

**LEADING INDIGENOUS EDUCATION IN A
REMOTE LOCATION: REFLECTIONS ON
TEACHING TO BE “PROUD AND DEADLY”**

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Keywords

Leadership, Indigenous* education, professional learning, Indigenous community partnerships, Aboriginal, pride, self worth, high expectations, challenging behaviour

*The term “Indigenous” used hereafter in this document specifically refers to the Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples of Australia. The use of the term Indigenous is for grammatical ease only and no disrespect is intended.

Abstract

This thesis is a critical reflection of the author's time as a Principal of an Indigenous state school from 2003-2004. The purpose is to reassess the impact of her principalship in terms of the staff, students and Community change that affected learning outcomes at the school and to reanalyse to what actions and to whom positive changes could be attributed. This thesis reflects and identifies, in light of the literature, strategies which were effective in enhancing student learning outcomes.

The focus of this thesis was the Doongal State School*, its students, staff and facilities. The author will attempt to draw out theoretical frameworks in terms of: (1) what changed educationally in Doongal State School, (2) what seemed to be important in the Principal's role, (3) the processes that took place, and (4) the effect of being non-Indigenous and a female.

Overall, the author undertook this critical reflection in order to understand and embrace educational practices that will (a) lessen the gap between the academic outcomes achieved by Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, and (b) enhance life choices for Indigenous children.

The findings indicate that principal leadership is critical for success in Indigenous schools and is the centrepiece of the models developed to explain improvement at Doongal State School. School factors, Principal Leadership factors, Change factors and factors relating to being a non-Indigenous female principal, which, when implemented, will lead to improved educational outcomes for Indigenous students, have evolved as a result of this thesis.

Principal Leadership factors were found to be the enablers for the effective implementation of the key components for success.

* pseudonym used

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List of Abbreviations

AARE	Australian Association for Research in Education
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.
ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
CDEP	Community Development Employment Projects
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training
DETYA	Department of Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
DOGIT	Deed of Grant in Trust
EQ	Education Queensland
ESL	English as a Second Language
FATSIL	Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages
IETA	Indigenous Education and Training Alliance
IEW	Indigenous Education Worker
ISSU	Indigenous Schooling Support Unit
NAIDOC	National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee
NATSIEP	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy
NBEET	National Board of Employment, Education and Training
QATSIP	Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Police
QIECB	Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Body
QUT	Queensland University of Technology
RATEP	Remote Area Teacher Education Program
SAE	Standard Australian English

Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signature: _____
(Angela Douglas)

Date: _____

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To the three best kids a mother could wish for, Jack, Madelaine and Lachlan, now we can have some fun on the weekends, and to my husband Craig for his love and support. It is through their unselfishness that I have been able to write this thesis.

Preamble

At the start of 2003, I was appointed Principal of a State Primary School in an Indigenous Community in Queensland. For the purposes of this research, this school will be called Doongal State School. I was Principal at the school for two years and, during this time, I implemented a program I adapted from that used in Cherbourg State School (Sarra, 2003). At the end of the two years of my principalship at Doongal, the State Education Department considered that I had done sufficiently well with respect to school attendance, student engagement, and student learning outcomes that I was made a High Achieving Principal. As a result, my practice at Doongal became a model for training programs targeting principals of Indigenous schools.

However, as time has passed, I have come to feel that the Department's assessment of my time at Doongal may have been simplistic in terms of outcomes (i.e., school outcomes where positive change according to their surveys and assessment indicated success in terms of learning outcomes and Community/Parent Opinion Surveys) and attribution (i.e., the actions and the actors they considered responsible for the successful changes). I wanted to reflect more deeply on what happened at Doongal State School when I was Principal. In particular, I wanted to reassess the impact of my principalship in terms of the staff, students and Community change that affected learning outcomes at the school and to reanalyse to what actions and to whom positive changes could be attributed, looking especially at interactions between staff, Community members and me. This thesis is the result of those reflections. Therefore, I have undertaken this thesis as a means of reflecting critically on what happened at Doongal State School during 2003 and 2004 in the hope that it will provide insight into the role of principal in schools in remote Indigenous communities and enable theory on effective principalship to be developed. Thus, this thesis is embedded in a historical research paradigm as it aims to produce an "integrated account of the relationships between persons, events, times and places" (Burns, 2000, p. 481).

Writing this thesis has been difficult for two main reasons, namely: (a) disentangling my reflections in 2009 from my thoughts and actions in 2003/4; and (b)

ensuring that these reflections take account of, and acknowledge, my cultural biases. It has been difficult to step outside myself as Principal in 2003-4 and the beliefs and understandings I had at that time. The method I have used is to write in heteroglossic form using two voices, one from 2003 and 2004 (Angela03) honestly saying what I saw, felt and did at that time, and one from 2009 (Angela09) critiquing and evaluating the Angela in 2003-4. To provide information on how I have juggled these voices, and to explain why they are different, is the role of this preamble.

Angela03 and Angela09 have to be seen as two related but different versions of me. Angela03 was naive, new to Indigenous people, reasonably judgmental and a little arrogant and racist. Angela09 is older and, hopefully, more experienced, less judgmental and more reflective. Angela09 has been changed by her Doongal experience and from writing this thesis. Hopefully, this is evident in the way the two versions of me reflect on what it means to be: (a) an Indigenous learner in an Indigenous Community; (b) a young white inexperienced teacher in a Eurocentric school within a rural and remote Indigenous Community; and (c) a white female principal of such a school.

The reader needs to differentiate between the two Angelas because the thesis belongs to Angela09 and not Angela03. The voice of Angela03 lies in the descriptions of my actions in 2003 and 2004 and in the recollections and records of what I thought and said. These do not reflect the reasoned judgments of a PhD thesis nor are they always sensitive to Indigenous culture. The voice of Angela09 is the voice of the thesis and should reflect consistent reasoned argument and the awareness of literature, culture and context of a critical reflection.

To assist the reader to share in Angela09's critique of Angela03, this preamble provides background to both Angelas, particularly with respect to Indigenous issues. It encompasses three sections: (a) a brief outline of what I did and have done before, during and after Doongal; (b) a description of my experiences with Indigenous people before, during and after Doongal; and (c) an outline of my approaches to critical reflection and where in the thesis the two voices will predominate. I believe it is important that my background and my reasons for pursuing this particular line of research are known so that this can be taken into account in understanding my reflections. Thus, this preamble precedes the normal first introduction chapter of a thesis.

PERSONAL JOURNEY

BEFORE DOONGAL

I had a happy childhood and believe that I grew up with a deep sense of social justice. My parents were practising Catholics and this was the ethos that appeared to be dominant in our home. My father was a coal miner and my mother a school teacher. We children were inculcated into the importance of working hard at school and striving to achieve our potential. I lived a white, middle-class life of privilege and opportunity and I felt lucky to do so.

After completing Year 12 at a Catholic school for girls, I attended university to become a teacher. My grades were not really good as I was more interested in going out and socialising. After teaching for a year and giving birth to my first son, I decided to go back to university and complete a graduate diploma in psychology by correspondence. During this time I gave birth to a daughter and then another son.

My husband was also a school teacher and began seeking promotion in country New South Wales. My husband was promoted to a country school on the New England Highway. It was then that I decided to return to teaching and I was also promoted to Principal at a small school west of Tenterfield.

After a few years as a small-school principal, I began thinking about taking on a larger school and applied for positions in Queensland where I won the position of Principal at Doongal State School. Having lived in an outer Sydney suburb, I had very little knowledge of Aboriginal communities and had not paid much attention to media regarding these as I believed that it was not something I could have any impact upon, that is, it was someone else's problem.

DURING DOONGAL

I started as Principal of Doongal State School in 2003 with three major Angela03 beliefs. First, I believed that a principal could change the culture of a whole school. Second, I believed that students regardless of their living conditions and environment had a love of and craving for learning. Third, I believed that teachers chose their profession because they had a love for children and a strong desire to impart knowledge and shape our country. Thus, I was motivated in Doongal to ensure that the children in the school had access to an excellent education (not one where lower academic outcomes were

accepted and achieved) that would develop in them a love of learning and that teachers would teach in an environment where they felt that they were making a difference for the students in their classrooms. It was with these beliefs in 2003 that I began my journey as Angela03.

The reality of schooling in Doongal was very different to what I, as Angela03, had experienced previously. There seemed to be a mismatch between curriculum being taught by teachers and student engagement in learning. The consequences of this mismatch were, for Angela03, a high rate of negative behaviour incidents by students, high absenteeism and low morale of teachers. There were a number of local Community people employed at the school who, to Angela03, seemed to be struggling to find a voice and a place within the chaos of the school day.

The teachers were all non-Indigenous and appeared to Angela03 to be labouring to learn about and accept the lifestyle of the Doongal Community. Customs and cultural practices as well as a legacy which had been acquired from the time of the non-Indigenous controlled Mission ensured that Doongal was a very different community to the city or provincial suburbs that most of the teachers had experienced in their lifetimes.

As Angela03, I implemented new practices in Doongal State School and I was happy and proud with their effect. At the end of 2004, I felt that these practices had changed schooling in Doongal. I believed, as Angela03, that I had changed the behaviour of the school staff and the activity of the Community to deliver a better education and a brighter future for the children of Doongal. Systemic data had, in my view, showed the effectiveness of what I had done in Doongal. My impression was that the whole school community felt that there had been a shift in the learning outcomes of students and an improvement in school culture.

AFTER DOONGAL

Since my time as Principal of Doongal State School, I have been a principal in one semi-rural state school and one large suburban state school. I have also held a position in a region where my role was to professionally develop and mentor other principals in Community schools. I currently hold a senior position within Education Queensland working with Indigenous schools similar to Doongal.

In 2004, as Angela03, I believed that my leadership was responsible for improved student performance and shift in culture at the school. In 2004, Education Queensland recognised Doongal State School had improved in terms of student outcomes and presented me with an individual award as a high-achieving principal. This has meant that, since then, I have been seen as a person who should be able to influence schooling within Indigenous communities.

I began writing this thesis to evaluate, as Angela09, whether my beliefs in 2004 were correct, whether there had been tangible improvements in Doongal and whether it was reasonable to apportion attribution for these changes to my practices.

INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCE

BEFORE DOONGAL

My life from 1970-2002 had been one of a normal white, middle-class female. I had heard family and friends make racial comments throughout my life and never really questioned these statements. If I was honest with myself, I would have to admit that if someone was Aboriginal I would feel sorry for them. I would picture them in the desert doing dot paintings or drunk under a tree in a local park. I never really bothered to look deeper into the culture than what I was taught in school or incidental learning from my environment.

As a principal in NSW, I had to develop an Aboriginal education program for the students at my school as a mandatory requirement for the New South Wales Department of Education.. My school had no Aboriginal students so I was not really concerned about the effectiveness of the program I had developed. My previous experience in teaching Aboriginal students had been as a part-time teacher in a juvenile detention centre. In this setting, although the majority of students were Aboriginal, there was very little professional development regarding cultural awareness or understanding learning styles. This setting was different to a mainstream school setting as there were a maximum of six students in a class with two or three adults to teach and supervise. The curriculum mainly consisted of life skills with basic literacy and numeracy. I had little firsthand knowledge about Aboriginal people and how to provide an effective education.

DURING DOONGAL

After being at Doongal State School for seven weeks, I realised that my lack of experience in Aboriginal education was going to block any reasonable teaching and learning progress so I made it my business to seek best practice in Aboriginal education in Queensland schools. It was at this time that I was introduced to Dr Chris Sarra, then Principal of Cherbourg State School, who had developed a program for his school that had markedly improved attendance, behaviour and achievement. Dr Sarra showed me around Cherbourg State School and shared with me his philosophy on Aboriginal education. Cherbourg State School had developed the motto of “Strong and Smart” (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5.1) as a basis for its success.

As a result of my visit to Cherbourg, I realised that, as Angela03, for students at Doongal State School to achieve acceptable outcomes in school-based education, it was important that they were given and developed respect, that is, self respect and respect for others. I also came to realise that their culture, and its relevant implications, should be acknowledged and respected. This meant that aspects of culture should be recognised and integrated into the education process. My position on the development of respect at that time (Angela03) was that the Community and the school needed to have an active and effective relationship with one another. I felt we needed to build on the positive aspects of Indigenous life, by developing new attitudes for the modern world and by having a vision for the children when they became adults.

As Angela03, I believed that, for change to occur, there needed to be strong leaders in the school community who would drive this agenda. As the school leader of Doongal State School, I needed to be committed to the belief that Indigenous children could achieve at levels similar to mainstream children. I needed to be resilient and not lose heart when obstacles arose. I needed to have a strong will to implement change and, as a result, enhance the life outcomes of the children at Doongal State School.

AFTER DOONGAL

The period since leaving Doongal State School has enabled me to look back and reflect on my own story and the changes I have undergone in terms of my attitude and understanding of Indigenous people and the part that I can play by challenging my own beliefs and the beliefs of other non-Indigenous people. By implementing, in Doongal State School, a similar program to that of Cherbourg State School, I believe, even as

Angela09 that I was part of growth and development of both the school staff and the students at Doongal State School. The experience has led me to believe that building pride and self-worth in young Indigenous students and holding consistently high expectations has the potential to reverse the tide of Indigenous underachievement within State school systems.

This self-reflection prompted me to write this thesis to understand what happened at Doongal State School and to see if my experience, in the light of critical evaluation, has anything from which implications can be drawn for other female non-Indigenous principals who undertake positions within Indigenous communities.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THESIS

FORM OF REFLECTION

This thesis is a critical reflection. I am writing the thesis as Angela09 with different knowledge and understanding than I had when I was Angela03 and the Principal of Doongal State School. I am writing it in the hope that the experiences of so doing will enable me (Angela09) to understand what changed at Doongal and to explain the changes that occurred in the school in a manner that will provide illumination for other new principals and teachers in Indigenous schools.

Prior to writing this thesis, I did not research literature on leadership in Indigenous education, therefore my reflections will be influenced by the knowledge I have acquired through this process. It is for this reason that I am speaking in two voices (Angela03 and Angela09) in some Chapters, notably 4 and 5. I will try to describe what I felt, said and did in 2003/04 (Angela03) and will try to interpret and give reflections from the literature I have read and the presentations I have heard since 2004 (Angela09).

I will attempt to draw out theoretical frameworks in terms of: (1) what changed educationally in Doongal State School; (2) what seemed to be important in the Principal's role; (3) the processes that took place; and (4) the effect of my being non-Indigenous and a female.

STRUCTURE OF THESIS

Chapter 2 (Literature Review) is the voice of Angela 09 as are Chapters 3 (Design) and 6 (Conclusions). This Preamble is predominantly the voice of Angela09 but also

presents the voice of Angela03 as do Chapters 1 (Introduction) and 5 (Discussion). In contrast, Chapter 4 (Results) is predominantly the voice of Angela03. I present the voice of Angela03 without censorship and, therefore, reiterating what I said at the beginning of the Preamble, it may reflect a genre and be written in a tone and tenor considered inappropriate for a thesis. I will do my best to let the reader know which voice is speaking, but I am sometimes constrained by the need to allow a free flow of ideas.

As a reflection and as an analysis of activity which at the time had not been set up for data gathering, this thesis will sometimes be based on recollection. However, to the extent possible, descriptions of Angela03's activities will be based on my diary, interviews with and reports written by staff, records of students' attendance, attitude and achievement, and artefacts such as minutes of meetings, teachers' teaching plans and students' work. As well, recollections will be systematically drawn out by a method of considering sections of time between 2003 and 2004 in terms of different perspectives (and as such are data similar to that collected by semi-structured interview).

Overall, I am undertaking this critical reflection in order to understand and embrace educational practice that will (a) lessen the gap between the academic outcomes achieved by Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, and (b) enhance life choices for Indigenous children.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to reflect on my practices as a non-Indigenous female principal in an Indigenous context, Doongal State School, in order to reassess my effectiveness as a principal, and develop theory. This chapter introduces the thesis, providing context (Section 1.1), purposes (Section 1.2) and significance (Section 1.3) for the thesis, and overviewing the design and the dissertation chapters (Section 1.4).

As the thesis is a reflection on what happened across two years, January 2003 to December 2004, the context will focus on Doongal at the beginning of 2003.

This chapter is predominantly written in the voice of Angela09; however, the recollections in Section 1.1 do, in part, reflect the voice of Angela03, even if filtered through Angela09.

1.1 RESEARCH CONTEXT

This section describes the context for the study, notably the situation at Doongal Aboriginal Community at the start of my time as Principal. It covers Community history and facilities (Section 1.1.1) and educational facilities (Section 1.1.2).

1.1.1 COMMUNITY HISTORY AND FACILITIES

Doongal Aboriginal Community was established in the 1920s, after approximately 300 Aborigines were moved en masse from a government Community 300 km to the South, a Community which had been established approximately 15 years before. The government promised a large dam and fertile grazing land. The dam was never built and the Community still has ongoing issues with access to water for cattle and crops.

History

After the initial establishment, Doongal Aboriginal Community continued to grow by the forcible removal of Aborigines from many areas of Queensland. As a result, the Community is composed of at least thirteen language groups. This meant that the members of the Community were separated not only from their ancestral lands, but also from their tribal groups. They were also put in close proximity to other tribal groups about whom they had little knowledge or with whom they had historical enmities. For this

reason, many separate cultures existed within Doongal Community in 2003-2004. According to two Community Elders, the dispossessions of these people meant that Doongal had no one strong culture. Across the years, the Community was run by white officials, with the Indigenous inhabitants being required to work for much less money than white people (the government kept all other monies paid for the work) and not allowed to leave the Community. In the late 1970s, with no preparation or training, the government handed over the Community to the Indigenous members to manage. The land was given to the Community in the form of a Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT) lease.

Population

The population of Doongal at the time of this study comprised 1000-1200 residents. The major reason for such variation was due to people moving in and out of the Community to stay with friends or family for varying lengths of time. No Australian Bureau of Statistics Census statistics were available from the Doongal Council. However, for the purposes of this thesis, an indicative breakdown of these population statistics (based on occupancy statistics) shows that the percentages of ages in the Community were: 0-5 years 15%, 6-12 years 20%, 13-18 years 10%, 19-35 years 27%, and 36+ years 28%. The largest group in the population was children up to 15 years old. Health statistics reveal that the average age of death was around 46 years (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001a).

Employment

Employment was mostly provided by the Doongal Council, or through the Community Development Employment Projects Scheme (CDEP) that was administered by the Council. In 1998, it was estimated that unemployment was 94.5% (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001b).

CDEP was introduced as a work-related response to concerns over potential problems which might arise from the payment of unemployment benefits. To meet these concerns, its original role was to assist in the development of Communities through work programs and thus have them achieve a greater economic, social and cultural strength. This was accepted as essential to ensure a future for Indigenous Australians as valued members of a fair and equitable society.

In 1987, the Doongal Council introduced the CDEP into the Community of 161 participants, the vast majority of whom had never worked before. In 1993, there were 520 participants in CDEP which were divided into 50 work gangs (McGregor-Dey, 1993). All of the teacher aides at Doongal State School were employed part-time on the CDEP scheme. There was a lot of dissatisfaction amongst the Community due to the Education Department's failing to fund an adequate number of teacher aides.

Health

Indigenous Australians continue to suffer a greater burden of ill health than the rest of the population. Overall, Indigenous Australians have less access to health services than the general population and are more likely than non-Indigenous people to be hospitalised for most diseases and conditions and die at younger ages than other Australians (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2005). Research suggests that this may be due in part to aspects of their physical environment, social environment and their position in the workplace relative to others, their social connections with friends, family and community and the degree to which they feel included or excluded by society (Shaw, Dorling, & Smith, 1999). The perceived lack of control over their own lives can also contribute to poor health (Marmot & Wilkinson, 1999).

At the time of this study, Doongal Community had one hospital which operated as a multi-purpose health service in partnership with the Aboriginal Council. The hospital provided an accident and emergency service, acute inpatient service, an outpatient clinic, low-risk midwifery, diabetes, sexual health, child and school health, aged care, oral health and mental health services. During 2004 a project was undertaken to eradicate the strongyloides worm from the Community.

Nutrition

At the time of this study, the residents of Doongal had access to a store which provided a small variety of products including some fruit and vegetables. An adequate supply of healthy and affordable food is important in maintaining good nutrition but this was not always available in the Doongal Community. Fresh produce was often scarce due to the freight distance and associated costs; accordingly commodities were more expensive in this Community than in major centres.

