in Victoria.

The CSF initiative by the State Government should be seen as part of a much broader series of changes to the state education system made by the Liberal-National coalition

Government following its election in 1992 and again in 1996. Faced with a budgetary deficit of some billions the new Government, following its election in 1992, set about cutting Government spending according to the market imperatives which shaped its policies. Smaller schools were amalgamated or sold, over 6400 teachers were cut from the DSE and over 280 schools closed.

In addition, moves were instigated to hand over substantial responsibilities to schools in the areas of budgeting, marketing and staffing. Following the Government's focus on parents as customers of education, the Accountability Framework was developed and distributed to schools. It was intended to enable schools to more properly focus their efforts on meeting their customers' needs and to be held accountable for their efforts in this regard. (DSE, Executive Memorandum 96/021)

Measurable accountability procedures figure large in the Accountability Framework as an agenda putatively demanded by the public of their schools and teachers. Each school was to develop a list of school priorities in a School Charter which was intended to be published widely in the local community as evidence of the school's plans for improvement. In addition teachers were to meet centrally-supplied performance indicators as part of an Annual Review and were expected to complete an annual Professional Development Plan which should correlate with the School Charter priorities reflecting state-wide Departmental priorities.

Further initiatives such as LAP tests, KIDMAP, Performance Payments, School Annual reports and School Triennial Reviews are integral components of the Accountability Framework having at its heart the surveillance and monitoring of student, teacher and school performance. All of this has been centrally mandated.

Not all of the changes are viewed sanguinely. The market-driven school, accountability processes and changes to teachers' work have been critiqued particularly in John Smyth's work on fallacious and contrived collegiality (1996) as a tool of central control and the de-skilling of teachers' work (1993a, 1998) as well as his criticisms of the self-managing school (1993b). He has exposed a range of problematic developments in Australian education. Simon Marginson (1997) has similarly cast doubt on the wisdom of the market-driven school and what such changes mean for Australian teachers and their work. In the US, UK and New Zealand similar fears have been voiced concerning the market ideology in education and the impact it is having on teachers' work. (Henig, 1996; Gewirtz et al, 1995; Lauder, 1991)

Some categories for understanding Teacher Responses to Change

This is the environment in which teachers are working to implement the CSF. It is also in this context that changes are being made to teachers' work. How do teachers respond? Crucial to this question is the exploration of the roles teachers believe they are playing in this change environment and whether their views of change are shaped by their views of themselves. Do they change simply because the Ministry has told them to do the CSF or, do they exercise their professional judgement as to the worth or otherwise of the proposed changes? Perhaps, if they resist the proposed changes, are they engaging in comfort zone maintenance?

Until recently implementation theory (Carter & O'Neill, 1995) spoke only of top-down or bottom-up models (Sabatier, 1986). Of concern in this study were the responses of the individual teachers to mandated change. Are changes blended, adopted, adapted, resisted, ignored? At the local and individual level what this study appears to show is that the teacher

role in implementation is more complex than a one-way highway wherein teachers are obedient technicians who '*...jump through the hoops*'. (Interview with a Principal, 1997).

In fact it seems teachers are far more selective in their responses than the simple binary of blind ignorance versus blind obedience. Teacher responses to centrally mandated curriculum change form a spectrum where certainly some ignore and some obey. But between these two extremes lie the vast bulk of teachers whose responses appear to be strategic in their agency.

Their responses might be sorted into three categories: responses to the intent of the changes as they impact on the systemic, local and individual; responses to the process by which the changes are developed and introduced; and responses to the requirements placed on them to 'implement' the changes. This structure may help later in coming to terms with what appear to be contradictory responses which might be seen as individuals exercising agency in their responses yet simultaneously expressing fatalism towards the changes.

Using Bowe et al's suggested broad categories (adaptive extension, accommodation and containment) for typifying school responses (Bowe et al,1992:137) it will be shown that a number of other responses by teachers provide evidence of what teachers do with mandated change. Unlike the science teachers in Yerrick, Parke and Nugent's study who '*so wholly bought into the notion of mandated curriculum and assessment*' (Yerrick, Parke and Nugent, 1997:154) the teachers in this study exercised a range of responses which illustrated that as Giddens memorably observed, '*The docile bodies which Foucault says discipline produces turn out to be not so docile after all...but knowledgeable agents who resist, blunt or actively alter the conditions of life which others seek to thrust upon them*'. (Giddens,1985 :172)

Bowe et al (1992:21-22) in attempting to contextualise the process of policy analysis proposed three contexts – the context of *influence*, *policy production* and *practice*. It is the third context, *practice*, which is at the centre of this paper and the attempt to analyse what teachers 'do' with policy. This process of '*active interpretation and meaning-making*' operates in an environment characterised by Bowe et al as involving '*...resistance, accommodation, subterfuge and conformity*'. (Bowe et al ,1992:13)

