EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MULTI-CAMPUS COLLEGE MODEL IN DELIVERING IMPROVED SECONDARY SCHOOL PEDAGOGY AND STUDENTS’ LEARNING OUTCOMES: LESSONS FROM NEW SOUTH WALES DET SCHOOLS


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Abstract

Since their inception in New South Wales (NSW) Department of Education and Training (DET) secondary schools in 1998, multicampus colleges have become a significant player in teaching and learning. They now provide education to 23,530 students in 10% of all the secondary schools in NSW. Students’ enrolments in the participating schools have improved remarkably, student engagement and governance has improved as have academic and non-academic outcomes. The public image of DET schools in the areas where these colleges are located has received a boost. Yet in spite of such success, the multi-campus college model remains surprisingly neglected in educational research and public debate.

Employing a multiple case study methodology, this paper draws on interviewees’ narratives of their experiences in selected multi-campus colleges to unpack the opportunities that the multi-campus college model creates for effective pedagogic intervention, improved teaching and quality learning. With the aim of seeking to inform and to provoke research and debate on this topic, the paper concludes that the multi-campus college model has potential to be a much bigger contributor to quality teaching and active learning in secondary schools not only in NSW but also in other Australian states and overseas.

Key words: multicampus colleges, learning environment, educational opportunities, learning outcomes, student empowerment, student leadership, student motivation.
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Introduction: Contextualising the issues

When a Sydney based newspaper carried an article in January 1996 claiming that certain comprehensive high schools had ‘failed’ students, not only did it cause repugnance among people concerned about the potential psychological harm of such public shaming of high school students but also triggered the restructuring of some comprehensive secondary schools in NSW. Even while the popular press was expressing views about school students at the end of their school year, major reforms were being introduced in the late 1990s in DET secondary schools, aimed at pedagogic intervention to renew secondary school delivery in the state and make it more motivating and engaging to students so as to improve their learning outcomes. As part of those reforms, not only was the curriculum broadened (McGaw, 2001) to provide a variety of courses that could capture students’ motivation, but new school structures were introduced to give students increased educational opportunity for success.

The restructuring commenced with the reconfiguration of three years 7 – 12 comprehensive high schools in the Blacktown schools district into years 7 – 10 “middle school” campuses. A new site to cater for the graduates of those three schools was then built as the years 11 – 12 senior campus. The four campuses were then integrated into one “Collegiate” comprising four geographically segregated campuses. This ushered into the DET secondary schooling system the multicampus college model.

Within six years of that innovation, 20 metropolitan and 14 rural based years 7 – 12 comprehensive high schools were reconfigured and then integrated with an additional three, newly built campuses, to establish 11 multicampus colleges consisting of 37 campuses. While the Blacktown collegiate model consisting of years 7 – 10 middle schools combined with a years 11 – 12 senior campus was the most common structure, consideration was given to local contexts in other locales. This led to a wide variety of structures within the multicampus college model, including, for instance, middle school campuses of years 7 – 9 cohorts combined with a senior campus of years 10 – 12. The most common feature of the new structural design was that none of the schools which had operated as a stand alone, years 7 – 12 comprehensive high school continued to function autonomously. Educational change and innovation led to integration which provided opportunities for the reconfiguration of the schools so as to enhance school renewal with new ways of curriculum implementation and pedagogic improvement.

While the restructuring completely closed some comprehensive high school in selected locales (e.g. Beacon Hill High School in the Northern Beaches schools district), new sites (e.g. Wyndham College in Blacktown schools district) were built in others according to need. As a consequence, by 2004, as indicated above, the number of schools in multicampus college structures had risen to 37. These schools catered for 23,530 students and represented 10% of all secondary schools in the DET. Thus, the model had become a significant provider of secondary education in the state. For example, some senior cohorts had an enrolment of more than 450 students in each of years 11 and 12 (DET, 2004). On average, the multicampus colleges realised an apparent retention rate 44% higher than the state average (ABS, 2004). Additionally, these colleges were achieving Higher School Certificate results significantly better than they had achieved before the restructuring.
However, in spite of such effectiveness, and not withstanding earlier work by Livermore (1990), Howe (1991), Kivunja (2006, 2005) and Kivunja and Power (2006), the multicampus college model surprisingly remains little documented in educational research and has not attracted much public debate. Earlier research systematically investigated stakeholders’ views about how the newly introduced changes in the structure (structural dynamics) were impacting upon students’ learning and pedagogic practices (cultural dynamics) in their colleges. The purpose of this article is to extend an understanding of these structural-cultural dynamics and to stimulate research and informed debate about the effectiveness of these colleges as a new way of secondary schooling renewal. This schooling renewal appears to create opportunities for motivating and engaging secondary school students leading to pedagogic improvement. It is associated with better educational outcomes for students’ present and future world.