Good nutrition requires access to fresh produce (Adams, 2005). Fresh produce was often not available in Doongal as supplies did not come often enough to enable supplies to be always fresh. Further, when fresh produce was available, costs were sufficiently high to deter shoppers from buying it. As well, Doongal people fall into the lowest socioeconomic group and a link exists between low socioeconomic status and various diseases. Therefore a proportion of their higher disease rates could be attributed to poor nutrition and low socioeconomic status.

Facilities

In 2003-2004, within the Doongal township there was a hospital, state school, preschool, Council-run high school (Hula*), CDEP office, day care centre, retail store, café, police station, churches, council office, post office, pool, stadium, family centre, old people's home (HAAC), women's shelter, and garage, as well as the following tradesmen: carpenter, electrician, and plumber. The local grocery store operated from 9.00am to 4.00pm Monday to Friday, with no provision for after hours' access to groceries. The recreational facility operated from 3.30pm to 6.00pm Monday to Friday. This usually lacked trained youth workers and was often shut due to the lack of availability of staff. The lack of trained staff meant that there were few programs running for the town's youth, resulting in boredom within the Community. The swimming pool was intended to be operational during the summer months, however, it was quite often not operational due to poor hygiene.

The Barcoo Creek was a seasonal waterway system which ran around the township. A number of bore wells situated in the Doongal area of the shire provided drinking water for the township and cattle.

Doongal was serviced by a sealed road from the closest city, whilst there were dirt roads to the nearby communities to the East. There were also a number of dirt roads which allowed access to grazing paddocks. It was not recommended that the surrounding dirt roads be used by any vehicles when it rained. There was also a sealed all-weather airport located on the northern outskirts of the township.

* pseudonym used

Housing

The housing at Doongal was predominantly fibro or weatherboard. Generally, a number of families occupied a single house, therefore overcrowding was an issue for most. Being a DOGIT (Deed of Grant in Trust) Community, residents did not have the option to purchase their own homes; rather, rent was paid to the Council.

Due to low payment of rent, the Community Council was only able to carry out a very few renovations. Many houses were in a state of disrepair with holes in walls, broken windows and makeshift doors.

There were few houses where landscaping or gardens were evident. Rubbish disposal was generally not confined to Council bins and would be seen blowing around house yards and the streets.

1.1.2 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AT DOONGAL

At the time of the study, there were two schools other than Doongal State School servicing the Community – one within the Community (the Council-run Hula High School) and one outside the Community (Guilford* State School, in a small white community approximately 35 km from Doongal). As the focus of the study was the Doongal State School, its staff, students and facilities, this subsection will briefly describe the two other schools and then provide detail on Doongal State School.

Hula High School

Hula High School was an Independent non-denominational, co-educational Aboriginal Community school situated in the Doongal Community. The school offered educational and vocational programs to post-primary students up to and including mature age students.

Aboriginal Literacy and Numeracy programs and an Aboriginal Culture program formed part of the curriculum. The Queensland Year 1-10 Curriculum was taught across the seven Key Learning Areas: English, Mathematics, Science, Study of Society and Environment, The Arts, Health & Physical Education, and Technology. Nationally

* pseudonym used

accredited Vocational Training studies in Office Practices, Child Care, Agriculture and Horticulture were offered at the school. A variety of extra-curricular activities were available for students. Off-campus extra-curricular activities included cricket, football, dancing, excursions, culture and camps.

The school encouraged students to participate in cultural programs of dance and art and engaged specialist teachers and tutors, and artists-in-residence, where appropriate. Opportunities were provided for students to participate in, and perform, cultural activities such as National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week and other Indigenous celebrations.

Guilford State School

Guilford State School was a Preschool to Year 10 facility and accessible across a dirt road of about 30 kilometres from Doongal. Guilford was a very small town with a predominantly white population. The road between Doongal and Guilford was unsealed and not usable in wet weather. Guilford State School community consisted of a diverse range of client groups. A core of traditional white nuclear families existed within the school community along with an increasing number of blended and single-parent families. The school serviced the Guilford township and its surrounds, including the Doongal Aboriginal Community, local Detention Centre and residents of the neighbouring shire. At times throughout the school year, the student population included up to 47% Indigenous English as Second Language (ESL) learners and a significant percentage of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous transient students. The school in 2003 and 2004 had an enrolment of around 120 students, approximately 47% of whom were from Doongal in 2003.

Guilford was an ex-coal mining town and at the time of the study serviced beef, agricultural, education and health industries. The town had a police station, ambulance, hospital with doctor, post office, LandCare office, historical village, caravan park, general store, hotel, cafes and garages. The town had two small corner stores which were accessible from 8.00am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday and 8.30am to 12.30pm Saturday. There were a number of social activities in Guilford which ran on varying nights throughout the week, including tennis, touch football, aerobics, music lessons, church groups and horse riding clubs.

Doongal Aboriginal Community Council provided bus transport to Guilford for Doongal and other rural students. The bus made two return runs per day (to deliver students to Guilford school and to return students to their homes).

Doongal State School

As an Education Queensland school situated within the Doongal Community, the student population was 100% Australian Indigenous in 2003 and 2004.

SCHOOL FACILITIES – EARLY 2003

Doongal State School was equipped with eleven teaching spaces in 2003. The classrooms were quite old with a lot of graffiti evident around the outside and on the class chairs and desks. The equipment was poorly cared for by the students and past teachers. Cleaners performed their duties sporadically across the entire school leaving it quite unhygienic. Included in the eleven teaching spaces was a classroom designated for RATEP (Remote Area Teacher Education Program). This room was well equipped with six computers, phone, fax, data projector, video camera and abundant stationery. In 2003 the program was not operating.

A tuckshop was managed by a local Elder. The tuckshop sold pies, sausage rolls, chips and soft drink as these were easy to supply, but was operating at a loss.

The school had one well-resourced computer lab with fifteen networked computers. One teacher had been responsible for this room but had been transferred away from Doongal against his wishes the year before and had not provided adequate passwords and information on how the room was set up for future efficient functioning.

There were two resource rooms filled with mathematics and literacy resources which were accessed by the teaching staff. However, with a large turnover of staff, resources were not utilised due to a lack of appropriate professional development.

The school administration block consisted of an office and Principal's office, staff room which was quite small for the number of people employed, and a library. The library was in a terrible state. Books were scattered everywhere with no system for finding books. Teachers from the previous year had "dumped" all of their resources in a big pile on the floor. The administration building from the outside showed the scars of repair from constant vandalism. Human and animal faeces were often evident at the entrance to the building.

During the Easter holidays of 2003, a fire was lit in a stairwell underneath the main teaching classrooms. This destroyed five classrooms including the RATEP room, the literacy and numeracy resource rooms and the tuckshop. It took a year and a half to rebuild so we had to make do with what we had as well as some temporary classrooms.

SCHOOL STAFF AND STAFF FACILITIES – EARLY 2003

Altogether, the school had 23 staff comprising: 1 principal, 8 classroom teachers (P-7), 4 specialist teachers (Behaviour Management, PE and Music, Learning Support, Guidance Officer) and 9 teacher aides (8 classrooms, 1 behaviour management). (See Table B-1 in Appendix B for details – pseudonyms are used to denote the teachers, specialists and teacher aides.)

Staff at Doongal School were supplied housing at a discounted rate within the Doongal Community. The houses were located together about 150 metres away on the same street as the school. The Principal's residence was located apart from the teachers and was across the road from the police station.

Living in such close proximity to each other was usually positive for the non-Indigenous teachers. They socialised together on the weekends and were a support for each other after a hard day. On the pay weekend, staff would go to the closest major centre which was about 2½ hours away. Occasionally the close living would create issues especially after a weekend where a lot of alcohol had been consumed. Overall, most teachers enjoyed the camaraderie of the Community living. Some of the younger teachers also socialised with local Community members.

STUDENT ENROLMENT AND HEALTH – EARLY 2003

There were 175 students in Doongal State School spread across preschool and Grades 1 to 7. Table B-2 (Appendix B) outlines enrolment numbers for each of the eight classes (P-7) and the Behaviour Management class in 2003. The Behaviour Management class was established to meet the needs of students whose behaviour did not allow them to function in the regular classroom.

The students attending Doongal were only part of those eligible to attend school from the Community. A significant number of students travelled to Guilford State School. Although all reasons for this travel were not known, some of these students did travel to Guilford because their parents felt it would give them a better education.

Student health was generally in need of improvement. The tone of students' skin, the presence of lesions, and low body weight indicated this. Many students suffered from Otitis Media which affected their hearing. Sound systems were implemented into every classroom.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE, BEHAVIOUR AND ACHIEVEMENT – EARLY 2003

Attendance averaged 30% (unreliable data given by the District Director in 2002). On any given week day, in 2002, a drive around Doongal streets would have highlighted the fact that many children of compulsory school age living in Doongal were not attending school.

Although numbers of behavioural incidences are not known, it is true that behaviour at Doongal was significantly different to mainstream schools from similar locations. Behaviour issues usually revolved around violence. Classroom furniture was often used as weapons in disputes arising during the day. Lunch breaks, when the whole school would get together, proved even worse, quite often ending with extreme physical violence using whatever was lying around the streets.

Results from the 2002 standardised testing revealed that no children at Doongal State School in Year 2 met the minimum standard in reading, writing and number. Results for the Years 3, 5 and 7 state-wide tests showed Doongal State School to be one of the lowest-performing schools in Queensland.

1.2 PURPOSES

The overall aim of this thesis is to reflect critically on what happened at Doongal State School from 2003 and 2004 in my time there as a non-Indigenous female principal. The particular objectives are:

- (1) to describe my experiences as Principal of Doongal State School in relation to literature on Indigenous education, leadership and school change;
- (2) to explore changes in myself and others (staff, students and Community members) associated with the school across 2003-4 in comparison to literature on principals of Indigenous Community schools;
- (3) to use the results of (2) to reassess impact (the effectiveness of my actions as Principal on staff, students and Community, particularly in terms of school

attendance, engagement and learning), and reanalyse attribution (the actions and the actors that appear to be responsible for positive changes);

- (4) to construct a theory that explains the results from (2) and (3) in terms of my and others' leadership actions and practices at Doongal; and
- (5) to draw implications for improved principal leadership practices with respect to Indigenous students, particularly for schools not only in remote Indigenous Communities but also for any school with Indigenous students.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE

The research is significant because of its focus, the impact of female non-Indigenous principal actions on staff, students and community in a school within a remote Indigenous Community. This focus enables three important issues to be reflected upon, Indigenous learning outcomes, school leadership, and female non-Indigenous leadership in remote Indigenous Communities.

Indigenous students' learning outcomes

Research that focuses on Indigenous learning outcomes is significant because state-wide testing in Australia consistently reveals that Indigenous students are underperforming in relation to their non-Indigenous counterparts. Indigenous student performance on benchmark tests is well below that of non-Indigenous students in remote and rural locations.

The majority of Indigenous students in Australia do not complete high school and, as a consequence, career options are markedly limited. This suggests that the kind of schooling being delivered to them is inadequate. For the majority of Indigenous students, changes are required if they are to complete high school and succeed.

This thesis will explore one case study of Doongal State School and draw implications from this case for other schools in remote Indigenous Communities.

Leadership and Indigenous learning

Marshall and Tucker (1992) described transformational leaders as "people orientated" and leaders who build relationships, help followers develop goals, and identify strategies for accomplishing these goals.

This thesis will reflect on my years at Doongal in relation to this literature in order to reassess impact and reanalyse attribution of the perceived success in terms of student learning outcomes, staff and Community change, looking particularly at Doongal in my time as Principal in terms of how a vision or mission is articulated, decision-making is shared, and staff, students and Community are empowered to carry out the vision to enhance Indigenous students' learning outcomes..

Non-Indigenous and female leadership

Research that focuses on non-Indigenous and female leadership in Indigenous schools and is significant because they both may reflect a cultural confrontation. For example, non-Indigenous principals reinforce dominance of white culture while female leadership can be confronting for some communities due to the focus which may be placed on male leadership.

Non-Indigenous leadership is common in Indigenous schools, therefore the information provided in this thesis would be helpful in many situations. Similarly, female leadership is becoming more common. This study has the potential to provide cross-cultural strategies needed for success by non-Indigenous female principals in particular.

Paucity of research findings

As the literature review in Chapter 2 shows, there is little research on the attributes of an effective white, female leader in an Indigenous school. Therefore, this thesis fills the gap in the literature on this subject and, as the number of non-indigenous female principals is increasing in Indigenous schools, provides insight for future leaders in Indigenous schools.

1.4 OVERVIEW OF THESIS

This section describes the design which is mixed method and longitudinal, and provides a brief overview of the chapters in the document.

Although the study is reflective in the sense that data gathering had already been completed, it is intended that the thesis follow a traditional path.

1.4.1 DESIGN OVERVIEW

Methodology. As described more fully in Chapter 3, the research methodology for the study has three components: qualitative, reflective/critical, and decolonising.

It is *qualitative* (comparing in terms of the quality and descriptive use of numbers), *ethnographic* (interpreting data in terms of the categories of the participants) and *longitudinal* (following a group of participants across two years). It focuses on an Indigenous primary school (Doongal State School) as a *case study*. It is also *action research* in that it is a principal attempting to improve her practice, and thus follows an action-research spiral of planning, action, observation and reflection, and new plans.

It is *reflective* and *critical* in that it looks back at what happened in Doongal State School across two years (2003-2004) and analyses the effectiveness of actions taken in light of the literature. It focuses on the two years as a *narrative* (Cresswell, 2005) and is *reflexive* in that reflection not only focuses on actions and outcomes but also on the techniques used to gather data at that time.

This thesis observes protocols that the researcher-principal is a non-Indigenous observer-practitioner in an Indigenous environment. It uses an Indigenous critical friend to provide feedback on interpretations.

Participants. The participants are the teachers, teacher aides, general staff, students and parents associated with the school. The focus is on the school and all its members, but a small number are selected for more in-depth study.

Instruments. The instruments are eclectic – tests and surveys, interviews and observations, reflective journals and collections of artefacts (see Appendix A for these instruments).

Procedure. The procedure follows the action research spiral of *Planning, Action, Observation and Reflection* (see Chapter 4).

Analysis. The analysis ideas emerge from the data (*emergent*) and are undertaken continuously so that later observations can be affected by earlier findings (*contingent*) and findings constructed across time (*cumulative*).

1.4.2 THESIS OVERVIEW

The *Preamble* discusses background to the research and identifies which forms of data were utilised to direct this research. It also discusses the history, beliefs and perceptions of the researcher-principal, and the two different voices (Angela03 and Angela09) used in the thesis.

Chapter 1. This chapter discusses the context of the Doongal Community and Doongal State School, and provides the background, purposes, significance and overview of the research.

Chapter 2. In this chapter, the pertinent literature relating to the Australian Indigenous context and education is reviewed, as well as literature relating to leadership in general and the role of school principal in particular, factors that impact on teacher and student change, and Indigenous school renewal. This chapter concludes with implications for the theoretical framework of the study.

Chapter 3. This chapter provides the research design for the thesis in terms of methodology, participants, instruments, procedure, analysis and limitations.

Chapter 4. This chapter provides the results of the study. It is framed in four stages of my time as the Principal of Doongal State School and follows the action research cycle of plan, act, observe and reflect during each of the four stages.

Chapter 5. Provides a discussion of the findings in the light of the literature and develops a theory with respect to School factors, Principal Leadership factors, Change factors and being a non-Indigenous, female Principal.

Chapter 6. Provides a summary of the findings and draws implications for practice and research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse what happened during my time as a non-Indigenous and female principal in a remote Indigenous context. Thus, this chapter provides an overview of the historical context of Indigenous education in Queensland as well as research on leadership. Good practice for Indigenous education is included in the final part of the chapter to prescribe certain models for transfer and application to other school leaders in Indigenous schools and to highlight educational leadership and programs which have been successful. Indigenous education can not be considered in isolation from issues of poverty, democracy and human rights; however, it is a tool for enhancing opportunities for Indigenous people to exercise their social, cultural and civil rights.

This chapter reviews the literature pertaining to the aims of this study as follows: *Indigenous Educational Context* looks at Indigenous Education from historical and cultural perspectives (Section 2.1); *Indigenous Teaching and Learning Outcomes* examines the literature with respect to issues affecting Indigenous educational outcomes (Section 2.2); *Leadership* highlights effective leadership models (Section 2.3); *Professional Learning and School Change* reviews literature with respect to professional development and teacher change (Section 2.4); *Effective Change in Indigenous Schools* looks at factors that have affected the success of Indigenous schools, most notably Cherbourg State School (Section 2.5); and *Framework for the Reflections* focuses on summarising literature reviewed and developing an initial theoretical framework for later reflections (Section 2.6).

This Chapter is almost solely from the voice of Angela09, but in some parts of this chapter Angela 03 will be evident. The Angela09 voice is grounded in the situation and practices of Angela09. In other words, although Angela09 is in control, decisions are made on priority and emphasis in order to illuminate Angela03.

2.1 INDIGENOUS EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

This section reviews literature pertaining to Indigenous educational contexts with respect to: (a) the historical perspective of Indigenous education from traditional

Indigenous knowledge to Westernised Indigenous education (Section 2.1.1); (b) the role of language in relation to Indigenous culture and education (Section 2.1.2); and (c) identity differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students (Section 2.1.3).

2.1.1 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Indigenous education pre colonisation

Indigenous cultures have an ancient but highly-developed and complex education system. Indigenous education goes far beyond European contact (Broome, 2005). Education was a life-long process driven by the need to function effectively in society and in harmony with the environment. Learning was considered a gift of knowledge which needed to be passed on from one person to another. It was a strong oral tradition in which the stories and songs of particular Dreamings passed on the wisdom, beliefs and values of its people, allowing Indigenous Australians to keep their knowledge and culture alive for around 2000 generations (Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Body (QIECB), 2003). It was not uncommon for Indigenous people to learn as many as fifteen languages and dialects (Mudrooroo, 1995; Trudgen, 2001)

Bourke, Johnson, and White (1980) agree that prior to 1788, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders had an effective but different system of education to the Western world. This Indigenous system of education system had stages of learning similar to education system evident today and the traditional teaching practices also had similar strategies to those of today, these being: storytelling, the use of demonstration, group activities, and the sharing of knowledge. These have been the preferred learning style for many thousands of years and are still used today. However this education system had no written component, instead relied on non-written forms of knowledge.

Educational history post colonisation

Historically, the Western school system has failed to meet the needs of Indigenous students (Broome, 2001; Folds, 1997; Mudrooroo, 1995). From the late eighteenth century to the late nineteenth century, Indigenous people have suffered from the destructive force of globalisation. Moran (2005) asserts that this has brought for them, disease, dispossession and cultural devastation. At the time of British invasion, the Indigenous population of Australia was divided into hundreds of tribal and sub tribal groups living throughout Australia and its nearby coastal islands. Most tribes lived by

hunting and gathering, although practices, lifestyles and degrees of mobility varied depending on geographic areas, from the coast to the inland desert. Initially, the Indigenous people learned farming skills and worked as labourers for the new settlers, however Indigenous people later became obstacles that stood in the way of settler dreams and progress. It was not long before tribes were dispossessed of their lands (Broome, 2001).

This dispossession potentially provides one reason why Aboriginal communities are still plagued by issues of poverty, alcoholism, domestic violence, high mortality rates, high teenage pregnancies and a range of other social and health issues which ultimately threaten the survival of these communities (Fitzgerald, 2000).

European contact

Eighteen Hundreds. Around the 1800's, families were sent to missions and settlements "according to the provisions of carefully crafted 'protection laws'" (Kidd, 2002). Many Indigenous people died of disease and starvation because these missions were usually established on non-fertile land and there was little provision for the people to grow food to survive. Those Indigenous people who escaped from the missions in search of food and work were hunted down and returned in chains. Work was compulsory and unpaid until the late 1960's. The housing that was provided was of an extremely poor standard.

Early Nineteen Hundreds. In 1905, Bourke, Dowe, and Lucas (1993) assert that the Queensland Crown Solicitor advised the Queensland Government that Aboriginal children were not exempted from the government's own law requiring every child to be given a regular education. Despite this, the Queensland Government did not provide qualified teachers, classrooms or learning resources for Indigenous students.