These four responses will be examined in an effort to explore the presence of language which operates as slogan – language which short-circuits meaning and replaces meaning-making with the white noise of surface outcomes. The surface 'outcomes' continue to appear but then, what do they mean? The apparition continues if the legislator believes that policy 'fiat' means policy will happen, for, in Ball's terms, there is '*...slippage between the fabric and the core*' (Ball,1997:13) Not unlike the teachers in Argentina the teachers in this study may have found '*...voicing open opposition to the curricular and doctrinary(sic) directives of the Peronist government could result in negative consequences for those attempting it*'. (Gvirtz & Naradowski, 1998:235. Note: All of the teachers in this paper's study chose anonymity). It could be that the politicians are presented with quantifiable 'performance indicators' and 'learning outcomes' but it might also be a form of medieval tithing - husks with wheat, chalk in milk. The scales are there, the figures are presented but is it really happening? There is a requirement by the DSE that teachers record student achievements as they were intended in the CSF. Is this being done? Why and how are such results compared by the DSE with another or other schools? Are they also not quite doing the CSF as intended? The figures are there but what do they signify? Ball argues that: '*...performance indicators (of schools and teachers) ...fabricate an organisation for external consumption, they provide a focus for quality and accountability, they are there to be viewed and evaluated and compared*'. (Ball,1997:12).

This use of language to create appearances can also be explored through the realm of policy sloganeering (Kosimar & McClellan, 1961) which can be used to explore many of the terms associated with educational innovation. Whether the motive is better outcomes or political grandstanding, the phrases/slogans employed by Governments while meaning one thing to the policy-makers may carry vastly different meanings for the policy practitioners-teachers. The DOE widely publicised the devolution of responsibilities to schools for a wide range of matters, called on teachers to take responsibility for the implementation of the CSF and provided local and individual funding for professional development. But control of the curriculum remained in the DOE's hands in terms of extending state-wide student testing and the Accountability Framework.

The Context of the changes

One aspect of this study will be to explore Paris' notion that curriculum change operates '*in the complex, and often conflicting historical, interpersonal and ideological contexts of the individuals and organizations involved in the process of change*'. (Paris, 1989,3). One context operating in the CSF changes was the relationship as perceived by the teachers between themselves and the DSE. Later in this paper it will be shown that the teachers displayed a distinctly negative attitude towards the Department.

The changes were being sought by the DSE in the context of a lack of trust between some of the teaching staff and the implementing Government and this despite or perhaps because of the Minister's letter in 1996 circulated to all Government teachers praising their efforts. There is much talk of the Government's hidden agenda: anti-teacher/anti-Government schools. It goes without saying that not all teachers are anti-CSF nor anti-Government but the changes were so many and their impact on the teacher in the classroom have been translated largely into economic and numerical impacts which the teachers in this study see as less to spend on bigger classes. These changes from the teachers' perspective are critical. Charters, performance payments, Annual reviews, Teacher Reviews, LAPs and so on - but at the end of the day there is less money and more students in each room.

Perhaps also the less than flattering comments made on occasion by the Minister of Education (while commenting on the 1500 teachers in excess he was reported as saying, '*Last year it cost the taxpayer of Victoria \$26 million for no work, for no return, not one iota of effort for the people in these schools*'. The Age, 11 October, 1996:1) the school closures, staff cuts and the introduction of contracts created a climate in which teachers were suspicious of the Department's attitude towards them.

Teachers' Responses to the CSF.

The teachers who agreed to participate in this study did so with assurances of anonymity and member checks before publication of their comments. The interviews took place over twenty months and each teacher was interviewed three times between December 1997 and August 1999. In the beginning the interviews were structured and had as their focus the changes mandated by the CSF. As they progressed the interviews moved to a more open semi-structured format allowing for greater exploration and exchange of views concerning the teachers' careers, their emotional responses to change and their attitudes towards the DSE, their school and their faculty.

In reporting the teachers' responses in this study I would like to take a simple chronological approach which seeks to organise them according to a series of decisions which I found myself making as a practicing teacher with regard to the changes mandated by the CSF.

Firstly, I would focus on what the CSF required me to change in my course preparation and lesson planning. Secondly, I would seek to determine what in my classroom teaching practice the CSF asked me to change and finally, I would examine what changes were required in my assessment and reporting procedures. The clustering of responses below inevitably involves some attempt to characterise the teachers' responses but it should be noted that there were occasional exceptions to the broad tenor of the teachers' responses which will be explored below.