Before proceeding to excerpts of interview data from the participants in this study, it is useful to review, briefly, some of the literature which informs contemporary paradigms about the relationship between organisational structural and cultural dynamics, and to comment on the methodology used in this study.

**Literature review**

When Senge (1999, p. 140) posits that organisational structure is “the basic interrelationships that control behaviour” he clearly signals the inextricable link between structure and organisational behaviour. Pace (2002, p. 28) agrees with Senge (1999) when he defines the structure of an organisation as “the way in which individuals and roles relate”. Thus defined, organisational structure is seen as the definition and arrangement of roles, relationships and responsibilities within an organisation. From this definition it is easy to understand why leaders in the field, such as Louis and Miles (1990), Evans (1996), Fullan (2001a), like Mintzberg (1979) share the argument that changing the structure of an organisation inevitably means interference with established patterns of behaviour. Such behavioural patterns include “shared assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration. … The deeply embedded unconscious basic assumptions…. The essence of culture” (Schein, 1997, pp. 12 – 16). According to this world-view then, structural change and cultural dynamics are very closely intertwined and intimately interlinked.

Poole and Van de Ven (2004) like Hargreaves (1994) view organisational structure not as the central determinant of organisational effectiveness but as the product of a social process which is instrumental in organisational performance because it creates opportunities for cultural dynamics to emerge. Hence Poole and Van de Ven (2004, p. 161) admonish that:

one role of structure is to contain and channel individuals’ actions to serve broader goals of the organisation. Formal structures have symbolic as well as action-generating properties. In other words, structures can become invested with socially shared meanings and thus, in addition to their objective functions, can serve to communicate information about the organisation to both internal and external audiences.

Therefore, and consistent with Bolman and Deal’s (2003) argument, it is useful to regard the role of organisational structure as the blueprint for formal expectations and exchanges among internal players and external constituents. In this regard Bolman and Deal (2003, pp. 46 – 47) compare organisational structure to an animal’s skeleton or a building’s framework, which both enhances and at the same time constrains what an organisation can accomplish. Silins and Mulford (2002, p. 428) also signal the important role of structure in school reform when they identify it as one of
the key determinants of a school’s capacity for organisational learning because it gives the school the favourable conditions for the creation of opportunities and ability to share information, knowledge and commitment of organisational members to collaborative learning. However, it is recognised (Fullan, 2001b, pp. 43 – 44) that while “structure makes a difference, it is not the main point in achieving success” when implementing school reform. “Reculturing” which is “changing the way we do things” is the main point.

Similarly, Stanford (2005, p. 5) argues that changing the structure is important “but structure is not the only consideration. For things to work well you need to design not simply to re-structure”. This metaphorical world-view of reculturing in terms of designing means that reculturing is a core concept in the cultural dynamics of a school and is likely to be central to effecting meaningful curriculum change and pedagogic practices which can motivate and engage students in any school setting – multicampus or other situations of learning.

Methodology

Of the 11 multicampus colleges in NSW, five are located in the Sydney metropolitan areas and the other six are in rural areas. In keeping with the maximum variation sampling procedure, purposeful sampling (Merriam, 2001, pp. 62 – 63) in a multiple-case sampling design (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 29) was used to draw up a sample consisting of two metropolitan and two rural based colleges. The four colleges comprise a total of 14 campuses. The colleges included also met the criteria of longevity of establishment, typicality of structural design and locality. Upholding the first criterion meant that the very first (the oldest) college to be established was included. Structural design typicality compliance meant that all cohort configuration types (e.g. years 7 – 10 or years 7 - 9 and years 11 – 12 or years 10 - 12) were represented. The locality criterion ensured that schools from both the metropolitan and rural areas were included. The case study methodology followed created opportunity for the research to take advantage of the researcher-interviewees interactive epistemological assumptions (Scott and Usher, 1996, p.11; Ezzy, 2002, p. 28) as well as the reconstruction of interviewees’ understanding of the dynamics in their colleges, given ontological assumptions (Scott and Usher, 2004, p. 94) that guided the research.