Nineteen Fifties to Sixties. Until the 1950/60's, Graham (1994) states that lessons for Indigenous children were limited to half a day so that they could work in the afternoon, and they were provided with outdated materials passed on from the white schools with unpaid local monitors as teachers. Also, although many Indigenous children spent up to 10 years in structured classes during this time, the content provided to students only aimed to reach a minimum standard of around Year 4/5. This meant that a considerable amount of time was spent on teaching particular subjects. Many Indigenous

people who were schooled during this period believe that due to the formal structure of learning and their willingness to learn new concepts at this stage of their life, children acquired high levels of literacy and numeracy skills that allowed them to function adequately socially and in the workforce. At the same time, those Indigenous students retained their traditional skills and cultural knowledge of their land alongside their new skills (Education Queensland, 2006).

Many Indigenous people from this era are presently leaders within their communities and have maintained high levels of literacy and numeracy skills in contrast with the current educational underperformance of Indigenous students, who have access neither to the traditional skills and culture of their tribal group nor to the contemporary skills and language of 21st century society (Trudgen, 2001).

Nineteen Seventies. Since the mid-1970s, conventional schooling has been provided to Indigenous students. In the 1960's and 70's Trudgen (2001) argues that many Indigenous people went through to higher education and onto full-time employment in the 1970's. Beresford and Partington (2003) argue, however, that Indigenous tertiary education has not improved significantly since few students stayed on to Years 11 and 12 in the 1970's. Folds (1987) does not agree that education was in fact meeting the needs of Indigenous students. He believes that the outcomes were poor and attributed these to the failure of schools to support Indigenous culture and identity. Trudgen (2001) suggests that a great many things affect the Indigenous people's desire for education. He believes that the lack of meaningful work in which Indigenous people are involved is one reason along with the lack of quality of education offered to Indigenous people.

Nineteen Eighties. Around 1982, the administration and management of respective school sites on communities commenced within the previous DOGIT community schools. Prior to this time, the education of Indigenous students who lived in these communities was the responsibility of the former Department of Native Affairs, and schools were often staffed by non-Indigenous public servants or wives of Community administrators. Other community schools were run by church groups and lessons, taught by church leaders, featured strong Christian values.

In 1989, following a review by the national Aboriginal Education Policy Task Force (Australian Government, 1988), a joint policy for Indigenous education was endorsed by all levels of government. The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Education Policy (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1990) was implemented from 1 January 1990 and provided 21 long-term goals focusing upon the following four priorities:

- involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in educational decision-making;
- equality of access to educational services;
- equity of educational participation; and
- equitable and appropriate educational outcomes.

Nineteen Nineties. Until the late 1990s, a national approach drove the policy directions and priorities of Education Queensland which established National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Program (NATSIEP) Teams in every region to deliver upon the 21 goals of schooling for Indigenous students. Each NATSIEP team was responsible for the administration and dispersion of Commonwealth funds to improve Indigenous student achievement in their region. Student enrolments in schools generally determined the direction of Commonwealth funds to support Indigenous students. Indigenous numbers in post-secondary qualifications increased by 156% between 1992 and 1999 (Bourke, Rigby, & Burden, 2000).

In 1994, a National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples conducted by a States and Territory education sector reference group sought to build upon the work from the previous NATSIEP findings. Many of the review's recommendations targeted the school's role in establishing partnerships with local communities to strengthen school decision-making on Indigenous education initiatives and funding. Beresford and Partington (2003) question the slow progress under NATSIEP and raise questions regarding the effectiveness of schools to engage in change on behalf of Indigenous students. This challenge is not only relevant in Australia as Ogbu (1978) also questioned the capacity of schools in the United States to respond to reform agendas of that government to improve minority education.

In 1998, the first Queensland-initiated review of Indigenous education in state schools (Education Queensland, 1998), which was broadened to include employment outcomes for Indigenous people, recommended four major areas for improving Indigenous education:

- building effective partnerships;
- negotiating accountability frameworks;
- improving coordination and coherence in service delivery; and
- establishing relevancy in curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, reporting and employment policies and programs.

Early 21st century. In 2000, Education Queensland responded to these review recommendations with the release of its first policy on Indigenous education – Partners for Success Strategy for the Continuous Improvement of Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Education Queensland (Education Queensland, 2001).

2.1.2 LANGUAGE AND INDIGENOUS CULTURE

Indigenous people take pride in their languages according to Mudrooroo (1995). He asserts that languages came from the Indigenous ancestors but many of the languages have been lost as a result of European invasion. Trudgen (2001) agrees with Mudrooroo that traditionally Indigenous people were masters of communication. As noted in Section 2.1.1, it was not uncommon for them to learn as many as fifteen languages and dialects.

However, the language that the non-Indigenous people brought to Australia was very different to the languages the Indigenous people had previously mastered. Few non-Indigenous people attempted to learn the Indigenous languages; instead, the Indigenous people had to learn English. Mudrooroo (1995) states “we have to use different languages in different situations – an Indigenous language or our variant of English in the cultural and social, and the Australian standard of English in the economic” (p. 57).

Indigenous languages have not only cultural but ceremonial importance (Walsh & Yallop, 1993). Trudgen (2001) believes that it is the lack of understanding of the English language which causes communication problems that the dominant culture or non-Indigenous people do not even notice. This destroys Indigenous people’s attempts to acquire meaningful education and training, thereby preventing them from gaining control of their future.

Language and achievement

Language is identified throughout the literature as a crucial issue that impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students’ educational underachievement. The same issue is grappled within the USA with the African-American students (Hassimi in King,

2005). His research indicates that, when students are taught in their own language, they are engaged and a deeper learning takes place. Students feel their culture is valued.

The Review of Education and Employment Programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Education Queensland (Education Queensland, 2001) findings reveal that:

Where communities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in rural, remote and urban locations do not speak Standard Australian English, literacy achievement in Standard Australian English is problematic. (p. 6)

Standard Australian English (SAE) is the language in which fluency is required for schooling purposes and is the language of instruction in Education Queensland schools. However, for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, SAE is not their first language.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students often speak more than one language. For some, SAE may be a second, third or fourth language or dialect. Today, some Indigenous students in remote areas of Queensland will speak traditional languages. Others speak a variety of krio and non-standard varieties of English.

While there is limited research available with regard to these new language varieties, a recent study by Angelo (2006) of the language spoken in Yarrabah in North Queensland reveals the language to be a Kriol as analysed according to Bickerton's (1999) 12 featured characteristics of Kriol grammars. The language spoken by students at Yarrabah has commonly been referred to as Aboriginal English which implies a close relationship to SAE, however this research reveals that there is a need for more clarity around the similarities and differences between the home language and SAE in order to enable students to function effectively in teaching and learning experiences.

Language was also identified by Bickerton (1999) as an important factor in student's achievements in numeracy outcomes. He argued that providing opportunities to explore the language of mathematics and talking, writing and reworking mathematical concepts were effective teaching and learning experiences. He also advocated approaches to learning experiences in numeracy that included plenty of hands-on, concrete activities which related to students' home lives.

A number of papers (e.g., Education Queensland, 2000; Luke, Woods, & Land, 2002) identify Education Queensland's lack of systemic guidance, policy direction and concentrated pre- and in-service teacher preparation across the system for Indigenous language awareness and support. However, acknowledgment of, and respect for, Indigenous languages across the country is a key aspect that has been recognised through a number of reports and reviews that impact significantly on Indigenous student achievement. "Recognising the significance of a language to its people needs to be inherent in any process of Government, or program development which aims to positively influence the social circumstances affecting a community" (Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages [FATSIL], 2003, p. 4).

Traditional languages and learning

Trudgen (2001) asserts that there are some traditional schools operating effectively. These institutions teach ancient knowledge in a very efficient manner with higher than average attendance rates. These institutions use the Indigenous people's language, communication mores, and ways of constructing knowledge. The Indigenous teachers use well-refined "scaffolding" techniques to build on pre-existing knowledge. Trudgen also believes that many Indigenous teachers in our current school system lose almost all of these culturally-appropriate teaching methods when they attend mainstream training institutions and that many of these institutions do not understand the principles of effective cross cultural/cross language education.

Nancarrow (2003) reveals that there have been mixed feelings within Aboriginal communities throughout Queensland about the idea of traditional languages being taught in schools. Many people have a strong "spiritual and emotional connection with their language and want this to be passed on to their children" (p. 3). At the same time there is a general concern about the "education system taking over the agenda on what is fundamentally Aboriginal knowledge" (p. 3). This is compounded by the general experiences Indigenous communities have with schools that can be distancing and culturally non-inclusive. Teachers in Indigenous schools face specific challenges in terms of learning about, creating and applying teaching methods that meet the specific learning and language needs of Indigenous communities. Teaching methods need to be continually assessed and refined with the participation of students, parents and Community members. This training for teachers is not always available and would be situation contextual for

each Community. King and Schielmann (2004) argue that to assist teachers, Elders need to be recognised, respected and involved by teachers. Teachers in communities need to develop their own teaching materials in consultation with the Indigenous communities, as the specific resources may not be available.

Giroux (1991) points out that minority groups are marginalised as a result of viewing cultural literacy as Eurocentric. He states that to understand literacy as a discursive practice, we must recognise not only that the differences are crucial for understanding how to read and write, but also that the identities of others matter as part of a broader set of policies and practices aimed for the reconstruction of democratic public life.

2.1.3 INDIGENOUS AND WESTERN IDENTITY DIFFERENCES (VALUES)

The values of Indigenous people can be fundamentally different to those of non-Indigenous people. Indigenous culture is “preoccupied with the relatedness of land, kin and religious ceremony” (Harris, 1990, p. 278). It is clear from research that support and development of strong identities for Indigenous students would contribute to improved educational outcomes and have a positive impact on psychological and behavioural outcomes; however, the connections are not always clear (Purdie, 2003).

Indigenous identity and beliefs re education

McDonald (2004) says that the “Indigenous identity” is “complex and contested, thus providing particular challenges to teachers who seek to support the identities of their Indigenous students” (p. 2). McDonald’s study considers “best practice” for teachers of Indigenous students as identified by the students, their families and the school administration. This case study reveals how the identity of successful Indigenous students can be conflicting with their Indigenous identity. Tensions exist, at a number of levels. The challenge for teachers is to provide the suitable conditions for students to feel proud of being Indigenous through valuing Indigenous cultures. Purdie (2002) suggests that Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups of students may have different concepts of what it means to be a “good student”. Her study of self-concepts of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students considered six dimensions of self-concept: *family, peer, general school, academic achievement, career* and *self-acceptance*. While it seems that, in general, non-Indigenous students associate being a “good student” more strongly with

academic achievement, Indigenous students commonly considered the positive relationships with teachers or remaining silent in class as being more connected to being a “good student”. The results also support that, for Indigenous students, family plays a vital role in their success both at school and also in maintaining a positive sense of self. This was in contrast to the results of the non-Indigenous students.

Another side to the argument about the impact of culture on Indigenous education is Cummins’ (2001) view that Indigenous youth lack a positive identification with the culture of school because it is alien to their own cultural background. McConaghy (2000) states that there is some evidence that, in remote communities, adolescents regard school as being only for children and they are reluctant to attend. This becomes more entrenched once social and cultural obligations increase.

Pride and self worth

“Identity is a locus of the struggle for power to control the epistemological relations between social action and meaning, social identity and practice” (Povinelli, 1993, p. 284). That is, social boundaries whether ethnic, racial or other, are made in action and intention. Coolman (1993) supports Povinelli and quotes Erne Dingo, an Aboriginal actor:

You can go into a black community area and everyone will want to have a talk with you to say hello, or acknowledge you as you are passing. You go into the city at lunch time and every body’s in their own world ... We’ve never been trained to be ourselves. We basically are becoming stereotype whites. But you know the white society isn’t our society. Our society comes from togetherness, and we don’t have to be acceptable coons. If we be ourselves that’s more honest. We’re faced with a lot more negatives through out every day, just by the colour of our skin. Sometimes it’s positive and a lot of times it’s negative. White people will see a black person and think of all the reasons why there are black people. Yet black people will look at white people and try to work out where they are from. Whether they are Irish or whatever. White people look at blacks and think of alcohol, fighting, racism, no education, dirty. They don’t want to learn about the complexities of an Aboriginal person, they don’t want to accept that we are just as good as them. (p. 98)

Katznelson and Weir (1985), and Bowles and Gintis (1976) seek to show how class structures in American societies were recreated in the nation’s schools. Both recognise

that schools had specific functions in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Both find a definitive relationship between capitalist methods of production and the establishment of public schools. They both declare that at this time, the new modes of production needed educational reform and expansion to prepare a literate and capable working class.

A structural correspondence is said to exist between the social relations found in educational practice and those of the workplace. Classrooms are thus seen as parodies of the workshops, with teacher playing the capitalist role and students the workers. Rothstein (1991) asserts that educational production refers to the way youth are transformed into docile, legitimate students by teachers in the schools who demand particular cultural and linguistic requirements of them. School is designed to prepare students for their life in the productive sector of society. Students then grow learning the ideologies and common beliefs of their families and schools; they learn to explain what is happening to them at home and elsewhere in terms of understanding of the past. Rothstein also explains that ideology permeates the schools, causing a clash between the ideas of working class and poor students and the essentially business-class values and interpretations of teachers. This struggle forces youth to accept or reject their roles as ignorant and unworthy students. They must learn about the distortions in school, or accept ideas about themselves and their families that are stereotypical and demeaning.

Aboriginal is a household word arousing passions, both sympathetic and fearful, apparently in the whole population (Cowlshaw, 2004). While terms such as Aboriginal identity, Aboriginality, and Indigenous culture have generated much public discussion in Australia, there is still no specific social location and meaning. This is because usages seem to refer to individuals, discrete categories, or historical events which can not be sustained. Aboriginal identity is not predictable or knowable in any formal sense. The varied, unstable and contested thing known as Aboriginal identity is made up of the deprived and despised, the noble and the savage (Langton, 1998; Peters-Little, 2000).

Victimhood, stigma and racism

Indigenous people throughout the world are now unified as victims of colonial history. There is a façade of unity at the local, state and national government levels who are all competing to be the most wise and well intentioned in solving the “Indigenous problem” (Cowlshaw, 2004. p. 79). There is a foundation of victimhood which pervades

the Indigenous domain. Povinelli dramatises what she calls a “qualifying condition” of present tense Indigenous, “These scars are what Aborigines are, what they have. They are their true difference: the ‘active edge’ where the national promise of remedial action is negotiated” (Povinelli, 1999, p. 29). Angry and disruptive Aboriginal behaviour and complaints of discrimination are linked with “statistics of immiseration” (Havemann, 1999, p. 29 in Cowlshaw, 2004) to explain Aborigines’ distress and historic damage to communities. Although statistical accounts of black disadvantage are taken as evidence of a universally experienced distress, individual Aborigines do not identify themselves as victims (Cowlshaw, 2004). Cowlshaw asserts that this victimology contributes to a sense of dependency, resentment and anger among Aborigines, and acts as a powerful barrier to alternative meanings and desires in local communities.

Stigma refers to a damaged or spoiled identity which is a source of social dishonour and shame, and it must be managed; that is, hidden or disclosed in strategic ways as part of the rituals of everyday life (Goffman, 1963). Cowlshaw (2004) states that Aboriginal people are “hailed” from infancy in ways that mean their identity within the Australian nation is assigned with the guilt of stigma, the shame of derogation and the awareness of inferior status.

Cowlshaw (2004) writes about a town in New South Wales where there are racial tensions. She describes a scene from the main street:

Aborigines gather regularly outside the Post Office Hotel, lounging against the windowsills. Weekly rhythms of many Murri social lives are played out there. Inside, the beer is pulled and passed around, the talk is lively, and the poker machines twinkle and buzz. Outside, the men and women talk beside the open pub doors, children play on the wide pavement. On “pension”, “social” or “endowment” days the crowd thickens and gets in the way of other pedestrians, sometimes spilling onto the streets among the cars, sometimes partying into the night. There is a lot of movement, loud laughter and shouting, an assertive presence that occasionally erupts in verbal or physical violence. The Murris have not dressed up to go to town because they are at home in the street, available to their kin, participating in a dense community-wide sociality (p. 84).

To many of the non-Indigenous residents, the kind of sociality associated with this, the roughest pub in town, is the epitome of the Community's problem and moves have been made to close the pub down.

This scene illustrated the contrasting forms of public sociality which exist in one social and geographical space. The difference demonstrates a gap between internally and externally created Aboriginal imagery. Cowlishaw states that "the self images which circulate within the Aboriginal domain are not oblivious of the governing white presence which has shaped them. Aboriginal self perceptions are coloured by the meaning of their position in white discourse" (p. 85).

While Aboriginal communities in rural Australia enact an Aboriginality which displays a specific sense of history and intricate forms of sociality, humour and energy, they take a minor part in the "production of public truth" about themselves because they are outside the circuits which activate the "ensemble of rules" for this game (Foucault, 1988, p. 6)

2.2 INDIGENOUS TEACHING AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Part of the complexity of Indigenous education lies in the broader relationships Indigenous youth have with the world around them such as poverty, higher rates of crime, drug and substance abuse, and mental health issues. Groome and Hamilton's (1995) study highlights the following issues: racism in the form of regular verbal harassment; stereotyping of Indigenous people in negative ways through the media; poor relations with the police; lack of employment due to racism; a family life of poverty and high level stress and conflict; and differing values to the dominant culture. Each of these experiences can be linked to under-performance and poor school experiences.

The socioeconomic status of families and its relationship to children's school performance has been widely researched. Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman and Hemphill (1991) who argue that social class is a summary label for a variety of complex components including "parental education, occupational status, income, housing conditions, time allocation, attitudes towards school, expectations for future educational and occupational success, nature of the family's social network, and style of parent-child interaction" (pp. 3-4). Indigenous communities within Queensland have high incidents of people in the low socio-economic demographic.

This section reviews literature pertaining to Indigenous educational outcomes with respect to: (a) the interaction among school, culture and learning styles (Section 2.2.1); (b) Indigenous student outcomes in literacy and numeracy (Section 2.2.2); and (c) Indigenous involvement in schools (Section 2.2.3).

2.2.1 SCHOOL, CULTURE AND INDIGENOUS LEARNING STYLES

Education has not only failed to level the playing field between black and white Australians, it has, in fact, widened the gap between the two groups. According to a government report (Australian Government, 2000):

In the 1996 National School English Literacy Survey, approximately 70% of students in Year 3 met the identified performance standards in reading and writing. However, less than 20% of students in the Aboriginal sample met the reading standards and less than 30% met the writing standards. Similar results were obtained for Year 5 students, which suggests that the lowest achieving Year 3 Aboriginal students make little or no progress over the following two years. (p. 9)

In total, these general issues in Aboriginal education may be seen as relating to the historical and continuing negative treatment of members of the Aboriginal Community by Anglo-Australian society (Cooper, Baturo, Warren, & Doig, 2004).

This subsection looks at four issues with regard to Indigenous students' educational outcomes: (1) the clash between school and Indigenous culture; (2) the importance of relationships; (3) the need for high expectations; and (4) the holistic nature of Indigenous learning styles.

School versus culture

“Culture is the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man or woman as a member of society” (Blount, 1982, p. 56). With such a definition, there is an evident clash between the culture of Indigenous students and that of school.

Cooper et al. (2002) suggest that education with its typically “white” values has ensured this clash by not acknowledging the knowledge that Aboriginal students bring to schooling and by further expecting “black” Australians to jump through “white” hoops in terms of achievement and assessment. Issues in education in Aboriginal communities are

further complicated by growing health and social issues that leave many students unable to engage with school at the level required for success. Despite these obstacles, many Aboriginal students do negotiate the education system successfully. While this is due to many factors, it is no doubt helped by teachers who have taken the time to understand Aboriginal students and the way in which they learn.

Australian Aborigines, New Zealand Maoris, Japanese Ainu, tribal people of the Soviet Union and Inuits are members of what New (1992) refers to as the “Fourth world” – Indigenous people locked into nations they can never hope to rule. These groups were once the sole inhabitants of their lands, but are now overwhelmed by settler populations. The Inuits use body language for a large part of their communication. Diction is poor and many words are mispronounced. New (1992) writes that Inuit students are passive learners – they learn by observing. Inuit students need to code switch between home language and the language used in the city and classroom. Inuit students, he writes, often have difficulty applying what they have learned at home in the school environment, and vice versa. Cultural events take precedence over school demands. Students and villagers often do not see the need to read or write beyond a basic level. This view is reinforced when the school curriculum is neither environmentally nor culturally appropriate. Traditional teaching methods have proven for the Inuits to be unsuccessful. New found that by reading stories about Inuit myths and legends he began to engage students in the educational world and results started to improve. He argues that bureaucratic plans for native people will not have a chance for success unless they take into account the determination of the people to remain themselves. He states, “Their determination to retain their own cultures and their own lands does not mean they wish to return to the past; it means they refuse to let their futures be dictated by others” (p. 397).