These three stages reflect broadly three sets of responses by the teachers which are here tentatively termed 'cut and paste' (planning), 'duck and weave' (teaching) and 'smoke and mirrors' (assessment and reporting). (I have excluded the use of quotation marks as all comments in italics which follow are direct quotes from interviews with the teachers.)

"Cut and Paste" (Planning)

- *Some teachers have tried really hard to develop and share their CSF stuff but I think most carry on as usual.*

- *You manipulate the CSF documents to suit your own intended outcomes.*
- *I cut and pasted various elements and created my own outcomes sheet.*
- *I work through the CSF and choose what I think is important for the students*
- *Teachers are trying to do what they've always done and they're telling themselves that they're doing the CSF but it's less not more.*

"Duck and Weave" (Teaching)

- *I've thought little about the CSF since last year. It had no real impact on my teaching practice.*

- *I'd have to say that the CSF has not really changed anything, certainly no real changes in*

the classroom.

- *The variety in my teaching is driven by the students' needs. I teach what I want and tack*

on the CSF.

- *I follow procedures on face value but in my classroom practices I'll do what I think the kids need. What I teach, the way I teach and how I assess are different for different classes.*
- *I still get a fair bit out of the kids, seat of my pants stuff, partly using Bloom – drawing on*

past experience.

- *You have to suss out the group in the first few lessons so you can start organising the teacher stuff you might do with them.*

- *You get by on street-smarts and colleagues*
- *I've used my intuition and experience to decide what I'll use but in the end my focus is on*

teaching the individual. You take each day and class as they come and sometimes your best prepared plans go out the window. You learn to read the moods.

"Smoke and mirrors" (Assessment and reporting)

- *There's the chance of quantum leaps of judgement based on spurious, slender evidence.*
- *I'm aware that for many the CSF is tacked on to the traditional report just to satisfy the*

requirements.

- *I make it look like they all did the same thing and keep the authorities happy but my work*

is pitched at the kids.

- *They (KLAMs) want to say to Administration, "We're doing the CSF" but really people aren't. Staff do the paperwork that's all.*

- *You do what you normally do and then slot it into the right boxes when the time comes.*
- *It's not surprising that teachers respond by sticking to conservative judgements and the norm. They avoid too many 'E' assessments because it presents a problem if the following year a teacher might assess the student as 'C'. (at a higher level of achievement)*
- *At our faculty level there's a decision that Year 7 students are at CSF level 5 when in fact they're all over the place.*
- *It's based on this mythical state-wide standard. At this school the advice has been not to*

stray from the depicted level for the grade e.g. CSF level 5 for Years 7/8; CSF Level 6 for Years 9 & 10.

Again, while these comments reflect the general tenor of the teachers' comments it should be noted that some of these teachers also suggested that the CSF was '*generally necessary*', that it provided '*a common form of assessment*', that it did help '*sharpen the focus*', '*create some uniformity and commonality*' and it was '*worth it because we do have to constantly look at what we're doing*'. Are these positive comments contradictory to their

strategic behaviour? I don't think so. Many in fact noted with approval that one intent of the CSF was to create a uniform system which would facilitate the transfer of students between schools across the state. What emerges from their critical comments above and their positive comments in this paragraph is an awareness of the gap between the DSE's intent for the CSF and teachers' day to day practices and experiences.

Additionally, almost all commented unfavourably on the lack of consultation by the DSE during the introductory stages of the CSF- the process or developmental stage. Many commented bitterly on their exclusion, their ignored professionalism, the remoteness of planners and their own deepening cynicism towards the Department's initiatives such as staffing flexibility and contract teaching, as well as what they perceived as Ministerial hubris and a politicised Public Service. Comments such as *'we've just got to fit in with the State machine'*, and *'The CSF was me being put upon. My professionalism was ignored. Just do it'*, reflect the bulk of the comments made. Similarly, *'The Department is well-meaning but uninformed and ignorant..they're still dictatorial'* and *'I regard the Department as my adversary'* shed further light on their views of the DSE and the context within which the CSF was supposedly being 'implemented'.

Such broadening nets of bitterness and disillusionment support those researchers who have attempted to portray teachers as more and better than change-resistant neanderthals, stuck in their ruts or in their secret gardens happily oblivious to the world around them. (Newmann, 1996). These teachers are very aware of what is happening to their profession and in their schools. They are not the helpless victims of central planning but actively seek agency in the nooks and crannies of official mandated policy. (Gitlin & Margonis, 1995). As Gardner points out when discussing the responses of teachers in the UK to mandated change, teachers create an *'internal resistance in the form of the manipulation of policy reform within the classroom'*. (Gardner, 1998, 47).