A quantitative instrument designed using the Likert-scale perception ranking analytical tool (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003, pp. 20 – 22) was used to gather data from 280 teachers and 1030 students across the years 7 – 12 cohorts in the four colleges. A qualitative instrument consisting of open-ended questions was used in interviews held with focus groups of a total of 50 students and 40 teachers. Individual interviews were held with 21 principals and deputys, the relevant Minister of education and three DET officials who were interviewed for the study.

Analysis: Stakeholders’ understanding of the effectiveness of the new model on curriculum, enrolments, pedagogy and students’ learning outcomes in their newly re-structured schools

Central to the narratives from interviewees was their understanding that the impact of the new model was to integrate the schools and thereby provide a critical mass of students and resources which enabled a broader secondary school curriculum to be delivered. This was seen as a better way of secondary schooling delivery because it enabled the new schools to meet students’ learning needs. The following excerpt from a Principal highlights this understanding in the various discourses from interviewees.

The issue for us was about improvement of our students’ outcomes, about doing things better. The new structure has allowed us to aggregate the numbers from the three high schools in year 11 and 12 in this town. The aggregation has given us the critical mass which then can be given a wide range of academic courses, TVET courses; courses which I believe meet the educational needs of all students (Principal, rural college).
The effect of this was to attract students to participate in and to complete their postcompulsory education. As a consequence, the schools experienced positive multiplier effects whereby school integration led to curriculum enrichment, which in turn attracted larger enrolments, and higher retention rates which created opportunity for new pedagogic practices to be introduced. Interviewees who supported this deduction said:

The numbers here are actually going through the roof because we are able to offer a breadth of curriculum that the individual high schools could not offer. … Our experience has been that the model is a real draw for us. The fact is that students here can get the subjects they want, at the levels they want and in the faculties they want. And because they are doing subjects they want, they are working harder at them and achieving better results (Teachers, metropolitan colleges).

Respondent validation of this claim submitted:

The impact of the new model on curriculum we are able to offer has been absolutely fantastic. The retention rates in the structure are up. All our retention rates and enrolments have increased because of the large number of courses we have here (Principal, metropolitan college).

These claims were supported by enrolment data at each of the four colleges studied.

The appreciation of the new model was a recurrent theme across the four colleges. This was demonstrated further by interviewees who repeatedly discussed the impact of their new structural dynamics in superlative terms such as the following:

There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that the greatest advantage of the new model is the broader curriculum offered to students on the senior campus. Our senior kids get a greater subject choice and they perform better at them. (Teacher, rural college).

This understanding was in stark contrast to interviewees’ views of the old structure which they described as ineffective in the delivery of education to their students. They said:

The old comprehensive high schools were not meeting the needs of all students and so this was having a huge impact on enrolments and retention rates in year 11 and 12. The problem was that because we had low enrolments there would be a large number of students who would not be able to do certain subjects simply because they could not be offered to the small number of students we had. (Relevant Minister of Education).

Interviewees’ aggregate arguments reflected the understanding that the restructuring had created opportunities for the schools to overcome some of the deficiencies of the old model which, functioning autonomously, could only offer a limited curriculum. There was the understanding that students, ‘forced’ into the restrictive curriculum on offer, had little chance of engagement and academic achievement. This was expressed by an interviewee who said:

For some time there had been the feeling that if you came to one of these schools you were already classed as somebody who wasn’t going to achieve particularly well. These schools were achieving poor HSC results. And so by restructuring them, we were able to re-badge them and give students another chance at becoming a success in their secondary education. I have been sent data which shows that in fact that’s what is happening. (Relevant Minister of Education).
Such narratives suggested that there was a view among interviewees that changing the structure of their orthodox comprehensive high schools had made a positive difference by creating a new teaching and learning environment which was offering improved opportunities for success for the students. Interviewees tied the improved opportunities very closely to the new structural dynamics.

Interviewees said that the curriculum being offered in the new structure had improved, not only because the larger enrolments made more classes composition viable, but also because the combined purchasing power enabled them to acquire educational resources which the individual schools could not afford on their autonomous budgets. Resources could now be jointly purchased and their utilisation shared by the integrated schools to offer a more diversified curriculum. So interviewees said:

The structure has enabled us to group students from our three schools and to acquire up-to-date equipment and ICT which the single schools could not afford. So it has given us economies of scale which we are using to offer a richer curriculum to meet a broader range of student choices. The problem for us was that the schools had low enrolments. So it became very expensive and indeed prohibitive to be able to offer a range of subjects that students wanted. So at one end, we couldn’t offer vocational subjects; and at the academic end of the spectrum, we would have sometimes 2 or 3 or 4 students wishing to do a particular level of subject. This was economically prohibitive and so those subjects simply weren’t offered (Principal, metropolitan college).