Relationships

Scrimgeour (2001) asserts that, for Indigenous students to be taught well, there needs to be positive relationships, trust, flexibility, individual concern and problem solving, perseverance, thoughtful observation, careful investigation of best teaching strategies and possibilities, and knowledge of students’ backgrounds. Continuity of quality teaching is also a key requirement for Indigenous students.

Winkler (2004) explains the importance of respectful and friendly relationships in Indigenous education: “You can have great curriculum, noble intentions, innovative ideas

and a conducive environment – but chances are that they will all fall short of success if there are no strong personal relationships in place” (p. 6). Meaningful, respectful and friendly relationships between teachers and students are a key to success. Relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and between schools and their communities are also crucial.

Queensland’s Indigenous Education Consultative Body (QIECB) released its position paper in March 2003 (QIECB, 2003) outlining recommendations for improving outcomes for Indigenous students. It states that:

National goals and objectives for Indigenous learners can only be achieved in school environments where students’ self esteem is enhanced: where they are valued as individuals; where their backgrounds are acknowledged; where their cultures and home languages are recognised and accommodated; where they are inspired to become lifelong learners; where school Principals and administrators possess the leadership skills to establish and support strong and effective school community partnerships; where teachers are appropriately educated and adequately prepared to meet the needs of diverse student populations and where the curriculum is relevant and purposeful. (p. 8)

At the heart of this statement lies the ability of both teachers and principals to develop meaningful relationships with students and Community members. As Greenfield (1986) argues:

Power lies in relationships among people. Organizations are expressions of those relationships and are therefore instruments of power. The organization is a tool that enables (more or less) some people to do what they want and that requires others to participate in the realization of others’ desires, wants, beliefs and purposes. (p. 18)

The power of relationships on classroom success is not a new theory or thought. Whilst it has been acknowledged for many years in Indigenous education, the same lessons and the same mistakes seem to be repeated. “Indigenous people look at the quality of the person when establishing relationships” (Beresford & Partington, 2003, p. 211). If teachers go to Indigenous communities for the wrong reasons (these reasons are discussed in Chapter 4), it is unlikely they will be able to build relationships with Community members and they may find life very frustrating. Quality relationships between

Indigenous Community members and non-Indigenous teachers take time to develop and are part of a process which needs to be undertaken carefully with advice from people like the Indigenous Education Workers at the school.

Expectations

There has been a lot written recently about the difference between the home culture of minority students and the culture of Western schooling (Trouw, 1997). It has been demonstrated that a cultural mismatch can occur between the two and this is believed to be a factor in the low academic achievement of many students. Trouw asserts that while this type of information is important for teachers in making appropriate decisions regarding how and what to teach, there is some danger that this sort of information can also contribute to the formation of stereotypes of the capabilities of particular minority groups. This can then have a strong influence on a teacher's expectations of students in that minority group.

Rosenthal and Jacobson (1986) suggested that teachers' expectations for a student could be self fulfilling. This research proved to be rather controversial, thus a large number of researchers have investigated this claim using a variety of techniques (Brophy & Good, 1987; Rist, 1970). The outcome of these investigations supports Rosenthal and Jacobson's findings that teacher expectations can sometimes function as a self-fulfilling prophecy, that is, if the teacher expects a student to perform poorly, then the student will perform poorly (Trouw, 1997). Judging children on the one characteristic such as their ethnic group can result in inappropriate expectations. Trouw asserts that when poor academic results can be explained by blaming a child's ethnic group, teachers may feel that there is no purpose in trying to foster improvement.

Many teachers are not aware that they have consciously stereotyped expectations of minority students (Trouw, 1997) and, even if aware, cannot change their attitudes (Sarra, 2005). When teachers have low expectations of students, they will treat these students differently from other students, particularly with respect to teacher questioning, the type of feedback given, and accepting inappropriate behaviour (Malin, 1994; St. George, 1985; Trouw, 1994), all of which prevent these students from achieving their full potential.

For example, St. George (1985) found that although teachers tried to give all students in their class similar attention, the type of attention differed between students.

Students in the high expectation group were more often called upon to give answers when they raised their hand than those in the low expectation group who were often expected to answer questions directly asked of them by the teacher without these students having indicated that they wished to answer the question. This causes these students to respond incorrectly in many circumstances thus reinforcing to themselves and the class their incompetence.

Malin (1994) writes that in her study the teachers would give approving glances to students in the high expectation group upon giving a correct answer. The opposite response was communicated to students in the low expectation group. The teacher would react with surprise at a competent answer or piece of work by a student in the low expectation group. Inappropriate behaviour in these studies was often accepted from students in the low expectation group.

Trouw (1997) states that Aboriginal children will often raise their hand to answer a teacher's question without having mentally constructed the answer and, if chosen by the teacher, they will respond with "I forgot". Trouw believes these students are merely following the school ritual of raising their hand. If the teacher accepts these responses they are reinforcing inappropriate behaviour and will not assist the child to develop an understanding of school learning.

Malin (1994), St. George (1985), Trouw (1997) and Sarra (2005) agree that expectations should not be based on ethnic groupings but on fact and followed up with appropriate behaviour. Teachers should continually check their expectations of students and avoid making judgments. Teachers need also to be aware of the effects their expectations can have on the behaviour of students who will conform to their expectations.

Holistic framework

Ernie Grant's (1998) framework outlines the importance of a holistic approach that emphasises the link between Land, Language and Culture and contextualises these in terms of Time, Place and Relationships. Together, these six interrelated elements provide a flexible but holistic framework for organising and presenting information on a range of topics. Grant explains that Indigenous communities' holistic view of the world is significantly different from what is considered the "norm" in Western society. There is a

particular emphasis on environmental cycles and patterns and the effect each has on the other. For example, each Indigenous language is formed out of a relationship between the flora, fauna and seasons of the land, which in turn becomes paramount in creating the cultural identity of the people who speak that language.

Indigenous people actively make these connections because this is the world view into which Indigenous students have been socialised from birth. Grant (1998) argues that the links between these elements are often silenced by Western discourses, which tend to present a more compartmentalised organisation of knowledge in schools. The conflict of differing approaches, Grant (1998, p. 4) states, can be “confusing and frustrating for all those involved” in the learning process. He suggests that if all the elements of his framework are evident in both pictures and words, then it is easier for Indigenous students to connect with the text. He maintains that teachers must assist students to orally build the field of knowledge, making connections between the six elements of their life experiences and the visual text. Using conversational rather than interrogative interactions, the teacher must assist the child to orientate to the written text (McRae et al., 2000). In this way the student’s culture has been valued and celebrated and bridges have been built between the student’s culture and oral language and the culture of learning required for engaging with Standard Australian English print-based texts (Nakata, 1999).

2.2.2 OUTCOMES IN LITERACY AND NUMERACY

Indigenous students perform lower than non-Indigenous students in standardised testing across Australia. Indigenous students in Indigenous communities traditionally score lower than Indigenous students in urban schools. The relationship between Indigenous culture and the teaching of literacy and numeracy is discussed in this section.

Literacy

The relationship between literacy and culture has been examined extensively in the international literature (Au, 1993; Blount, 1982; Langer, 1987; Wagner, 1991) with the result that many literacy researchers take a socio-cultural approach to literacy. One of these, Li (2002) argues that literacy activities are embedded in the social, cultural and historical contexts in which they occur. He contends that culture consists of the categories of knowledge that members of a society have to know or believe or use in order to

organise their behaviours and that, therefore, functions, meanings and methods of communication vary from one cultural group to another.

Studies of home literacy practices have indicated the importance of cultural values in the literacy lives of immigrant families. Valdes' (1996) study of Mexican immigrant families indicated that the values of the families were different from mainstream American values of school success. The Mexican families did not place a high value on their children's school education because they believed that all people have talents, and individuals who did well in school were not necessarily intelligent. It was more important for these children to learn self-discipline and respect for others, and to take responsibility for younger children (Li, 2002). This study demonstrates that becoming literate is a matter of becoming encultured in one's own sociocultural world. Literacy is seen as a means by which the family as individuals conduct their own lives and construct their lives in the Community. Li states that the family is the place where literacy and culture intersect in the sociocultural continuity. Valdes' (1996) study stresses the importance of culture in the home in forming children's practices of literacy. Problems of discontinuity between school and home occur when values of home, school and society are different.

The outcomes of an individual's literacy learning are shaped by social contexts in which the learning is embedded and can only be fully understood in relation to these social contexts (Langer, 1987). Literacy behaviours of individuals gain their meaning from the contextual settings that have an overwhelming influence on literacy purposes, demands, and processes (Mikulecky, 1990).

Numeracy

There is a strong emphasis around the world on the importance of developing a numerate population who can understand mathematical concepts and demands of every day life at school and at home to participate in community life (Steen, 1997). For Indigenous students, the relevance of the school curriculum is a key factor for leaving school early. The majority of schooling, including the teaching of mathematics is based around the dominant culture (Sommerlad, 1976); this is supported by Ball (1990), who states that mathematics has always grown according to cultural pressures. It is important for the motivation of all students that the mathematics studied is relevant to them. If they can relate knowledge to aspects of their lives, they will be more likely to retain that knowledge. The dominance of white culture in schooling makes it difficult for Indigenous

students to relate to the knowledge transmitted in school. Flemming and Southwell (2000) state in their study that some parents suggested that "...children often complained work was too difficult for them. These students felt that they did not belong in school and there was no longer any point in attending" (pp. 5-6).

To improve mathematics outcomes for Indigenous students, teachers need to pay attention to the learning environment they are creating during numeracy sessions (use of time, space, resources and variety of teaching strategies). Warren, Cooper, and Baturu (2004) visited mathematics classes during maths time for their research into enhancing numeracy outcomes for students. They noticed that "most classes did not exhibit active learning to help students abstract essential elements of concepts and processes" (p. 2). Although there were some good aspects of teaching, they believed that most teachers had insufficient pedagogical knowledge of crucial concepts and exhibited little evidence of varying teaching to cater for learners. Planning was generally inadequate and piecemeal, based on examples from text books. Lessons did not flow or fit with previous work. Teachers' and students' classroom engagement varied; where it was inadequate, learning was limited. These factors would make it particularly difficult for Indigenous students to learn mathematics due to the additional impact of language and cultural barriers.

Sykes (1986) suggests that mathematics curriculum should reflect the local histories and cultures of Indigenous people in order for students' identity to be valued. It is vital therefore that Indigenous people at the community level and at higher decision-making levels have greater agency in their children's schooling. In her study on the success of Aboriginal students in secondary schools, Russell (1999) convincingly argues, "...the most significant school factor in the student's identity, retention and attainment was the appointment of Aboriginal Education Workers..." (p. 14). These staff members affirm to students that their identity is valued. This was also a finding of Warren, et.al's (2004) research.

2.2.3 INDIGENOUS SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT

As can be seen in Section 2.5, effective Indigenous schools have increased the involvement of Indigenous people in those schools. This has been through the involvement of Community members, the giving of greater roles to Indigenous education

workers (particularly teacher aides), and the recruitment of Indigenous teachers. This subsection discusses these options.

Community involvement

There is a consensus among researchers that building parent-school partnership in education is not only beneficial but also crucial to students' academic achievement, especially for minority children (McCaleb, 1994; Swap, 1993). Active parental involvement in schooling can improve students' self-esteem, affirm their sense of personal and cultural identity, and motivate them to learn new knowledge by building on existing "funds of knowledge" from their home culture (Moll, 2002). Active parental involvement can also inform parents of the school life of their children and therefore empower them to better support their children's learning (Li, 2002).

A poor home-school relationship can bring psychological and cognitive damage to children's development (Li, 2002). Literacy researchers stress two urgent missions of schools: (1) the need for students in minority groups (not the dominant culture) to have a solid foundation and competence in their first language and culture and to become functionally bilingual and competent in their second language; and (2) the need for their cultural experiences to be reflected through culturally sensitive curricula and pedagogy in the school and classroom (Cummins, 1986; Danesi, 1989; Fuzessy, 1998). If the schools fail to do so, one of the major consequences is to send a cognitive and social deficit message to children and hence nurture in them a low self esteem regarding their parents, their community and eventually themselves. Their home culture and language may be perceived as negative baggage, contradictory to what is valued in schools (Li, 2002).

The more similar a community's, a school's, and parents' expectations and ways of raising children are, the more likely they are to work towards common goals (Heath 1994). In most schools, Heath states, teachers do not feel that parents are on their side. Parents are confused about what they want for their children. Though both teachers and parents value the vision of developing the children into happy, healthy adults, each thinks that the other does not share this vision – which is not true. There have been many calls for parental involvement in schools.

The barriers to direct and constructive community and parental contributions to schools are numerous (Heath, 1994). Only a few parents will sustain their involvement

for the time needed to produce lasting effects. Family instability, single parent and two-career families, for example, limit parents' available time and energy. To attract and sustain parental involvement, a school's leaders and teachers must alter their attitudes about their relationship with their community and parents. They must genuinely value their support, actively initiate reaching out to ask individual parents and the community for their aid, and wholeheartedly believe that their community's and parents' resources are essential to the healthy growth of the students (Heath, 1994).

Only a few parents can serve on a policy-forming committee or will contribute time and energy for sustained involvement. However, all parents can continually clarify to their children that they support the school's goals of academic excellence and human excellence. They can expect their children to be good citizens, fulfil their academic responsibilities and serve others. Students whose parents encourage ethical behaviour like school more, and do better academically than those whose parents do not (Dhall and Dhall, 2003).

Indigenous education workers

An important aspect of the teachers' work in Purdie's (2003) study was the strong professional relationships they established with Indigenous workers within the schools, recognising and respecting the local experiences of the Indigenous community. She argued that the practice of these Indigenous education workers was "multi-dimensional, nuanced, situated and informed by an understanding of the complex dynamic interactions between race, history, school structures, peer relationships and Indigenous aspirations" (p. 14). Indigenous students consistently achieved higher grades in these teachers' classes because they worked with students to help them negotiate their competing positions and to see themselves as "knowers and learners, problem posers and solvers, smart rather than good" (p. 14). Purdie also advocates for the involvement of parents and Community in schools. She argues that this is essential in allowing a "two-way exchange of knowledge and the development of an understanding of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures ... reducing the conflict that students face between the home and the school" (p. 4). It is important to note that this conflict does not always exist for Indigenous students. Indigenous education workers often act as the mediator between school and home; this can reduce misunderstandings and encourage parent participation.

McGinty (2002) supports Purdie's (2003) work and describes the notion of teachers and support staff in classrooms as becoming "significant others" to make a difference to the educational outcomes for Indigenous students. This is built upon developing trust and understanding with students, whilst also allaying any fears that they may have towards academic learning. Those who become "significant others" in students' lives often have the greatest effect upon both aspirations and outcomes for them and can often have a greater influence over Indigenous students than parents and peers. Flemming and Southwell (2000) support this view and add that Indigenous staff members affirm to the students that their identity is valued; it gives students a staff member to whom they can relate, and from whom they can seek assistance. The Indigenous education workers can influence curriculum to make it more relevant and accessible to Indigenous students. Flemming and Southwell's study found that a major factor in Indigenous students leaving school is the perception that the school does not care about their culture enough to incorporate it into the curriculum. Keefe, 1992 (in Munro, Schumaker & Carr, 1997) quotes an Indigenous education worker in his study who articulated the desire among Indigenous people for the education of their children:

We wish to teach our children Aboriginal and white ways. If they do only white ways they will lose their understanding and will do things like petrol sniffing and fighting. They will not listen to old people talking to them. To avoid this we have to do Aboriginal and white ways. (p. 32)

Another major factor in Indigenous students' desire to leave school early is the racism they are faced with at school. Lester (2000) argues that racism is a stumbling block for Indigenous education. The constant availability of Indigenous workers in classrooms where both teachers and teacher aides are seen to be equal in what they have to offer the students helps to remove this stumbling block and demonstrate racial equality to students.

Indigenous teachers

A recent study by Reid and Santoro (2006) identifies the struggle that Indigenous teachers face. Interviews conducted with a diverse group of Indigenous teachers revealed their struggle with being positioned as "the 'Indigenous teachers' at the expense of any other identity including their role as 'teacher'" (p. 15). They felt they were often expected to fill the gap in knowledge of Indigenous education and issues, in effect taking the responsibility away from non-Indigenous teachers to work towards solutions to problems

within Indigenous education. At the same time, “the Indigenous teacher” is seen as inferior, less able and less well-trained than “the teacher” who is “normally” seen as being non-Indigenous and trained in “mainstream” institutions. The Indigenous teachers argue that: “Discursively constructed and racialised practice is centred on a binary logic which positions and prioritises whiteness as the norm from which all other positions are marked as ‘other’, weaker and less powerful” (Reid & Santoro, p. 143).

These issues are further complicated by Indigenous teachers’ roles within their own communities. They are often held in positions of authority and expertise and have high expectations placed on them by parents and Community members. They are expected to be the bridge between the two cultures and to change schooling in ways that will benefit their children.

The tension that exists between the values and norms of the Community and that of the school can also place an enormous amount of pressure on these teachers. This article also points out the strength and resilience of Indigenous teachers who create strong forms of Indigenous identity despite the challenges they are faced with on a daily basis. It highlights the importance of their roles and the impact their presence in schools has on challenging the “whiteness” of school education. It also identifies the persistent notion of enhancing resilience in young Indigenous people, as many older generation Indigenous people who suffered from long-term effects of oppression and government regulations continue to maintain a strong self-identity and positive outlook for Indigenous children.

Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (1996) state that too often and in many instances, the Aboriginal student has been portrayed in deficit terms of low literacy levels, poor school motivation and lacking in ambition and life goals. In some instances, these are culturised and accepted as the norm. Hence, the experiences that some Aboriginal peoples speak of in terms of their education are of being under-challenged and presumed to be a failure.

One of the biggest educational difficulties facing Aboriginal children is the negative experiences of their parents’ generation with schooling. This limited their capacity to assist or encourage their children at school. The generational influence often continues through families even though there is greater cultural awareness and many new programs (Newman & Yasukawa, 2005).

2.3 LEADERSHIP

The following section will discuss the *concept of leadership*, as well as the *role of leadership* in bringing about change within a school setting.

Traditional theories of leadership as well as various models will be critiqued in order to demonstrate a theoretical framework through which change occurred at Doongal State School. This section will cover traditional theories of leadership (Section 2.3.1); leadership in Indigenous schools to apply leadership to the context of this thesis (Section 2.3.2); leadership change models to give a theoretical background when leadership brings change as in Doongal (Section 2.3.3); and female principal leadership to focus on the particular issue of gender as well as culture (Section 2.3.4).

2.3.1 TRADITIONAL THEORIES OF LEADERSHIP

House (2004) defines “leadership” as “the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organisations of which they are members” (p. 24).

Barsade’s (2002) theory of “the Ripple Effect” sees leadership as an awareness of the reactions and influences of a group on the emotions of the individual. Ridden (1992) agrees that good leadership is the key to effective functioning. He states that for an organisation such as a school to function effectively in achieving its goals, it requires active involvement of a good leader or leaders.

To identify what good leadership is presents a challenging task due to definitions of leadership being as abundant as they are varied in content and criteria. However, regardless of what definition is valued, leadership will have a direct influence on the decision-making process and general functioning of an organisation (Cooke & Lafferty, 1987).

In the late 1940s, researchers started exploring the notion that how a person acts determines the person’s leadership effectiveness. These researchers examined behaviours and their impact on the performance and satisfaction of the followers. Likert (in Henry & Johns, 1993) identified two distinct types of leadership – *job-centred* and *employee-centred*. The job-centred leader practises close supervision and relies on coercion, reward and legitimate power to influence the behaviour and performance of subordinates. The employee-centred leader believes in delegating decision-making and aiding followers in

satisfying their needs by creating an environment which is supportive and is concerned for the followers' personal advancement, growth and achievement.

French and Raven's (1968) bases of interpersonal power suggest that power can be defined as the ability to influence another person's behaviour. Where there is an attempt to influence other people's behaviour without using the coercive form of power we describe the effort as leadership (Henry & Johns, 1993). Leadership involves influencing the activities of followers through the communication process and toward the attainment of some goal or goals. Leader effectiveness is typically considered in terms of the degree of the attainment of these goals.