Smyth's portrayal of the *'archetype dialogic school'* carries within it some of the seeds of the responses made by these teachers though my experience tells me that this would not be so for all involved in this study. Nor would I suggest that John Smyth believes all the teachers in his dialogic school bear out his description of them as preferring *'contestation, controversy, discussion and debate'* to *'certainty, stability, compliance or decree'*. (Smyth, 1998:8). The responses made by teachers in this study finds them actively engaged in their own meaning-making and in an environment characterised by their mistrust and cynicism of their leaders, still seeking to weave what they regard as their own best practices in and around, and sometimes in spite of, the CSF. The contestation is neither blatant nor rebellious but employed to create apparitions and masquerades of observance and Ball's subterfuge and resistance find their expression in these teachers' responses. Their resistance is quiet and private (Gvirtz & Narodowski, 1998:135). It is sourced from their experience, partly from their colleagues and their commitment to teaching based on the children and their needs.

In relation to experience the teachers commented that *'you do what works and anyway you should be having a go'* and *'working around it (CSF)'* or *'dealing with the realities of the classroom'*. Others commented that they *'teach what the kids need and what I know works for them'* and *'I've found out that it works and gets the best results'*.

Of their colleagues they stated that *'other teachers were my resources'* and *'I find the staff supportive, swapping units, resources, anything we do, informally passing things on to each other'*. But for some the amalgamated school did not reflect their previous experience. *'There's none of the Tech thing of working together and sharing'* and sadly *'we drop bits of paper on each other's desks but there's no real talking with each other about what works and what doesn't'* ending with *'we're basically on our own now'*. Clearly, the collegiate experience regarding the CSF was not uniform.

In relation to their students they asserted that *'my work is pitched at the kids'* and *'my teaching is based on the children. The CSF doesn't suit my approach'*. Further, *'the variety in my teaching is driven by the students' needs. I teach what I want and tack on the CSF'*, comments suggesting a quietly oppositional stance based on experience towards the mandated changes. In this they reflect Pignatelli's description of teacher agency as a *'refusal to be mindlessly complicitous and programmatically fixed to a systematic and totalizing design'*, (Pignatelli, 1999, 430).

Lest it be thought they deserve canonisation it should also be noted that on occasion there were elements of *'covering your bum'* and playing it safe in some of their responses. They spoke of the need to *'play the game'* and having to *'smoothly progress the student otherwise we cop the flack'*. Earlier (p. 8) I suggested that separating the teachers' responses into three categories (intent, process and requirements) may assist in understanding apparent contradictions in their responses. For instance, *'this is the system so we're stuck with it'*, *'The Government said assess this way so we do'*, and *'It's there so I do it. It's just another thing to fit into the framework'* – such comments suggest a tired resignation and fatalism to the mandated changes. But I believe these comments reflect their attitude to the intent of the Government which appears to have decided that the CSF will happen at the system, local and individual levels. I would suggest also that their bitter and resentful responses towards the DSE reflect their feelings about their perceived exclusion from the process or development stage of the changes. The changes were mandated and they believed they were not consulted.

The position of Paris referred to above (p.9) where she states that change takes place in the *'historical, interpersonal and ideological contexts of the individuals and organizations'* is also helpful when you are confronted by teachers who vary in their responses from *'you let a lot of things float past and just ignore them'* to *'we're now teaching to outcomes and that's reasonable'*. Certainly some brought bitter prior experiences to the CSF reflected in comments such as *'I regard the DSE is my adversary'*, and *'I figure they have their agenda and it doesn't include my welfare'* and *'overall I think it's been a huge PR exercise'*. Yet others commented that *'I'm used to change and I don't mind it'*, and *'I think the CSF is a good thing in one sense that it has provided us with definitions and structures of our branches of knowledge'*. These variations while still emergent at this stage of the research show perhaps the variety to be found in teacher responses beyond the simple dichotomy of blind obedience or bloody-minded resistance. As Goodson argued *'researchers had not confronted the complexity of the schoolteacher as an active agent making his or her own history'*. (Goodson, 1992, 4).

But it is in the requirements category where the ingenuity, agency and tacit knowledge of some of these teachers is most exercised for it is here where they have their greatest impact. Drawing on this research I would suggest that these teachers would appear to have engaged in Ball's *'...resistance, accommodation, subterfuge and conformity'*. (Ball & Bowe, 1992:13) but that in addition they have exercised considerable skill and professionalism in weaving through the mandated requirements their own versions of good teaching, concern for their students and a willingness to sift through central mandates and find spaces for themselves and their students. It seems they are prepared to create apparitions to satisfy the central powers and engage in practices they deem appropriate and defensible despite central mandates.

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