The above excerpt is also helpful in revealing a low enrolments-limited curriculum dilemma which the autonomous schools had faced. On one hand the schools badly needed larger enrolments so as to compose viable class sizes for the different subjects and yet in failing to offer to the few students they had the subjects of their choices, they were literally turning students away. Students who couldn’t be offered their subjects looked elsewhere, usually to the private sector.

The link between economies of scale and improved pedagogical practice was investigated further using the Likert-scale analytical tool. Teachers were asked to respond to the statements:

i) Our school has better facilities since becoming a multicampus college.

ii) Resources are now used in a better way than they were before the high school became part of the collegiate.

iii) Our school has better access to new technology e.g. computing, since it was restructured.

In the Likert-scale analysis of these structural-cultural dynamics, the scores of teachers’ mean responses in respect of these three statements were positive, with average scores of 2.69, 2.51 and 2.69 respectively. The numbers of teachers who agreed or strongly agreed with these statements were 71.88%, 55.07% and 72.00% respectively. These results showed that teachers in the four colleges associated the structural-cultural dynamics of their multicampus college with the availability of better facilities, a more efficient use of resources and better access to computing facilities including intranet networks across the campuses which teachers used to improve their pedagogic practices.

When interviewees were asked to, “Tell me how resources are used at this college and how they are shared among the campuses of the college”? their responses supported the view that the colleges were well resourced, that resources were being used efficiently and in particular, the colleges had access to what some interviewees characterised as ‘cutting edge technology’ in the form of intranet networks and internet access at levels greater than they had in the old schools.
Asked to, “Tell me what you like about this school?” students at the senior campus of one of the metropolitan colleges said:

I like our school. We have lots of facilities; like new computers, theatres and the gallery. (At a rural middle school students said) our computer labs are mad. … School is now fun, (because) surfing on the net is cool.

Apart from the new computing technology, the integration processes had provided new buildings and extensive refurbishment of existing buildings as well as modern equipment throughout the four colleges. Through the use of the new structural dynamics, new cultural dynamics had emerged and given the colleges greater efficiencies in the sharing and joint utilisation of the resources which had been made available by the new structures. Interviewees who confirmed this finding said:

We also share resources across our campuses; for example the senior campus had a lot of surplus equipment that didn’t fit their PDHPE programme and they offered it to the middle schools where we are finding it, very, very useful for our middle school curriculum. We also share with TAFE (Principals, metropolitan colleges).

In another site, as a result of the amalgamation of the high schools, coupled with the establishment of a central administration unit new practices had created substantial savings in labour and money among the participating cluster schools. This was well articulated by an interviewee who acknowledged that:

We’ve been able to develop economies of scale. For example, all the staffing for the campuses is done by the college administration unit. The amount of work this has taken off me is immeasurable (Principal, rural college).

Thus, at each of the four colleges, there was evidence of learning and teaching methods which were emerging in direct response to and so as to cater for the new cultural dynamics. For example, teachers were applying new methods and strategies for lesson preparation and delivery. They were trying out different strategies which facilitated their pedagogic practices in their new teaching and learning environments.

The structural-cultural dynamics of the new colleges appeared to have positive cumulative ‘pull effects’ whereby students in non-cluster schools, including private schools, were drawn towards enrolment into the new multicampus colleges because of their broader curriculum and the emerging better pedagogic practices. An example of many interviewees that supported this premise said:

In 2001, there were a number of parents who sent their children to other schools but we have clawed that back now, and we now have a much higher enrolment rate than the three former high schools had. The apparent retention rates from year 6 to 7 have risen and we are looking at retention rates of 101%. We realise retention rates here of over 100%; up to 110% in year 11. So that means we are getting kids from elsewhere. Students are coming to us because we can provide a course of study which their local school can’t provide (Deputy, rural college).

Students, like their principals and teachers, also acknowledged the large student enrolments at their colleges and in the main expressed positive views about their schools. They put their comments in the following terms:

This school is huge. It’s like students from three different schools all come here. Even students who would go to other schools now come here because this school
is a good school. It has Legal Studies, Business, Physics, TAFE; all courses are offered here; students do well here and that attracts everybody. 
(Students, metropolitan college senior campus).