Traits of effective leaders

Much of the early work on leadership focused on identifying the traits of effective leaders. Stogdill (1974) identified intellectual, personality, and physical traits of leaders. While useful in differentiating effective from ineffective leaders, the trait theory does not seem to be an efficient predictor of leadership potential. Bennis & Nanus (1985) identify five traits outstanding leaders exhibited:

- (1) Vision: the capacity to create a compelling picture of the desired state of affairs;
- (2) Communication: the ability to portray the vision clearly and to enlist the support of followers;
- (3) Persistence: the ability to continue ploughing ahead regardless of obstacles;
- (4) Empowerment: the ability to create a structure that effectively uses the talents of others to achieve the objectives; and
- (5) Organisational ability: the capacity to monitor followers, learn from mistakes and, consequently, improve performance.

Fiedler's (1967) contingency model of leadership effectiveness, postulates that the performance of groups is dependent on the relationship between leadership style and situational favourableness. Another view by Vroom and Yetton (1973) attempts to provide a normative model that a leader can use in making decisions. This can be used to select the amount of group decision-making participation needed in a variety of problem situations. The model suggests that the amount of subordinate participation depends on

the leader's skill and knowledge, whether a quality decision is needed, the extent to which the problem is structured and whether acceptance by subordinates is needed to implement the decision.

Sergiovanni (1987) notes that the leader's behavioural style is less important in reflecting the value of leadership, that is, what the leader stands for and communicates to others is emphasised. The effective principal needs to communicate integrity. The core values of the school culture must be communicated to staff, parents, students and Community.

Sergiovanni (1984) advanced insight into school leadership success when he classified leadership perspectives into five "leadership forces" (p. 6), incorporating the relationship perspectives which he labelled *technical* and *human* forces as well as *educational*, *symbolic* and *cultural* dimensions. Sergiovanni argues that the technical and human elements address the management competencies of the organisation; the educational dimension serves to ensure the effectiveness of the teaching and learning in the school; and symbolic and cultural perspectives take account of the need to go beyond competent management to higher values which bring about a desired better state through vision and the building of a strong school culture.

Vision

Bennis and Nanus (1985) explored the notion of vision and applied it to the leadership discussion. Their book identified ninety exceptional leaders and showed that successful leaders are able to focus attention on vision, communicate the vision through symbols and rhetoric, and due to their strength of personal commitment, see the vision through into practice.

Teachers and students alike want to know what is of value to the school. Sergiovanni (1984) points out that "providing meaning and rallying people to a common cause constitute effectiveness in symbolic leadership" (p. 8). Communication of the core values of the school is partly achieved by involving all in the formation of mission and vision statements as part of the School Development Plan; but, the most effective means is through these beliefs and mission pervading the total school in its everyday life.

2.3.2 LEADERSHIP IN INDIGENOUS SCHOOLS

Effective leadership involves the analysis and interpretation of student performance data to ensure that what is presently occurring in the classroom is designed to support the current needs and strengths of each student. Beck and Murphy (1993) state that leadership and guidance at the principal, deputy and senior teacher level will enable this to occur within all schools, although it must be a collaborative process that aims to provide effective support to classroom teachers in supporting student learning. They also state that for a principal to ensure that student learning outcomes improve, it is essential that effective models of change processes and strategies are adhered to in the course of administration. If as educators we continue to do the same thing for Indigenous students we will end up with the same poor results we have always seen.

Traditional Leadership

The traditional views of leadership, as outlined in Section 2.3.1, may be inappropriate when one considers the development of educational administration based on participation and collaboration. Administration arises not so much through manipulation and coercion but through the facilitation of collaborative, participatory decision-making processes involving the meaningful interaction of the school community.

Traditional ways of viewing the principal as the “boss”, as the dominating leader in the school, sit rather uneasily in the 1980s’ climate of devolution of decision making and participatory democracy. With devolution Simpkins, Thomas, and Thomas (1982) noted that a balance needs to be struck between the various powers of the various stakeholders; that is, the relative powers of principals and teaching staff as against outside interests and of principals as against teaching staff.

Leader Qualities

The research of Frigo and Corrigan (2003) revealed strong school leadership was a key to success for Indigenous students. They identified that principals of schools with a high success rate displayed a number of qualities including:

- using an innovative and progressive approach to administration; and
- being a strong advocate for Indigenous students, family and staff.

In all the schools in the Frigo and Corrigan (2003) study, Indigenous people and culture were apparent to anyone entering the school. All schools employed Indigenous education workers, tutors and teachers, however only one school had an Indigenous principal. In some schools there was a strong Indigenous presence particularly with respect to the number of Indigenous people employed at the schools. One school planned for increased Indigenous presence over a number of years so that children would see familiar faces and hear familiar languages. Many of the schools displayed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, along with Indigenous artwork, books and posters. Cultural recognition in this general sense was appreciated and valued by the local Community and parents.

In Frigo et al. (2003), studies of Indigenous schools which were achieving good outcomes for students found that leadership, attendance and engagement, good teaching and an Indigenous presence in the school were the distinguishing factors for success. It is important to note that the study states that while the leadership styles were different, leadership was strong and inclusive and pro-active in engaging Indigenous education workers, parents and members of the Community.

In the *What Works* program developed for the National Curriculum Services which has been distributed widely across the country and aims to support local action for schools, McRae et al. (2000) point out that “action doesn’t always begin with the boss – the Principal, the team leader, the unit manager – but the evidence suggests that effective action is led and supported by the boss” (p. 2). It appears that effective leadership plays an important role in improving outcomes for students.

The net effect of the cultural force of leadership is to bond students, teachers, and others as believers in the work of the school. Sergiovanni (1984) referred to the “sacred mission” (p. 8) which fosters an expanded sense of identity and a feeling of belonging to something special. Culture building and practising the art of purposing are the essentials of symbolic and cultural leadership forces.

Cultural life in schools is constructed reality and leaders play a key role in building this reality. Sergiovanni (1984) maintained “the more understood, accepted and cohesive the culture of a school, the better able it is to move in concert towards ideals it holds and objectives it wishes to pursue” (p. 9). All schools have cultures. Sergiovanni classifies

them either as strong and functional or weak and dysfunctional. Strong functional cultures are domesticated – they are nurtured.

The situation in Indigenous schools requires leadership that can persuade and influence people and coach or mentor people effectively, particularly if the leader has a well-developed *emotional intelligence* as a basis for effective persuasion and influence (Goleman, 2002; Scott, 2002; Stein & Book, 2006). Goleman claims that:

Great Leaders move us. They ignite our passion and inspire the best in us. When we try to explain why they are so effective, we speak of strategy, vision, or powerful ideas. But the reality is more primal: Great leadership works through emotions. (p. 3)

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence is not a new concept. It only seems novel because it was pushed aside by the 20th century's obsession with scientific data and rationalism at any cost. Only now are the social sciences catching up with behaviour that was unable to be previously identified. Stein and Book (2006) define success as the ability to set and achieve your personal and professional goals. Society's idea of success has placed an emphasis on cognitive intelligence and financial reward has been considered the primary result of that intelligence.

Duffy (2003) argues that a principal of an Indigenous school needs to have the ability to persuade and influence staff, build meaningful relationships with the entire school community and balance the school budget; it is essential that they are passionate about what they do. It is not enough for the principal to hold beliefs in their head. Duffy (2003) states, "Passion is not a 'head thing' – it's a 'heart thing'" (p. 8). Rational, logical goals and plans won't do it. You have to possess a burning desire to do what's right for children, teachers and the school system. Leadership is from the heart. Duffy concludes through his own experiences that true leadership is about having a vision and empowering others to make that vision come alive. There are many obstacles along the way, so principals need to be ethical, political and powerful to ensure real change occurs in their school.

2.3.3 LEADERSHIP CHANGE MODELS

Leadership needs to ensure change. Owens and Steinhoff (1976) distinguish between fundamental change and the relatively superficial adoptions which frequently occur. Organisational changes describe the fundamental changes to the existing state of one or more of the following aspects of the organisation – its tasks, technology, structure and people. A further dimension has been added with a growing recognition of organisational culture.

Change

For the purposes of this thesis, change is that which is planned; it is conscious, deliberate and intended. Schein and Bennis (1965) describe planned change as a conscious, deliberate and collective effort. They state that planned change is characterised by mutual goal setting by the parties to the change and a high degree of deliberateness to the bringing about of change. For change to occur there should be an alteration of an existing state in more than one of the following aspects – task, structure, technology and people.

Strategic orientations. Havelock (1973) argues that the strategies and tactics selected by a change agent will depend on the person's orientation towards the change process. Those advocating problem solving as part of the innovation process would have an orientation towards self renewal, action research, collaborative action inquiry, consultation and the sharing of practices and innovations. A research, development and diffusion orientation acknowledges the need for planning, that there should be a rational sequence, and the division and coordination of labour. Information system building along with research evaluation of adoption success and failure, user need surveys, and successive approximation form part of the strategies aligned with this orientation.

Social system approach. The 1976 Owens and Steinhoff approach identified seven methods or strategies for bringing about change. Although the reader may feel this model is outdated, I feel that it is appropriate to the research being undertaken for this thesis. The seven strategies are:

- (1) *Information.* Giving information is the most traditional method of organisational change. Particularly potent when combined with other strategies where people want to adopt change.

- (2) *Individual counselling and therapy*. A weakness is that this method is directed at the individual and not at the organisational system as the target of the change.
- (3) *Influence of the peer group*. Owens and Steinhoff (1976) argue that the “processes of discussion and decision making help to develop group cohesiveness and spirit” (p. 86). They add the caution that participation in the decision is not enough by itself. They warn that “the decision – in order to be effective in shaping group norms – must be an action decision, something to which the group commits itself and in which it is involved” (p. 89).
- (4) *Sensitivity training*. Here again the target of sensitivity training is essentially the individual and not the organisation as a whole.
- (5) *Group therapy within organisations*. This strategy is to apply the principles of individual therapy to groups in the organisation especially to recognise conflict between individual motives and organisational goals and the consequences in terms of resistance to change.
- (6) *Data feedback*. Improving the organisation’s use of feedback on its functioning can lead to basic changes in the organisation.
- (7) *Systemic changes*. Katz and Khan (in Hendry & Johns, 1993) believed this to be the most important of the strategies because it focuses on the larger organisational system itself. This strategy calls for manipulation to significant organisational variables in order to bring about fundamental change. This structuralist approach emphasises inducing changes to organisational structure to bring about changes in participants’ behaviour.

Collaborative School Management

Caldwell and Spinks (1992) address four issues and concerns at school level which reflect the importance of a focus on teaching and learning, a framework of accountability, appropriate involvement of staff, parents and students, and professional development programs for the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes among participants in the management process. They call for a comprehensive approach to school management which links goal setting, need identification, policy making, planning, budgeting, learning and teaching, and evaluating. Their model, described as the Collaborative School

Management Cycle (CSM), has six phases: *Goal setting and needs identification*; *Policy making*, with policies consisting of statements of purpose and broad guidelines; *Planning of programs*; *Preparation and approval of program budgets*; *Implementing*; and *Evaluating*.

Goals, according to Caldwell and Spinks (1992), are usually expressed as desired outcomes and should merely be a statement of broad direction. They see the formulation of these goals as involving input by different individuals.

The second related activity of this phase is need identification. Caldwell and Spinks (1992) believe that a need is usually considered to exist if “what is” falls short of “what should be” (p. 263). The authors do not go into detail about why and how needs might vary between individuals and groups. They do, however, prefer to be practical, business-like and target-orientated and suggest that important questions to ask include: Is the discrepancy between “what is” and “what should be” large enough to warrant action? What harm will be done if the gap is not closed? How important is this need compared with others that may exist?

Beare (1989) claims that the Caldwell and Spinks (1992) model is “a model for school management which would help bring a vision for excellence to reality” (p. 149). The Caldwell and Spinks model summarises what the literature for educational leadership argues is relevant for effective transforming leadership, especially those aspects concerned with ensuring clarity, consensus and commitment. Having a common purpose and commitment is also crucial to long-term effectiveness, a fact borne out by the literature on school change (e.g., Beare, 1989; Elias, Arnold, & Hussey, 2003). To develop these commonalities, school staff have to create an environment in which they can discover what they really care about, and then they have to get together so they can talk about their visions. Elias et al. (2003) state that creating ownership for a program of change requires hard work and a clear plan on the part of the school leader.

2.3.4 FEMALE PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP

Role of Principal

The school principal’s role in change leadership refers to their ability to resolve the conflicting demands and pressures, both internal and external, and in achieving the goal or goals of the school. Trow (1984) believes that leadership shows itself chiefly along

four dimensions: symbolic, political, managerial and academic. Sergiovanni (1984) points out that “providing meaning and rallying people to a common cause constitute effectiveness in symbolic leadership” (p. 8). Political skills are needed to bond people as believers in the work of the school or department. Greenfield (1986) said:

Power lies in relationships among people. Organizations are expressions of those relationships and are therefore instruments of power. The organization is a tool that enables (more or less) some people to do what they want and that requires others to participate in the realization of others’ desires, wants, beliefs and purposes. (p. 18).

An understanding of power can help analyse phenomena about politics and education (Darder, 1991). Politics is really a particular kind of power. It may be defined as those activities which may not form part of one’s formal role in the organisation, but that influence the distribution of advantages and disadvantages within the organisation. It is the use of power bases to influence decision making.

The dominant culture in leadership

Sergiovanni, Burlingame, Coombs, & Thurston (1992) state that as educators, our understanding of how to learn, and practice leadership is determined by the assumptions and values embedded in the dominant leadership culture. Most white people do not often confront racism. Social forces, including language, knowledge and ideology shape white identity in Australian life. Most people will agree that there are issues of power and power differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Darder (1991) states that whiteness has its financial rewards. There continue to be unearned wages of whiteness. Blacks across the world have had limited access to property ownership and capital acquisition. Schools in general offer a form of education that engages students in an examination of the social, political and psychological dimensions of membership in a white racial group.

Tucker’s (1991) dissertation supports Davis’ (1996) concept that transformational leadership is related to increased satisfaction, effectiveness, and extra effort of followers. Rosener’s (1990) study reports that women tend to use an interactive style and are more likely than males to be transformational. Boomer’s (1993) study supports Rosener’s conclusions.

White female leadership in Indigenous schools

Women and other outsiders to the dominant leadership culture usually do not become aware of hidden assumptions and values until they fail to follow the deeply embedded programs and agendas of the culture (Bowers, 1994). A review of texts on leadership, the principalship or educational administration shows few written by women or other marginalised groups. A few introductory texts weave the research and experience throughout the content. An introductory text for school administration (Sergiovanni et al., 1992) intermingles the work of several women, but makes no attempt to balance the total perspective of their text which is that equality is merely a myth.

Harris, Ballenger, Hicks-Townes, Carr, & Alford (2004) interviewed nine “winning women” and discovered that a number of themes emerged such as an early love of learning, a strong work ethic and the importance of mentoring. Three major leadership themes connected all nine stories, namely: *Joy* – the women lead with joy and find a deep abiding joy in serving others; *Excellence for all*; and *Spirituality* – a sense of power nurtured in spirituality. Grogan (1996) asserts that it is also the fundamental concern for the welfare of children that is a key to effective female leadership in education.

Dunlap and Schmuck (1995) studied leading women in education by looking at their leadership practices. Although the women were leaders in education, they proved to be “outsiders” in the sense that they were perceived to be different to the traditional leader, if by no other reason than by being female. Many reported learning to understand the difference between spoken and enacted values. These female leaders took advantage of opportunities to improve practice, care for others and themselves and celebrate leadership.

Davis (1996) theorised that female leaders in schools wanted their followers to be proud to be associated with them and have faith and trust in them as a leader. Most effective female leaders spent a majority of their time engaged in interactions with others in their school. Talking and listening to others developed trust with teachers who viewed principals as supportive and empathetic. Effective female principals modelled effective teamwork behaviour. They were flexible, approachable, warm and used humour in their dealings with staff. They also were seen as being able to understand staff. Davis’ study demonstrated that females with this leadership style facilitated change in their schools.

A review of the literature did not reveal any findings on the effective leadership of a non-Indigenous Australian female in an Australian Indigenous school. There does not seem to be much written about “white women’s” knowledge in Indigenous education. White women are often the ones who are the biggest players in educating Indigenous children at all levels of schooling, yet there are not many white women who have been given a voice in Indigenous education. This thesis aims to do just that. It is important also to point out that as a researcher my own position is derived from and connected to my own whiteness; I have inherited the power and privilege of whiteness which will have influenced my thoughts and recollections in this study. Moreton-Robinson (2004) suggests that the role of academic analyst is inextricable for their subject positions. Yet Dyer (1988) points out that it is very much white people’s responsibility to think about issues of race relations, and in particular to interrogate the power and privilege of whiteness.

2.4 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND SCHOOL CHANGE

Clarke (1994), Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002), Craft (1996), and Hoban (2002), agree that it is naïve to think that teacher learning is a linear step-by-step process, independent of who teachers are, the culture in their schools and the experiences they bring to a request for change. They argue that sometimes teachers try new ideas after attending a workshop, but efforts often fade or teachers adapt the new ideas to their existing classroom practices. Rarely does a one-off workshop promote change, as it does not take into account the existing complexity of a classroom context or have a framework to support teacher learning through the non-linear process of change. Tunica (1995) agrees that as people prepare to leave old behaviours behind, they experience a sense of loss of the known, and need to replace it by developing a commitment to the new. Duignan and MacPherson (1992), Tunica (1995), and Cole and Chan (1987) agree that awareness and acceptance of the need for change, together with involvement in developing the blueprint for change, helps generate such commitment. Individual teachers differ in their ability to accommodate change. This can generate uncertainty and anxiety because the future is unfamiliar (Craft, 1996).

This section will focus on effective professional learning (Section 2.4.1); effective teaching and learning (Section 2.4.2); and school change and cultural influence (Section 2.4.3).

2.4.1 EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Wenger (1998) argues that “professional learning communities hold the key to transformation – the kind that has real effects on people’s lives” (p. 37). Harris and Lambert (2003) carried out studies of effective professional development within schools and conclude that schools which continue to improve invest in the life of the school as a learning community, where teachers are constantly striving to improve their own practice. They assert that an optimal school learning environment provides teachers with opportunities to work and learn together, and to share ideas, opinions and experiences. They argue that working together not only reduces a sense of isolation but also enhances the quality of work produced. It is also important to allocate time for personal reflection and opportunities for teachers to talk together about teaching and learning. Schools that build leadership capacity in this way hold the key to transformation – they can make a real and sustained difference to the achievement of young people.

Models for effective professional development

Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) present a model for professional growth which identifies specific mechanisms which impact on four analytic domains:

- (1) *External Domain:* The external source of information such as lectures or presentations.
- (2) *Domain of Practice:* Professional experimentation, teacher tries new ideas in the classroom.
- (3) *Domain of Consequence:* Salient outcomes are achieved as a result.
- (4) *Personal Domain:* Knowledge, beliefs and attitude of the teacher impact on whether pedagogic change will occur.

This model is reliant on enactment and reflection of the new skill or strategy and argues that the stimulus for the external domain will only affect the personal domain if it is coupled with successful consequences. Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) also make it clear that their study showed that the school environment had a significant influence on

teacher growth. The absence of particular conditions supportive of change caused less growth and more resistance for teachers studied.

Clark (1994) supports this model and also adds that good professional development for sustained change requires good leadership and leaders (not only the principal) in the school. The leader ideally has charismatic qualities and credibility. He asserts that “the Principal’s ability to engage others from the school and community is even more important than the vision and direction he or she provides to the school” (pp. 40-41).

Professional development for effective teaching

Duignan and MacPherson (1992) state that the professional service of teachers can only be enhanced if a complex process of professional development is planned, developed and sustained by the school leader. They presume that the quality of school life is greatly dependent on the quality of students’ experiences in the classroom. It is therefore acknowledged that leadership decides what is to be valued in the curriculum and what is believed to be excellent in teaching methods. Changing people implies the use of a learning process which depends heavily on each individual’s ability and willingness to reflect on practice, critically analyse it, and experiment with new ways of thinking and acting (Tunica, 1995).

For Indigenous students to be taught well, there need to be positive relationships, trust, flexibility, individual concern and problem solving, perseverance, thoughtful observation, careful investigation of best teaching strategies and possibilities, and knowledge of students’ backgrounds etc. Continuity of quality teaching is also a key requirement for Aboriginal students (Folds, 1987).

Warren, Cooper, and Baturu (2004) delivered professional development programs to Indigenous teacher aides in mathematics and found that, for professional development to be effective within the Indigenous Community, Indigenous teacher aides needed to be valued at the school level for the cultural knowledge they brought to the classroom and that students, teacher aides and the Community needed to be treated equally to ensure the success of the professional development. They also found that the professional development needed to be contextual for the Indigenous teacher aides and their Community. Sarra (2005) adds that self-esteem and identity are important for the Indigenous staff in the school context.

Baturo and Cooper (2006) developed six elements to improve teaching practice. These are: (1) *expert input* – an outside expert needs to have input into desired change; (2) *successful classroom trials* – teachers need to practice new skills in the classroom with success; (3) *just in time support* – support needs to be supplied at the time it is needed; (4) *peer sharing* – peers need to reflect on change; (5) *in-situ classroom focus* – professional development needs to be followed up in the classroom; and (6) *depth* – professional development is better with a small group in a detailed on-going manner.

Within rural settings, Boylan (1997) asserts that effective professional development programs must operate at three levels to ensure success: the community, the school, and the teacher. For non-Indigenous teachers within an Indigenous Community, the principles of effective professional development apply. At the Community level, professional development must recognise and support teachers experiencing cultural isolation. Non-Indigenous teachers labour to deliver a curriculum which is inappropriate for students in Community schools with a total lack of Community support (Folds, 1987).

2.4.2 DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Fanshawe's (1999) study showed teachers of Aboriginal children should exhibit the following characteristics.

- They should be demanding, having faith in the academic ability of their Aboriginal students, avoiding the trap of expecting little from their students and getting little.
- They should be warm and supportive, giving guidance, help, understanding and encouragement; being sympathetic to the Aboriginal culture, whether it be the traditional culture or the culture of the fringe dweller.
- They should be stimulating, presenting material and organising activities which are clearly demonstrated to be relevant to the needs of their students.
- They should be responsive and organised, eliciting from their students a trust in their professional competence.

The National Board of Employment, Education and Training Report (NBEET, 1995) suggests that schools are not successful in recognising and meeting the needs of their Aboriginal students. There is a failure of schools and teachers to provide Aboriginal students things which they and their parents desire and expect. The report suggests that

this situation can change where there are school policies, programs and strategies which are supportive of Aboriginal identity and which provide a warm, supportive and demanding approach to students. The report also acknowledges the need for relevant curriculum.

Wyatt-Smith (1995) argues that despite many writings on Australian Aboriginal education, there has been little written about how teacher perceptions of Aboriginal students differ from those of non-Aboriginal students. This is despite fairly wide acceptance that the way teachers perceive students will impact on the teaching, learning and assessment outcomes that students receive.

Supporting Indigenous identity

Cooper et al. (2004) state that, "It is commonly accepted that education functions to reproduce social inequalities and that teachers have a role in this process" (p. 2). They contend that there is no greater case of social inequality in Australia than the gap between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal citizens of the country.

Developing effective teaching strategy that leads to effective outcomes for Aboriginal students has its origins in the ways in which the teachers perceive their students and the ways in which they learn. According to studies by Herbert, Anderson, Price, and Stehbens (1999), Indigenous people see education as a false promise; at the same time the answer to and the cause of their oppressed position. Resisting school is seen as a rational response to the reproductive nature of education that continues to marginalise and disadvantage Indigenous people. Herbert et al. describe that according to Indigenous students, a good teacher: (1) shows willingness to be personal and to communicate with students and to listen; (2) asks students to do things by giving clear, helpful instructions; (3) talks about things other than school work; and (4) assists students with school work. They also describe that according to Indigenous students, a bad teacher: (1) makes students feel dumb; (2) rather than teaching students, does it for them; (3) holds a bad impression of students and maintains that impression throughout schooling; (4) holds something a student did once against them; and (5) singles students out in front of others (that is "shames" the student).

Davis (1996) indicates that teachers who exhibit:

warmth and personal concern for pupils and intrinsic acceptance of them are likely to be adopted by such pupils who will enjoy a derived status based on this identification, and may strive for academic success as one way of meeting the teacher's expectation and hence retaining their approval (p. 97).

He also argues that teachers need "to see a child's language as having value in itself since it reflects family interactions which are a part of the culture" (p. 100). This is supported by Giroux (1991) "...educators need to approach learning not merely as the acquisition of knowledge but as the production of cultural practices that offer students a sense of identity, place and hope" (p. 170).

High expectations

Green (1982) argues that teachers have low expectations of students; he states:

The fact of the matter, then, is that the teachers do not expect Indigenous children to do well in school. While few are complacent about low achievement of this section of the school population, most teachers feel that the situation is well beyond their control. Indigenous children, they have accepted, just cannot do well in school. (p. 113)

Green writes that according to the 1976 Inquiry into Poverty in Australia "when a teacher believes a child to be disadvantaged because of his deprived experiential background he will have a low expectation of the child" (p. 114). A child's attractiveness also impacts on teacher perception: "some teachers find it difficult to display sincere warmth towards, and encourage physical contact with, a child who may have suppurating ears, unsightly nasal discharge, skin infections, dirty clothes or even all four conditions" (p. 116).

Green (1982) also examined the influence of the classroom teacher on the performance of Aboriginal children. Teachers blamed the student's parents, Community and culture for their inability to achieve high academic outcomes. Many of the teachers attributed poor performance to the language, behaviour and social skills of the students as well as poor nutrition and low parental expectations. None of the teachers actually questioned whether their own preconceived notions of Indigenous students could in fact affect their academic outcomes. Similarly in the USA, Paley (2000) in her book, *White Teacher*, writes candidly about her low expectations of "black" children in her class in the south of the USA. She says that she was initially scared of the "black" children and felt that this fear was from not really understanding the backgrounds of her students. She

began to take note of how she reacted to the “black” children in her class and realised that there was a common need in every child. The challenge in teaching is to find a way of communicating with every child that his or her special quality is understood, is valued and can be talked about. Paley spent a lot of time getting to know the students’ families and understanding student backgrounds. Once she did this, she discovered that the needs of the “black” children were the same as for all children.

Student/teacher relationships

Malin (1989) maintains that successful school learning in an Indigenous classroom involves a relationship between a student and teacher, a relationship developed on mutual trust that recognises the identity and interests of both people. In Malin’s study, the teacher felt that she lacked legitimacy in the eyes of the Indigenous students which led to a breakdown between them. For teachers such as this one, Malin recommends that cross cultural awareness training be provided. Cooper et al. (2004) state that a successful teacher of Indigenous students will be one who is willing to accept knowledge, the cultural identity of the student and a belief that the students will learn if they are supported and have high expectations. Crowley and Rizvi (cited in Groome and Hamilton, 1995) have argued that teachers have a tendency to treat Indigenous students differently from other students because of the ideas they have about the cultural characteristics of Aboriginal students.

Elias et al. (2003) assert that having a positive relationship with students provides teachers with alternatives to head-on confrontation. The relationship provides a gateway for learning. Characteristics such as self awareness, problem-solving abilities, good communication skills and a positive sense of self were once systematically developed in young people by many Indigenous groups. School leaders who have undertaken the task of shifting a school’s culture already realise the importance of working to build relationships. Through understanding, empathy and respect for each other, a cooperative school spirit is established.

Teacher/student relationship therefore is of crucial importance in creating a safe, secure and supportive learning environment for Aboriginal students. Fitzgerald (2000) states that teachers with limited understanding of Aboriginal students, their cultures and issues which are of concern to them continue to be appointed to schools with high

enrolments of Aboriginal students. This contributes to the continuing achievement of poor academic outcomes.

Education in human values

Non-Indigenous teachers are not trained in the processes, pedagogies and methodology of education that achieves cultural change in the school. The challenge for the teachers is to go beyond the usual professional development talks and workshops they may attend and become involved in systematic training in values education methodology (Dhall & Dhall, 2003). In part, Dhall and Dhall state that “the sense of being overwhelmed by problems in the school arises because teachers do not use their work as a means for personal growth and self awareness” (p. 4). This is, however, an integral part of a properly constructed program in the acknowledgment that values are not taught as much as demonstrated by teachers. If teachers make a commitment to values education they benefit personally, they bring new and creative dynamics into their professional lives and make a difference for the students.

It is increasingly clear that education needs to give children a proper sense of self through which they become involved in a deeper engagement with both the inner world of values, feelings, emotions and ideals and the outer material world. McConaghy (2000) however states that the training of Indigenous people for “responsible citizenship” has a long history in Australia. She states that Indigenous people have been implored to accept the modes of dress, language and behaviours of “good” Australian citizens, of British ancestry. McConaghy also points out that in the 1960s there were “values” programs that were aimed at instilling attitudes of good citizenship in Indigenous people. They gained award wages and the right to vote as part of the citizenship transaction. The aim of this program was to raise living standards. George (1969) argued that a lot of Indigenous people did not seem to possess an aim in life and this new citizenship would improve their ability to assimilate. Widders and Noble (1993) stated that “citizenship, far from being a set of universal rights stemming from a common humanity, is a culturally specific form of governance to which access is not guaranteed but distributed along lines of social power” (p. 95).

The values education program endorsed by Dhall and Dhall (2003) is education in human values, not citizenship. Values such as: caring, honesty, courage, participation, love, friendship, manners, fairness, consideration and respect, are the human values they

believe allow students to grow socially and emotionally. Until recently, no special attention was paid to the needs of the child for social development but it was generally agreed that school was a place of social interaction and did confer moderate levels of social skills on the child.

However, little attention is given to the children's emotional, moral and spiritual needs (Kessler, 2000). In addition a "spiritual void" has been created by design in the educational institutions as different religious groups voice their objections to the teaching of spirituality in schools fearing religious indoctrination with alien beliefs. Clearly this stems from confusion between religion and spirituality.

As advocated by the Adelaide Declaration on National Goals of Schooling (1999), ideal education should address all aspects of a child's personality and perhaps the greatest need at present is to recognise children's legitimate aspiration for spiritual and moral development alongside physical, mental, emotional, social and aesthetic development. Goleman (2002) asserts that these areas can be addressed through education enriched with values. Indeed, scientific evidence is emerging to show that it is development in emotional, social and spiritual aspects of personality that determines success in life rather than the level of intellectual attainment by the child.

2.4.3 SCHOOL CHANGE AND CULTURAL INFLUENCE

To achieve changes in Indigenous schools that ensure improved student performance, there is a need to focus on differences between the cultures of teachers (mainly non-Indigenous) and the Indigenous students.

Impact on learning

All cultural groups have a defined cultural process for acquiring new knowledge. Trudgen (2001) believes that there is a correct process to be followed for the acquisition of knowledge by Indigenous students. Non-Indigenous teachers need to learn and understand this process for effective teaching and learning to occur. The process according to Trudgen is as follows.

- (1) The information must come from a credible source. The teacher must be seen as qualified to introduce new knowledge.
- (2) The information must be delivered in a culturally correct way.

- (3) The information must build on culturally accepted truths and knowledge.

Cultural awareness programs assist new and beginning teachers to understand this knowledge process. Mudrooroo (1995) states that teachers need to be open to and willing to accept these concepts for programs to be successful. Folds (1987) asserts however, that while conflicting values do underlie resistance, this will not be remedied by trying to make non-Indigenous teachers do more to reinforce Community values and culture. He argues that there are structural problems underlying apparent teacher competence in such areas as their chronic inability to embrace Indigenous culture in the classroom. He agrees that knowledge of specific skills and learning styles of Indigenous students is vital if Indigenous Community schools are to build conceptual bridges from the knowledge the children already have.

A greater understanding of the influences racism and discrimination have on Indigenous students is identified as another issue impacting on Indigenous students' achievements. Lester (2000) points out that "racism is pervasive across all areas of Community activity and the education domain is not exempt from its destructive focus ... racism is still a major stumbling block to any program development in any Indigenous education and training" (p. 45).

Student status and decision making

The concept of being a "good student" has been explored by McGinty (2002). He described how Indigenous students presented many "masking" talents for teachers in order not to draw attention to themselves in the classroom. Upon the surface they would appear to be good students who listen, pay attention and do the work that is expected of them, although many of these students are either disengaged or uninterested in the learning processes being presented to them, which often leads to the notion of "invisible underachievement". Many of these students possess low self-efficacy towards academic learning, which has been researched to be common worldwide amongst Indigenous people who have suffered from long-term disadvantage.

Ogbu (1978) commonly refers to the long-term suffering from oppression and other atrocities towards Indigenous people as developing "involuntary minority status" where, due to long-term disengagement from societal norms, Indigenous people have become accustomed to low outcomes and failures, and commonly have low educational/career

aspirations. Indigenous workers in classrooms can often identify these students and are seen as role models allowing students to aspire to academic excellence in the classroom.

Many individuals can and do function in these two contrasting cultural systems successfully. This notion of operating across two contrasting systems and making decisions about the level of engagement within each of them is also described by Ogbu (1978) as a “forced-choice dilemma”. All students are faced with many “forced-choice dilemmas” but, for Indigenous students, they are not necessarily a choice between two options, (e.g., being/not being engaged) but rather a selection from a wide variety of choices of engagement (e.g., having a go at learning, being a behaviour problem, behaving as expected). There are also several other factors of choice including: family/Community expectations; peer group pressure; teacher expectations; and cultural considerations.

2.5 EFFECTIVE CHANGE IN INDIGENOUS SCHOOLS

The strategies implemented at Doongal State School were a result of the information gained after a visit to Cherbourg State School early in 2003. This section looks at the Cherbourg situation and other successful schools for factors that give positive change.

2.5.1 THE CHERBOURG STORY

For seven years, Dr Chris Sarra was the Principal of Cherbourg State School, an Aboriginal Community about 300km north-west of Brisbane, Queensland. The Community was formed by forcible removal of many Aboriginal families of different tribal groupings from their traditional lands to Cherbourg where their lives were state controlled until the 1970s. Without adequate resources or employment, the Community came to rely on welfare with the consequential alcohol and violence problems, poor health and low life expectancy, and discrimination and exclusion. The students at Cherbourg State School performed poorly compared with State means and most students’ knowledge at the end of Year 7 was so low that the average stay for a Cherbourg student at the local Murgon High School was nine months (Sarra, 2003).

Sarra found that several non-Aboriginal teachers believed that such student outcomes were a legacy of being Aboriginal. They felt that the unsatisfactory student

performance, attendance and behaviour was the best that could be expected. One of the strategies Sarra implemented to change things at Cherbourg State School was to implement a program based on the slogan “Strong and Smart” which challenged the students academically, built pride and associated Aboriginality with intelligence. The combination of student pride, Aboriginal leadership, high expectations and challenging programs resulted in significant improvements in Aboriginal students’ attendance, achievement, behaviour and self concept (Sarra, 2005).

Sarra believed his task was to bring about a “dialectic of liberation” (Sarra 2005, p. 169). He believed that for student empowerment to occur, Aboriginal children needed to stop seeing themselves in terms of the negative perceptions around being Aboriginal and start seeing themselves as embodying the positive perceptions of being Aboriginal. These positive perceptions, Sarra believed, constituted what Bhaskar termed as “informed desire” (Bhaskar 1993, cited in Sarra 2005, p. 169). Sarra led the school in such a way that the children were challenged about how they perceived their own Aboriginal identity. The children had to reflect on the negative perceptions that they were willingly or unwillingly emulating. Sarra then worked with teachers and school staff to guide and develop students to understand a more positive perception of being Aboriginal. The alternative Aboriginal identity became the “Strong and Smart” Aboriginal identity. For this new identity to be embraced by students, Sarra saw it as his role to: (1) challenge Aboriginal identity; (2) develop Aboriginal identity; and (3) change the school culture.

Challenging and developing Indigenous identity

Sarra (2003; 2005) believed that *challenging Aboriginal identity* in a school meant confronting beliefs about being Aboriginal and reflecting on how these beliefs are manifested in behaviour and attitude towards working hard in the classroom. He also believed that the staff at the school needed to be challenged on their own perceptions about Aboriginal identity and to get them to decide whether they truly believed that Aboriginal children could achieve well at school. However, he also argues that this challenge should be linked to building a more positive identity. He states that any school in the process of challenging negative Aboriginal perceptions must “nurture and provide opportunities to develop a more positive perception of being Aboriginal” (Sarra, 2005, p. 170).

As schools play their part in challenging Aboriginal children to reflect more positively on their identity and nurturing them to develop that identity, the school will become a place where Aboriginal children can emulate a positive identity. As Sarra (2005) states, “The challenge for school staff is to move beyond the entrenched mindset about Aboriginal identity and to reject collusion with poor performance” (p. 171).

Sarra worked tirelessly with the Community of Cherbourg to obtain agreement that the people of Cherbourg had every right to expect their children to perform academically at a level of any other child from any other school, and to have a strong and positive sense of what it means to be Aboriginal. “The vision is now firmly encapsulated in the school motto, *Strong and Smart*, which is echoed by all staff and children in all classrooms, and anchors everything that occurs in the school, including school attendance and academic performance” (Sarra, 2005, p. 176).

The pursuit of “Strong and Smart” is closely aligned with what Slee (2001) articulates as the conditions and rights for new and essential directions in schooling. Slee suggests that schooling should ensure individual enhancement, therefore allowing the setting of conditions in which to build confidence. He argues for the individual right to social, cultural, and intellectual inclusion, and strongly argues for assimilation.

Building Indigenous leadership

Sarra (2003) argued that an important component of Cherbourg’s success was due to ensuring that Indigenous students saw examples of Indigenous leadership in their school lives. He speaks of ensuring that all people brought into the school to perform maintenance were Indigenous. He employed Indigenous carpenters, painters, glaziers and gardeners and describes how their work was less vandalised than that of non-Indigenous tradespersons.

However, Sarra’s (2003) most difficult change was in providing opportunities for the Indigenous teacher aides to be part of decision making in the classroom. He set up school policies that meant that Indigenous teacher aides were in control of cultural matters in the classroom and had the power to tell teachers what to do. He set up a cultural studies program to be prepared and taught by the teacher aides. He describes how, when the policies re Indigenous teacher aides were first introduced, many teachers asked for transfer to other schools. As described in Baturo, Cooper, and Doyle (2007) and

Warren, Baturu, and Cooper (2009, in press), empowering teacher aides can strongly affect Indigenous schools.

Changing the school culture

Changing the culture of a school is a complex process indeed. A Department of Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA) (2000) study notes the extensive impact teachers have on the development of a child's self-identity. Cherbourg State School had teachers who were in the habit of accepting underachievement as an "Aboriginal thing" (Sarra, 2005). This perception had to be addressed as it clearly has the effect of children believing the negative perception of who they are, and subsequently aspiring downwards as some means of proving to their peers that they are "Aboriginal" (Pedersen & Walker, 2000, p. 8, cited in Sarra, 2005, p. 176).

Christie (1996, p. 303, cited in Sarra, 2005, p. 177) notes that "where communities are disrupted, schools are an important way to build up solidarity". Groome and Hamilton (1995, p. 37, cited in Sarra, 2005, p. 177) further highlight the need for children to feel a sense of worth about their identities. Some very simple yet powerful strategies used by Cherbourg State School to generate this strong sense of self worth about who they were as Aboriginal people were the development of the school song, the introduction of a school uniform, and the cleaning up of school grounds. A school song was developed to create pride and unity in the school and most importantly, to give the school community time together (Sarra, 2005).

Sarra discovered that when the school staff and Community had high expectations, the children worked hard to meet these expectations. Expectations such as improved attendance, improved student behaviour, cleaner school grounds and improved academic performance resulted in the overall success of the school.

Teaching can be a self-fulfilling prophecy – students seem to know when an adult does not believe they are capable and they live up, or down, to this. Sarra (2003) speaks of starting in Cherbourg and meeting teachers who were proud of classrooms in which student learning was patently absent because this was the best expected from the Indigenous students. He worked hard to build a staff (teachers and teacher aides) who believed that Indigenous students could achieve at the same rate as non-Indigenous students.

Sarra's (2003, 2005) final argument is that successful Indigenous schools need strong relationships with their Indigenous Community. In particular, this means bringing the Community into the school by: (a) celebrating Indigenous cultural days and acknowledging deaths; (b) bringing the elders into the school with a role in relation to student learning; (c) building strong relationships between teachers and parents; and (d) allowing local Community knowledge being an important and legitimate part of school knowledge.