An application of the Likert-scale analytical tool to investigate teachers’ understanding of the effectiveness of the multicampus college structural-cultural dynamics on enrolments, retention rates, curriculum breadth and subject choice at their college showed a mean score for teachers’ perceptions of 2.83 for students’ enrolments and retention rates and that for curriculum and subject choice was 3.51. The first statistic means that teachers on average ‘agreed’ with the statement that the multicampus college model encourages higher enrolments and retention rates at their college. The second co-efficient denotes that teachers on average, ‘strongly agreed’ with the statement that the multicampus college structural dynamics give students a broader HSC curriculum and a wider subject choice. The first result was obtained from 78.04% (n = 780) of the respondents and the second from 96.14% (n = 280) of the respondents. Thus the analysis found that the very positively correlated structural dynamics-broad curriculum relationship was not only the highest in the Likert-scale ranking but also the most broadly shared view among teachers.

Analysis of overall impact of new model on teaching and learning environment and on students’ governance

The Likert-scale analysis was also used to evaluate teachers’ and students’ views about the overall learning and teaching environment created by their new structural dynamics. In response to the statement that ‘Students’ attitude in the new structure is more positive than it was in the old structure’, 61.09% of the teachers recorded a Likert-scale perception ranking of 2.59. Thus the research found a positive correlation between the multicampus college structural dynamics and the cultural dynamic of teachers’ acknowledgement of a more positive students’ attitude within the structure. This relationship was interpreted to mean that on average, there was the understanding among teachers that students’ attitude towards school in the new structural-cultural dynamics was more positive than it had been in the old, comprehensive high school structural-cultural dynamics.

Students were also asked to respond to the statements that:
   i) There is a friendly atmosphere at this campus of the multicampus college.
   ii) The atmosphere at this campus is stimulating to hard work.
   iii) Students at this campus appear highly motivated to work hard.

Students’ average responses to these three statements had Likert-scale mean rankings of 2.84, 2.64 and 2.50 respectively, indicating positively affirmative responses. These statistics were respectively obtained from 84.69%, 72.50% and 64.58% of the students’ sample (n = 780) and were therefore derived from quite a large proportion of the students who responded to the questionnaire. This analysis clearly suggested that both teachers and students in the four colleges positively correlated the multicampus structural dynamics of their colleges to a learning environment in which students were more positive towards their studies and appeared to be highly motivated to work hard.

These findings on the learning and teaching environment in the multicampus college structural dynamics are important in an understanding of cultural dynamics because the way a person perceives his/her environment governs his/her attitude and the way he/she reacts. For example “perception of a positive environment brings about greater sensitivity and more, optimism and opportunities” (Pace, 2002, p.147). Peoples’ positive perceptions to their work environment influence their preparedness and willingness to “do better, move ahead, work free and want more” (Pace, 2002, p.50). For students, this creates opportunities for engagement resulting in improved learning outcomes.
Teachers and students were given a further opportunity to express their understanding of what it is really like to teach or learn in their multicampus college with the question: “How is the multicampus college structure impacting on the learning and teaching environment here?” Like their teachers, students both in the senior and middle school campuses, spoke very positively of the learning environment created by the new structural-cultural dynamics of their colleges. Interview segments from three different campuses included:

This school lets kids take whatever subjects they want. Students’ opinions are respected (Students, metropolitan senior campus).

We like the range of subjects offered at this campus. It is quieter here because you don’t have junior kids running around. So we can focus well on our HSC studies. Our HSC students do very well. (Student, rural senior campus).

We like it this way because, when you have year 12, the teachers focus on them and we are just sort of extras that don’t really matter (Students, rural middle school).

A recurrent comment from interviewees across all campuses was that the new structural dynamics had enabled their teachers to develop improved pedagogic practices. For example, interviewees explained that an emerging practice was that teachers were developing their expertise as specialists in the teaching of years 7 – 10 or 11 – 12. Principals and teachers alike said that teachers were becoming specialised as middle school curriculum experts in their subjects as opposed to spreading their skills across the years 7 – 12 curriculum. This had enabled teachers to specialise in their subjects and to develop greater depth and expertise in their pedagogical practices.

It was said that such specialisation by the teachers in the middle schools had been made possible because the new structural dynamics gave them the freedom to focus on middle school curriculum without allocating their time and other resources to the teaching of HSC subjects. Principals and teachers therefore felt that they could hone their skills on their students and develop productive pedagogies at a level of expertise which had not been feasible in the years 7 – 12 structural dynamics. So it was commonly believed, as illustrated by the following data that “there is better quality of teaching and learning taking place in the new structure because staff are not stretched over three stages of learning from year 7 to 12” (Principal, metropolitan college).