Summary

Since he left Cherbourg State School, Sarra has developed the Indigenous Education Leadership Institute and has been training principals of Indigenous schools in his methods for successful school change. As a result of this training and visiting many schools with successful outcomes, Sarra (2008) summarised the characteristics of successful school change into five fundamental strategies: (1) acknowledging, embracing and developing a positive sense of Aboriginal Identity in schools (2) acknowledging and embracing Aboriginal leadership in schools and school communities; (3) 'high expectations' leadership to ensure 'high expectations' classrooms, with 'high expectations' teacher/student relationships; (4) innovative and dynamic school models in complex social and cultural contexts; and (5) innovative and dynamic school staffing models, especially for Community schools. The latter two strategies point to the need to have a school structure and staffing that is in harmony with the particular characteristics of different Indigenous Communities. However, these 5 strategies are global in design and need to be considered in terms of simpler strategies such as: (a) build pride and belief in ability; (b) connect to the Community; and (c) celebrate and respect local culture.

2.5.2 OTHER SUCCESS STORIES

Community partnerships are seen as an essential part of allowing Indigenous students to reach their full potential. Coolman, (1993) describes a project focusing on the development of a "schooled culture of learning" in an inner city Indigenous Community. He found that by developing a shared language, Indigenous students became engaged and performed well at school. This study emphasised the importance of family involvement in schooling and the acknowledgement of family values within the school context. The difference between the accepted and expected behaviours of home and school do not only

occur in remote communities but also in the urban context. Recognition of how social context and cultural practices play an important role in a child's developmental process is a key to planning for each student's success. To establish and understand the socio-cultural context of Aboriginal students that are bi-lingual and bi-cultural, the program began with an exchange of cultural knowledge between the Aboriginal Community and the school community. All staff undertook cultural awareness training before the project commenced, which grew out of engaging with Aboriginal Community members and learning the stories of the people in the Community.

Success is usually equated with test scores, however those in schools know that there is much in schools which cannot be measured such as the happiness and well-being of the person as a whole (Telford, 1996). Fullan and Hargraves (1992) indicate that understanding of what constitutes school success and school improvement are still in their infancy. Generally, however, success in school improvement is related to the organisational good health of a school with indicators of success conceived of as performance indicators. These are linked to school outcomes.

This chapter has attempted to provide a review of the literature to highlight some of the issues faced by Indigenous students in the education system as well as to highlight theories regarding effective leadership and leadership for change. When I went to Doongal State School I did not have any pre-concept of applying a change model to the school. My research however has highlighted that the steps I took to bring about change do, in fact, fit into the tried and tested models discussed above. It is leadership and change management that will impact on all spheres of Indigenous education.

2.6 FRAMEWORK FOR THE REFLECTIONS

This study is unusual in that it is a reflection on what has happened in the past. Therefore, the thesis is an examination of the practices of the school, the actions of the Principal (myself), staff, students and Community members, in the light of the literature and in relation to the objectives stated in Chapter 1.

Because the study is a critical reflection on two years of being a principal in an Indigenous school, the literature review's role is to provide ideas and findings which I (as Angela 09) can use to critique my own practice (as Angela03). These ideas are presented

in three parts: a summary of the major sections (Subsection 2.6.1), an initial framework (Subsection 2.6.2), and implications for the remainder of the thesis (Subsection 2.6.3).

2.6.1 SUMMARY

Despite many Education Queensland programs and government policies, the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous student outcomes continues to grow. The research indicates that many educators have failed in their engagement of Indigenous students in the classroom.

Indigenous teaching and learning outcomes

The major points in light of the literature regarding this failure are as follows.

Cultural clash. Education is administered in a form different from Indigenous culture, therefore often Indigenous people feel school devalues them and their culture. For example, the QIECB (2003) states that Indigenous people educate their children through stories and have a strong oral tradition, a position that is not privileged in modern schools with their wider literacy base of reading and writing.

As well, the values of Indigenous people are different between school and home. For example, Cummins (2001) says that the lack of positive identification and the alien nature of school to the cultural and family life of Indigenous people results in students being reluctant to attend school. Li (2002), however, blames cultural and family commitments for these difficulties. Regardless of where the blame lies, lack of attendance by Indigenous students at school is a contributing factor to continuing failure.

Thus, the importance of cultural programs is highlighted in the literature. Many non-Indigenous teachers and Principals do not feel comfortable instituting such programs and believe it is best left to the Community Elders. It will be worth considering the impact of cultural programs at Doongal State School and their impact on *building pride* within the student body in relation to Cooper et al.'s (2004) work on the impact of conflicting cultural norms and expectations.

Language clash. Indigenous students do not have Standard Australian English as their first language. Trudgen (2001) blames this lack of understanding of English for communication difficulties in Indigenous schools. Angelo's (2006) work around Aboriginal English as compared with Standard Australian English is crucial to

understanding communication barriers within the school environment. The fact that Bickerton (1999) demonstrated the remarkable results achieved through a hands-on approach to the teaching of maths encourages Indigenous educators to question traditional non-Indigenous schooling methods involving sitting at desks with paper and pencil.

Relationships. Winkler (2004) believes that relationships are the key to success in Indigenous education; he believes that the relationships built with students and Community are even more important than the curriculum. Beresford and Partington (2003) agree that teachers who take up teaching positions for the wrong reasons will struggle because they will find it difficult to make meaningful relationships. Newman and Yasukawa (2005) highlight the impact negative school experiences of parents have on the current cohort of students. Parents will be reluctant to come to the school or question school practices without good relationships if they had negative experiences themselves.

Indigenous education workers. Chaffey's (2004 in Piirto, 2007) work on the impact of Indigenous support staff in the classroom will be integral when considering the role of the Indigenous education workers at Doongal State School. The ability of the teacher aides to become significant in the students' lives can have a large impact on student engagement.

Indigenous teacher. Reid and Santoro's (2006) study highlighted the issues facing Indigenous teachers who felt that they were trapped between the non-Indigenous world of education and the Indigenous culture. These teachers are often expected to bridge the gap between cultures; however, they are seen as inferior to non-Indigenous teachers in many instances.

Principal leadership

Frigo et al. (2003) and McRae (2003), among others, argue that leadership is the key to success with Indigenous students. The major points in light of the literature on Principal leadership are as follows.

Leadership traits. Bennis & Nanus (1985) identified five traits of good leadership (vision, communication, persistence, empowerment and organisational ability) which are a solid foundation from which to assess a person's leadership capability. These traits emphasised the importance of forming and communicating a vision.

Collaborative school management. Caldwell and Spinks (1992) developed a model for leading collaborative change and for determining whether such change is or will be effective which has the potential to bring excellence to reality. The model, titled *Collaborative School Management Cycle (CSM)* has six phases: goal setting and needs identification; policy making; planning of programs; preparation and approval of program budgets; implementing; and evaluating.

Advocacy and persuasion. Sarra (2003/2005) asserts that Principals must have the ability to persuade and influence staff, and be passionate about what they do. This is supported by Goleman (2002).

Being white and female. Indigenous Community culture makes it difficult for white females to have the same influence as Indigenous males. However, Harris et al. (2004) discovered that a number of themes emerged in their interviews with women Principals – such as an early love of learning, a strong work ethic and the importance of mentoring. They argued that three major leadership themes are revealed: *Joy, Excellence for all,* and *Spirituality*. Furthermore, Grogan (1996) found that female teachers have a fundamental concern for the welfare of children and that is a key to effective female leadership in education.

Professional development and teacher change

Success at Doongal State School was only possible because teachers and teacher aides changed their practices. The major points in light of the literature on professional development and teacher change are as follows.

Professional learning. It would seem that Clarke and Hollingsworth's (2002) survey of effective professional development is pertinent with regard to the study of the effectiveness of the professional development offered at Doongal State School. The model is reliant on the provision of sufficient time for the enactment of the skill and is followed by reflection. The domains of *external practice* and *consequence* will result in *personal* change if they are followed by a positive response. The model by Baturu and Cooper (2006) of expert input, successful classroom trials, *just-in-time* support, and in-situ classroom focus can be seen as a change model for classroom practice.

Indigenous identity. Malin (1989), Baturu and Cooper (2005) maintain that successful school learning in an Indigenous classroom involves a balance of power

relationship between the teacher and student that is developed by fostering an identity in the Indigenous students that is positive to learning.

Successful Indigenous school change

The five fundamental strategies of Sarra (2008) are a summary of successful school change: (1) acknowledging, embracing and developing a positive sense of Aboriginal Identity in schools (2) acknowledging and embracing Aboriginal leadership in schools and school communities; (3) “high expectations” leadership to ensure “high expectations” classrooms, with “high expectations” teacher/student relationships; (4) innovative and dynamic school models in complex social and cultural contexts; and (5) innovative and dynamic school staffing models, especially for Community schools.

2.6.2 INITIAL FRAMEWORKS

The review of the literature reveals that there are three separate factors which interrelate to bring about change in Indigenous education. These factors are (1) School factors, (2) Principal Leadership factors, and (3) Change factors. For each of these factors, an initial framework has been developed from the literature.

These frameworks provide a structure for determining design and analysis and thus for organising results (Chapter 4) and a starting point for the development of theory (Chapter 5).

School factors

Looking across the whole literature review, there appear to be six factors which are the key components to success in Indigenous Community schools. These are: (1) *high expectations*; (2) *building pride and self worth* which incorporates building positive student identities; (3) *Indigenous leadership*; (4) *connection to community*; (5) *effective pedagogy*; and (6) *leadership*, a key factor which is discussed in Principal Leadership factors.

These six key components for school success in Indigenous Communities were extracted from Brophy & Good (1987), Sarra (2003, 2005), Cowlishaw (2004), Coolman (1993), Heath (1983), Katznelson and Weir (1985), Lareau (1989), McConaghy (2000), Povinelli (1993), Rist (1970), Rosenthal & Jacobson (1968), Blount (1982), McDonald (2004), Purdie (2003), and Cummins (2001). Pedagogy was something that emerged from

the literature that was not in the Cherbourg model; Dhall & Dhall (2003), Grant (1998), Green (1982), Greenfield (1986), Nakata (1999), Paley (2000), Scrimgeour (2001), Trouw (1997) and Winkler (2004) argue the importance of good pedagogical practice to underlie improvement (see section 2.4.2). This model was also developed from Sarra's (2008) global strategies.

Principal Leadership factors

The review of the literature indicated that Bennis and Nanus' (1985) five traits of leadership, *vision, communication, persistence, empowerment* and *organisational ability*, are reflective of the leadership traits espoused by other researchers. Along with *empathy*, they form the framework for effective leadership for this research. Bennis and Nannus' five traits are supported by House (2004), Barsade (2002), Cooke & Lafferty (1987), French & Raven (1968), Stogdill (1974), Fiedler 1967), Sergiovanni, (1984,1987), Simpkins et al. (1982), Frigo and Corrigan (2003), Duffy, (2003), Caldwell & Spinks (1992), Beare (1989), Trow (1984) and Tucker (1991) (see section 2.3). The additional trait of *empathy* (which describes the ability to understand teachers and teaching) was added due to the importance of the leader understanding school practices and pedagogies that underlie sections 2.1 and 2.2; this trait is supported by Boomer (1993), Darder (1991), Davis (1996), Dunlap & Schmuck (1995), Harris et al. (2004), Rosener (1990).

Change factors

The review of the literature on change revealed that the framework described by Baturu, Warren, & Cooper (2006) of expert input, successful classroom trials, just in time support, peer sharing, in-situ classroom focus and depth is supported by Boylan (1997), Clarke (1994), Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002), Craft (1996), Hoban (2002), Harris and Lambert (2003), Tunica (1995) and Wenger (1998), (see Section 2.4). Two extra factors, time and leadership, emerging from Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) were likewise strongly supported from the literature on change in Chapter 2.

2.6.3 SIGNIFICANCE

As the literature review in Chapter 2 shows, there is little research of the attributes of an effective white, female leader in an Indigenous school. Therefore, this thesis fills the gap in literature on this subject and, as white female Principals are increasing in Indigenous schools, provides insight for future leaders in Indigenous schools.

The literature has also illuminated the purposes of the thesis (see Section 1.2). The following research questions then become of interest.

- Did the school practices of my time at Doongal challenge the embedded Euro-centric nature of schools? How did the Doongal practices take account of cultural and value differences? Did the cultural programs implemented at Doongal impact on the overall learning outcomes (including attendance)?
- Did the Doongal practices measure up to these five leadership traits, namely: Vision, Communication, Persistence, Empowerment and Organisational ability?
- How did the staff and I interact with each other and the students and the Community in terms of passion and commitment to improving outcomes for students? Was there appropriate advocacy for Indigenous students and how did this affect non-Indigenous teachers?
- What effect did the professional development implemented at Doongal State School have on the school and school outcomes? Was there sufficient support to enable successful enactments (e.g., provision of time, opportunities for sharing)? And if there was not, how did this affect what was done?
- Was the impact the teachers at Doongal had on the students positive for the students in terms of their identity as Indigenous learners and proud Community members? What role did the staff and I have in this?
- Did the Doongal practices enable the teacher aides at Doongal State School to interact with students in a manner that improved learning outcomes?
- How did Doongal practices overcome issues of race and gender? Did the ideas of Harris et al. (2004) and Grogan (1996) apply to me?

Chapter 3: Research Design

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the effectiveness of my leadership as a non-Indigenous Principal in an Indigenous context. This chapter describes the design of the study by overviewing the methodology (Section 3.1); describing the participants (Section 3.2); delineating the instruments or data gathering methods used (Section 3.3); describing the procedure followed to gather the data (Section 3.4); and describing the way in which the data are to be analysed (Section 3.5).

Similar to Chapter 2, the voice of Angela09 predominates in this chapter because it describes what Angela09 has done to critique herself as Angela03.

3.1 METHODOLOGY

This thesis analyses the effect of a white female principal's actions with regard to the improvement in attendance, behaviour and performance of Indigenous students that occurred in a state primary school in 2003 and 2004 in a remote Indigenous Community (Doongal) in order to construct theory that will explain what happened. As such, the thesis is a reflection on actions already taken, decisions already made, and data already gathered.

This thesis is embedded in a historical research paradigm as it aims to produce an "integrated account of the relationships between persons, events, times and places" (Burns, 2000, p. 481).

Therefore, the methodology adopted for the thesis essentially has three components: (1) it is *qualitative* and *ethnographic* (interpretive) (Burns, 2000; Cresswell, 2005) in terms of methodological techniques used and the data gathered; (2) it is *reflective* and *critical* in the manner in which it looks back at the time of the study; and (3) it is *Indigenous based* or *decolonising* (Smith, 1999) in the way it provides a voice for Indigenous members and is focused on improving social justice for Indigenous participants.

It is also designed to enable the voices of Angela09 and Angela03 to interact with as little confusion as possible.

3.1.1 QUALITATIVE ASPECTS

The thesis is *qualitative* in that it focuses on describing what happened, focusing predominantly on differences in quality. Even when numbers are used, comparisons are descriptive – no inferential statistics are used.

As a qualitative study, the research is also *ethnographic* and *longitudinal*. As an ethnographic study, the research focuses on understanding the actions of the participants in terms of the participants' categories. In this way, the thesis attempts to understand leadership issues which impacted on the learning outcomes of Indigenous children at Doongal. The researcher participated in the daily lives of the people of Doongal for a period of two years, watching what happened, listening to what was said, asking questions and collecting relevant data. As far as possible, the social world of the people at Doongal State School has been studied in its natural state. The primary role of this thesis is to report what happened in this setting and how the Principal's actions impacted on others in their context. The overarching characteristic of this thesis that is ethnographic is that it is to study and understand the cultural aspects of the behaviour of people at Doongal State School and the context of that behaviour (Punch, 2001).

As a longitudinal study, the research followed participants across two years. Participants were Doongal State School personnel who were working or volunteering at the school during 2003 and 2004.

The thesis focuses on Doongal State School as a *case study*. As the Principal of Doongal State School and researcher, I wanted a better understanding of why things changed at Doongal State School. This is also an instrumental case study as it is designed to give insight and refine theories about Indigenous education.

The study is also *action research* in that it is a leader (principal) attempting to improve practice. Thus, the study follows an action-research spiral of planning, action, observation and reflection and new plans that make action research, in Sargent's (1996) words: "a method whose intention is to actually change social conditions" (p. 65). This is because, as described by Bulmer (1978), action research is a process whereby, in a given problem area, research is undertaken to specify dimensions of the problem in its particular context and then, on the basis of this evidence, to formulate possible solutions which are translated into action with the view to solving the problem. Thus, action research can not only be used to identify the issues affecting Aboriginal students, staff and the Aboriginal

Community in Doongal, it can also develop working recommendations and strategies to improve outcomes for students.

3.1.2 CRITICAL REFLECTION

The thesis is a *critical reflection* in that it looks back at what happened at Doongal State School across two years (2003 and 2004) and analyses the effectiveness of actions taken in the light of the literature. It seeks to address an inequality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous schools and use the findings to advocate and call for changes.

The thesis focuses on the two years as a *narrative* (Cresswell, 2005). The story is valuable in studying the lived experiences of the Principal of Doongal State School and is a feasible way of collecting data because it is a common device in everyday interactions. This narrative focuses on my story so is a “personal experience story” (Cresswell, 2005, p. 476); the narrative is about my past experiences and how they contribute to my current educational practice. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) (in Merriam, 1998) observe:

there are no formulae or recipes for the ‘best way’ to analyse the stories we elicit and collect. Indeed, one of the strengths of thinking about our data as narrative is that this opens up the possibilities for a variety of analytic strategies (p. 158).

The thesis is also *reflexive* in that it reflects not only on actions and outcomes but also on the techniques used to gather data at that time. The Principal and researcher was part of the social world being studied in this thesis.

Finally, the thesis reflects the methodology of *historical accounts* (Burns, 2000) in that its data is similar to that gathered from participants that is used to analyse historical events. As described in the Preamble, the thesis aims to produce an “integrated account of the relationships between persons, events, times and places” (p. 481).

3.1.3 CULTURAL ASPECTS

The thesis takes account that the researcher-Principal is a non-Indigenous observer-practitioner in an Indigenous environment. Throughout the thesis it is my own voice which will be heard both as I was in 2003 (Angela03) and as I am now in 2009 (Angela09). In her chapter on “Research through imperial eyes” Smith (1999) describes how “Western ways of viewing, talking about and interacting with the world at large are

intricately embedded in racialised discourses” (p. 47) such as preferring the written text over oral language. She discusses how knowledge is created through the Western frames of analysis. Therefore the higher value usually placed on the written than oral accounts can be identified as “Western influence” and has been challenged by Indigenous communities on the grounds of cultural imperialism. Much of the data collected for this research has been oral for this reason.

The study also uses an *Indigenous critical friend* to provide feedback on interpretations. As this research is on Indigenous issues written by a non-Indigenous researcher it is essential that critical friend feedback is used to ensure that the interviewer has accurately reconstructed what the interviewee has articulated and there is no cultural bias.

3.2 PARTICIPANTS

The participants in this study were the teachers, teacher aides and students at Doongal State School in 2003 and 2004 and key Community members. However not all teachers in 2003 took data on their students. Tables B-1 and B-3 (Appendix B) list the teachers and teacher aides at Doongal State School in 2003 and 2004.

Teachers

In 2003 and 2004, all teachers wrote a plan for improvement for their teaching of their students. This included taking some personal accountability for ensuring improved outcomes. This plan was called a “*Proud and Deadly* plan” and is discussed in Section 3.3.5. Samples can be found in Appendices C and F.

In 2003 seven teachers took data on students in their classes. These were Courtenay, Rachel, Andrew, Brittany, Paul, Kobi and Betty. The data were written by the teacher aide in each class and used by the class teacher to monitor progress on their particular goal. (See Appendix C.)

In 2004 there were 13 teachers. Teachers only took data on their students relating to attendance rates and academic improvement.

Teachers were also surveyed about the effectiveness of myself as a leader and interviewed about how they felt the school had changed. Not all teachers returned this survey or took part in the interview. The survey was anonymous. (See Appendix D6.)

Teacher aides

Teacher aides were surveyed about the effectiveness of my leadership and were integral in the data collection for the class teachers. Seven teacher aides and the administrative assistant were surveyed using a survey designed and administered by me regarding their observed changes around the school (see Appendix D6).