Just as middle school teachers could now emerge as specialists, so did many teachers in the senior campuses say that because the new structural dynamics meant that all their teaching was now directed to year 11 and 12 only, they could specialise in their subjects and become expert in delivering their subject content to year 11 and 12. The new structural dynamics enabled them to do this because they were no longer required to teach the middle school years and there were large numbers of students enrolled in each of these subjects.

Apart from allowing teachers on the senior campus to specialise in their subjects, the new structural dynamics enabled larger faculties to be formed because of the large cohort sizes typical of the multicampus college structural dynamics discussed earlier. Teachers said that this gave them the opportunity to meet as a faculty and to share resources and their expertise and thereby enhance each other’s professional development.

In addition to teachers’ and students’ affirmations of the learning environment provided by their multicampus college structural-cultural dynamics as discussed above, parents too expressed their consideration that the new structural-cultural dynamics were providing a better learning environment for their children. They appreciated the fact that it gave them more freedom and that they were treated as more adults. One of many parent interviewees said:
I think they are maturing more than children that are in a (year) 7 – 12 school because now when they are addressed by the principal say at an assembly, there are no 13 to 15 year olds. So here the children are spoken to as adults and I think they try to live to those expectations (Parent, metropolitan college).

The submission that the structural-cultural dynamics in the senior campus offer a more adult environment was a recurrent theme among all interviewees. Surprisingly, even in the middle school campuses, steps had been taken to improve the level of maturity among students, to promote student leadership and to enhance the learning environment. Examples of these practices were contained in the following two interviews from different principals:

One of the focuses of the college has been to give kids more say with governance. The leadership is now with year 9. We are trying to develop a more adult learning environment (Principal, rural college).

Let me give you an example; in a (year) 7 – 12 time-table, most schools start by putting year 12 and 11 on first and year 7 at the bottom. Now, that doesn’t happen. In many ways we are putting year 7 first because we are setting up team-teaching. So we are meeting the needs of middle school better (Principal, metropolitan college).

Students interviewed in both the middle school campuses and the senior campuses appeared to be aware of the increased focus towards the middle school years in the new structural-cultural dynamics compared to the old comprehensive high school structural-cultural dynamics. Middle school students said that in the new structural-cultural dynamics, they were “now the focus for teachers, because year 11 and 12 are not here” (Student, rural college).

It would thus appear that the structural-cultural dynamics of the new multicampus college structure, provided an opportunity for the creation of a better and more adult learning environment not only on the senior campuses as was widely acclaimed throughout all the sites, but also in the middle school sites where for instance, year 9 or 10 were now the ‘senior’ students with student empowerment which enabled them to play a greater role in the governance of their campus. The only significant negative dynamic that was widely acknowledged by both teachers and principals related to the inability of teachers to transfer from one campus to another within the same college at a time of their choice. It was obvious from interviewees that more work needs to be done to work out a system of rotating staff in a manner that met both staff wishes and school needs.

**Conclusion**

Discourses with interviewees showed that they believed that the introduction of the new structural-cultural dynamics had led to improved educational outcomes. This was mainly because, by combining several previously autonomous comprehensive high schools on a collegial basis, and making one of them the senior school comprising only years 11 and 12 and making the others its feeder middle schools, they could gain an amalgamation of students large enough to make it feasible for the senior campus to offer both a wide range of subjects as well as a wider range of levels within subjects. This way, interviewees argued, the new structure had enabled them to provide better educational opportunities in terms of curriculum enrichment, subject choice, enrolments, economies of scale and pedagogical restructuring. Interviewees said that in the middle schools, learning outcomes measured by the literacy and numeracy tests had improved because of better pedagogic intervention. They went as far as saying that their students were now achieving better academic outcomes, such as bands 5 and 6 in the HSC and better
University Admission Indices because they were doing subjects of their own choice and were more motivated, interested and engaged in their learning.

The aggregate analysis in this study led the research to deduce that the establishment of a multicampus college triggers a synergy of positive multiplier effects which transcend the structural and cultural dynamics of the multicampus college and extend to its feeder schools, non-feeder schools in the area and the community where the college is located.

The research concludes that given contextual contingencies, multicampus colleges’ structural-cultural dynamics represent a totally new way of teaching and learning – with a new set of pedagogic practices – which was regarded by interviewees as having potential to provide positive pedagogical intervention and effective education in schools and learning communities of the future.

References