Community members

In November 2004, a survey (see Appendix D2) was given to parents to elicit whether parents had perceived that there was a change at the school from 2002 to 2004. It was taken to homes by teacher aides to 25 randomly-chosen families with children attending the Doongal State School. Assistance with reading and recording was offered to each participant by the teacher aides. Only 10 surveys were returned. All surveys were anonymous.

Students

Student opinion data was collected via two processes. These included the Education Queensland (EQ) Student Opinion Survey (see Appendix D3, Figure D-8), and an in-class oral survey (see appendix D4, Figure D-9) devised by me and administered by the class teacher, about student perceptions of Doongal State School.

3.3 INSTRUMENTS

This section outlines the tools used to collect data for this thesis. As it is a reflection, the data were collected through observations (Section 3.3.1), interviews (Section 3.3.2), student test data (Section 3.3.3), surveys (Section 3.3.4) and artefacts (Section 3.3.5).

3.3.1 OBSERVATIONS

One of the major sources of data for this thesis was observations. However, not knowing during my time as Principal that I would be writing this thesis, I therefore did not set out to formally observe people at Doongal for the purposes of research. Thus, observations here really means recall of observations.

Observations include listening as well as looking at everyday face-to-face interactions and depend heavily on both verbal and visual behaviour, a complex

combination to remember. Thus, to ensure a rich data source, recollections were written down and then rewritten more than once under a structure which required the following:

- (1) the recollection to be initially based on artefacts (see Section 3.3.5);
- (2) the total recollection across the two years to be divided into chronological stages based on different intentions – finding out, adapting, re-implementing and exiting (see Section 3.4 for more detail);
- (3) each stage to be divided into four distinct foci: school, personnel, Community, and myself;
- (4) each foci to be divided into cycles which have a similar agenda (e.g., academic performance, classroom behaviour); and
- (5) each cycle to be reported under the four action-research activities: plan, action, observation and reflection.

In this way, the recollections become like the results of a probing semi-structured interview. The structure results in extra and more complete recollections, and a rich data source. It also enables Angela03's voice to be heard and critiqued by Angela09, adding the power of "hindsight" to the memories of the time. My observations are my recollections of the conversations and interactions between people at Doongal State School and within the Community in order to develop a theory about why things improved so dramatically for staff and students during my two years as Principal at Doongal State School.

3.3.2 INTERVIEWS

Two types of interviews were used for the collection of data for this thesis.

Planned teacher interviews. (See Appendix F.) I developed and administered these interviews as part of my role as Principal. They were planned individual interviews where I would discuss teaching and learning programs as well as teacher progress on the *Proud and Deadly* plans. They were scheduled once per term for each teacher and were supervisory in nature. I did deviate from the script at times to probe responses, therefore they were semi-structured interviews. Teachers were asked to respond to questions regarding their level of planning and the progression of the students in their classes.

Teachers were also asked to consider their professional development needs during these interviews.

Ad hoc teacher/teacher aide interviews. (See Appendix F.) The purpose of these interviews was to ensure supervision of staff occurred on a regular basis so that I could provide support for teachers and challenge their practice. These interviews were unplanned, unstructured and open-ended. Specific questions emerged as the interview unfolded and the questioning depended on the direction each interview was taking. These interviews were held as needed by either myself or the teacher, teacher aide, administrative assistant and ancillary staff. These interviews did not have pre-established or pre-set questions. Some aspects of these interviews would be recorded in my diary (see Appendix G). The results of these interviews are incorporated in the body of the text in Chapter 4.

3.3.3 STUDENT TEST DATA

There were two sources of test data that were administered every year.

Standardised Year 3, 5 and 7 benchmark tests. Data from these tests were collected annually (late August) by Education Queensland through a statewide testing regime. These tests were set by the Queensland Studies Authority and were sent to the school to be administered to students under test conditions. The students' responses were centrally analysed and results were provided to the school for teaching purposes and published on the school website in December.

Year 2 Diagnostic Net. Data from this Net were also collected annually (June) by Education Queensland through a statewide observational checklist. Classroom teachers were required to observe students' responses to literacy and numeracy activities, worksheets and tests, to fill out a standardised and moderated criteria-based checklist called the Year 2 Diagnostic Net. The Net was required by Education Queensland to ascertain whether Year 2 students had reached a minimum standard in English and Mathematics. The Net results were then a determinant of additional funding for the school to provide additional support for those students not reaching minimum standards.

3.3.4 SURVEYS AND TRIALS

There were a number of surveys and trials undertaken during 2003 and 2004.

Evaluation of Change survey. Between August and December 2004, school staff, and parents were asked by me to complete a written Evaluation of Change survey with respect to classroom behaviour and school performance. This survey took approximately half an hour to complete. It was devised by myself. Twenty-four staff surveys were given out to teachers, teacher aides and administration staff. Thirteen surveys were returned. The surveys were formal pen and paper surveys. The staff who returned the surveys could have been the staff that had a good relationship with me as any negative responses could have ultimately been traced through handwriting. These results were then collected through a box kept in the Administration office and analysed.

Student, Staff and Parent Opinion Surveys. (Formal Education Queensland surveys – see Appendices A and D.) Students, staff and parents annually provide individual schools with opinion data relating to each school.

Classroom trial data. Teachers were asked to complete a *Proud and Deadly* plan (see Section 3.3.5) outlining the goals they wished to achieve in their classrooms in 2003, and to undertake a *Proud and Deadly* project to improve an aspect of that plan about which they collected data. These data were then collected and graphed by myself (see Appendix C).

Leadership impact survey. At the end of the two years, staff were administered a survey about the impact of my leadership on the school (see Appendix D6.)

Teacher-developed surveys. As well as these surveys, teachers collected data as part of the school process and as part of special projects. For example, teachers kept records of attendance and recorded unexplained absences, and teachers gathered data as part of their *Proud and Deadly* projects on things they wished to change in their classroom. I also asked teachers to collect baseline data at the beginning of 2003 relating to violence, attendance and number of books read in the classroom. Teachers were also asked to take data at intervals across the year.

As well as these data sources, qualitative data were gathered from a variety of people, including staff, students and Community members, in a number of other ways, for example: comments by the general public to Harris District Office, general discussion around the school by staff and Community members, and comments by visiting specialist teachers and DEST personnel who visited the school from time to time.

3.3.5 ARTEFACTS

The artefacts collected for this research included the following.

Local and government data. In order to assess the issues which affected the educational outcomes for students at Doongal State School, data were collected from Government sources. Population and geographical information for the study was obtained primarily from the 2001 Census conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). (It must be acknowledged that the ABS is not the ideal data source as the data are out-dated by the time they get into the public domain and there are a number of flaws in the methodology used to gather this data.) Local (Doongal Council), State and Federal government departments' websites and local knowledge were also used to gather other relevant quantitative data. Education Queensland's Corporate Data Warehouse was used to obtain data relating to academic outcomes for students and staff, student and community survey results.

Principal's informal journal and diary. During my two years as Doongal Principal, I kept notes on what happened at the school and my reactions to these happenings. In particular, they included any information I believed to be important which pertained to school change. These informal notes were taken from February 2003 to November 2004. My diary also contained appointments and notes on interviews with staff, parents, other government bodies and information anecdotally written. A sample is provided in Appendix G.

Teachers' Proud and Deadly plans. Teachers were asked to complete a *Proud and Deadly* plan outlining the goals they wished to achieve in their classrooms in 2003 and 2004, and to undertake a *Proud and Deadly* project to improve an aspect of that plan. In doing so, they collected data about student behaviour and their progress. I collected these plans and graphed the data. These plans are described in Chapter 4 and the individual plans and graphs of their data are in Appendix C.

Minutes and other records. Formal meeting minutes were collected to demonstrate certain issues discussed as a whole staff in regard to the changing of Doongal State School. As well, I collected notes on more informal meetings and copies of reports, messages and emails. These artefacts were collected to provide further insight into my practices as Principal.

3.4 PROCEDURE

Data were gathered continuously across the two years (2003-4) of my time in Doongal. Data are reported as recollections and from interviews, test data, survey and trial data, and artefacts, in a structure and in stages.

3.4.1 STRUCTURE

Looking back as Angela09, in terms of the intention of the school practices, this continuous two-year period was divided into four stages: *Finding out* (my first term at the school); *Adapting* (the remainder of that year as the school implemented its version of the Cherbourg model); *Re-implementing* (starting the second year with new teachers); and *Exiting* (trying to find closure as I prepared to leave Doongal).

In each of these stages, the data gathered were separated into four foci (*School, Personnel, Indigenous Community, and Myself*) and each foci was separated into action-research cycles which were reported under headings of *Plan, Action, Observation* and *Reflection*. The plans, actions and observations are written from the perspective of myself in 2003 and 2004 (Angela03) and are italicised. The reflections are written from both perspectives (Angela03 and Angela09) and those from my perspective in 2009 (Angela09) are not italicised.

Reflecting on what I did as Angela03, it is evident that different methods of data collection were used more at some times than at other times.

3.4.2 STAGES

Stage 1 – Finding out

As Angela03, my aim was to find out what the school and Community were like and then to find out the most effective way to lead the school and improve students' outcomes. I gathered data on this periodically across Term 1 2003, by observation and interviews (both planned and ad hoc), by journal and diary entries and meeting minutes (a process that continued throughout the two-year period).

These data enabled me to reflect, as Angela03, on where the school had positioned itself in terms of student behaviour expectations, and curriculum delivery. Within Chapter 4 (Results) this has introduced complexity because, as Angela09, it means that I

am also reflecting on Angela03's reflections as well as her practices. This complexity continues through the Results chapter.

Stage 2 – Adapting

After a visit I organised to Cherbourg State School, the Cherbourg “Strong and Smart” model was introduced to Doongal staff and a collaborative partnership was formed between teachers, Indigenous teacher aides, and the Community to adapt the “Strong and Smart” ideas to the Doongal situation.

When strategies learned at Cherbourg were implemented at Doongal, teachers gathered data on changes that occurred within their classes. Teachers were asked to complete individual *Proud and Deadly* plans to indicate the areas on which they would focus particular attention. These plans were evaluated at the end of this stage to monitor progress in particular areas. Student test data were collected in August 2004 for students in the Years 3, 5, and 7 diagnostic tests administered state-wide. Artefacts such as lesson plans, attendance sheets and class change data, were continually gathered during this stage.

Stage 3 – Re-implementing

With the changes in the school staff at the beginning of 2004, I felt it was necessary to bring the school and Community together to reconstruct the school approach. The data gathering strategies implemented in 2003 were evaluated and, where appropriate, re-implemented. Formal and informal teacher interviews were undertaken. During this stage, media interest grew and more formal interviews with students and Community members were documented. Teachers also had to re-evaluate their *Proud and Deadly* plans.

Stage 4 – Exiting

With my imminent departure, and that of many other teachers, planning and action turned towards developing and stabilising structures to be sustainable into 2005.

This stage allowed the administration of the Evaluation of Change survey and more informal observations. This was a stage for overall reflection and consideration for the future by Angela03 (as well as Angela09), and for planning for sustainability. Much of the data were shared with the current staff to enable them to induct new staff with the

appropriate strategies. My journal contributed to the data collected during this stage and is a major source of data for Angela09's reflections.

3.5 ANALYSIS

The data were analysed through four phases.

Phase 1 – Combining and organising. Data from all sources (interviews, tests, surveys, trials and artefacts) were collected, transcribed and summarised if necessary, combined and organised into a record of the two years. Recollections stimulated by diary and journal were written down and added to the data.

Phase 2 – Writing a story. The combined data was written into a rich description of my time as Principal of Doongal State School from 2003-2004. This story was then continuously written in greater detail using the structure of dividing the two years into four stages (Finding out, Adapting, Re-implementing, and Exiting), dividing each stage into four foci (School, Personnel, Indigenous Community, and Myself), dividing each foci into cycles each of which has a single agenda, and dividing each cycle into action research activities (plans, actions, observations and reflections). In this way, the story became rich and enabled both voices (Angle03 and Angela09) to be heard (see Chapter 4).

Phase 3 – Categorisation. The rich description was now read and reread and categories of behaviour identified (e.g., high expectation behaviour, behaviour that showed improved outcomes). Once these categories were integrated into the story, stages were compared and similarities across, and differences between, stages were identified. Relationships between categories were then identified from commonalities within and across activities, cycles, foci and stages.

Phase 4 – Theory building. The findings from the critical reflection were considered against the literature in order to reassess impact and reanalyse attribution, and to build theories concerning the frameworks from Section 2.6.2. Finally, these theoretical insights were extended to the issue of non-Indigenous female principalship (thus completing Chapter 5).

Chapter 4: Results

As the purpose of this thesis is to reflect on my practices as a non-Indigenous female Principal in Doongal State School in order to reassess impact, reanalyse attribution and develop theory, the practices which happened during my time as Principal of Doongal State School from 2003-2004 have to be described. Thus this Chapter 4; it focuses on the purposes of these practices, the results they achieved, and the responses to them by staff, students, Community members, and me.

As described in Section 3.4, this chapter is written in four stages, *Finding out*, *Adapting*, *Re-implementing*, and *Exiting*. Each stage is written under four foci, *School*, *Personnel*, *Indigenous Community*, and *Myself*. All the foci are written in cycles, each of which has a single agenda. Finally, each cycle is written using the four activities of action research, *Planning*, *Acting*, *Observing* and *Reflecting*. Within the stages, *School* covers performance, physical space/buildings and processes within the school; *Personnel* covers teachers, teacher aides, administrative staff, and their practices (e.g., teaching programs); *Indigenous Community* covers the Indigenous students and their parents, and other Community members; while *Myself* covers my personal reactions and thoughts.

This is the chapter in which the voice of Angela03 predominates; it is the voice of the plans, actions and observations, and part of the reflections (which it shares with the voice of the thesis, Angela09). As is described in the Preamble, the voice of Angela03 reflects my beliefs, ideas and experience from 2003 and 2004 and, sometimes, is not always reasoned in its judgements nor sensitive to Indigenous culture. Therefore, it is important that the reader can clearly discern which voice is speaking. To make this easier, ideas that reflect me in 2003 and 2004 (i.e., Angela03) are written in italics within this chapter.

4.1 STAGE 1: FINDING OUT (JANUARY-MARCH 2003)

This stage reports on approximately the first three months (January to March 2003) of my occupancy as Principal of Doongal State School. The supporting evidence for the plans/purposes of this stage is presented in Appendices A-D.

4.1.1 SCHOOL

In this section, I report on four cycles. These cycles are categorised as academic performance, behaviour management, administrative systems, and communication.

Academic performance

PLAN

My first plan was to analyse student academic outcomes, parent opinion surveys and staff opinion surveys. I hoped that these data would provide insight into the (then) current reality for students, staff and community members with regard to education in Doongal, deepen my understanding of the position of the school, and be a basis for future improvement.

ACTION

(1) I gathered and analysed existing data on student, staff and community opinions about the school and the academic achievement levels of the students in the areas of numeracy, reading, writing and spelling by accessing Education Queensland's Corporate Data Warehouse and speaking with the School Improvement Officer from the District Office (see Appendices A and D).

(2) I shared these data with teachers and community members, indicated that I felt that they were unacceptable, and listened to their comments.

OBSERVATION

Systemic data available from 2002 indicated that academic outcomes achieved were among the lowest in Queensland); EQ Parent Satisfaction Survey results were below state average but not extreme (see Appendix D1, Figure D-1); Staff Satisfaction Survey results were well below state average (see Appendix D5, Figure D-10); while Student Satisfaction Survey results were above state average (see Appendix D3, Figure D-8). Community data was from few respondents while student data was from attendees (about 30% of students).

As a consequence of sharing the data, there was an increase in comments from, and discussion among, teachers concerning student expectations and performance. These indicated that the data was what the teachers expected from the students and that the "blame" for it lay with the Community. As one teacher said "this is Doongal, and this is what we can expect to achieve due to the Community and the kids not coming to school".

There was also an increase in interest from community members; their comments indicated that they wanted better student outcomes and that the “blame” for this lay with the high turnover of staff and the teachers’ inability to “control” the students.

Finally, there appeared to be the beginnings of a mobilisation to reconsider and challenge the status quo. A few teachers and community members commented that they had tried to voice similar dissatisfaction as mine but had come to accept the present situation when they could see no action taking place.

REFLECTION

At the time that the data was shared, my reflections were that the low data response indicated a lack of engagement in the school from both the students and the community. I felt that this was something that as Principal I should change.

I was also concerned that, although the teachers seemed to recognise that the data on student performance was not good, they appeared not to accept any responsibility. I felt that this position would make it difficult for me to motivate the teachers to improve. I felt that I needed to make the teachers feel better about the students (thus I started to look at behaviour management).

Looking back, I am still confused by the students’ and parents’ responses to the surveys. The low response rate could be the reason for the positive EQ Student Opinion response as those who completed the survey were likely to be the students motivated to be at school. However, the positive parent opinion responses remain confusing to me because if the results at a school in Brisbane were similar to the results in Doongal, the parent responses would have reflected extreme dissatisfaction.

However, the comments from teachers blaming the Community and community members blaming the teachers now appear straightforward. They indicate the need for Doongal teachers to have *high expectations* and improved *community connections*.

Finally, gathering and analysing the data, sharing these with teachers and community members, and indicating dissatisfaction, appeared to be an effective early action for two reasons. First, it elicited comments that seemed to honestly reflect the commentators’ beliefs thereby providing a benchmark for future action, clarifying my goals, and indicating the direction I should go as Principal. Second, it opened debate on expectations for the school and began to mobilise interest. There appeared to be a learned

helplessness about what could be expected from the school as the poor performance had been witnessed for so long, but the action seemed to challenge this. This indicates the importance of *communication* and *peer sharing* in school change.

Behaviour management

PLAN

My second plan was to analyse and understand the behaviour management techniques that were being used in the classrooms. I felt that I needed to understand the behaviour management methods which had previously been employed so that I could use similar language and consequences in behaviour management to support teachers.

ACTION

(1) I visited classrooms to observe teachers and teacher aides who had been at the school in previous years to witness the behaviour management systems.

(2) I then met with them and discussed behaviour management problems with them.

OBSERVATION

My observations were that teachers had little control over students. I noticed that students would use inappropriate language towards teachers and other students. Each classroom had a completely different behaviour management system and teachers had no consistency of expectations. For example, I noticed that one teacher would punish students for using bad language while another teacher would tolerate it. The majority of teachers had few behaviour management strategies that seemed to work.

In discussions with teachers, they expressed frustration at the lack of respect shown to them by students and their inability to gain control in the classroom. One commented, "We can't expect to have good behaviour in the school when the behaviour in the Community is so bad!" Most teachers appeared to be stressed and at a loss as to what to do. Many resorted to shouting while others chose to ignore poor behaviour.

However, I noticed that the classes that did show academic engagement and fewer behaviour issues were those where the teacher had developed a good rapport with students.

REFLECTION

My reflections at the time focused on the ineffective nature of the behaviour actions undertaken by teachers, particularly the lack of response from students to the behaviour management techniques used by teachers. However, looking back from 2009, the reasons given by the teachers for the students' poor behaviour can also be seen as important. Once again, the teachers were blaming the Community for the situation in the school. This culture of blame, which was also evident in the Community where the teachers were blamed for the lack of discipline, highlights again the need for *high expectations* and emphasises the importance of *connection to community*.

The school operated independently of the Community and the teachers expected the behaviour of the students to be poor. This frustrated the teachers, but without understanding of the local Community and its culture, the teachers' attempts at behaviour management were inappropriate. The teachers, who were all non-Indigenous, lacked understanding of Indigenous issues and the Indigenous students lacked understanding of the teachers' discipline systems.

Finally, the relationship between teacher-student rapport and behaviour control should not be missed. It indicated that behaviour could be ameliorated by improving teacher- student relationships and making the curriculum more relevant and motivating. Empowering the teachers instead of criticising or rescuing them would allow them to find their own unique behaviour management techniques.

Administrative systems

PLAN

My plan for this cycle was: (1) to learn about and understand the existing school administration systems; (2) to ensure that current administration practices were functioning effectively, and to change any practices that were not functioning effectively; and (3) to hold staff meetings to inform the relevant people of any changes.

Each school has administrative processes unique to its environment. Whilst there are generic requirements, individual schools have developed their own practices.

ACTION

(1) I scheduled a meeting with the last Principal prior to the commencement of the 2003 school year to talk about school administrative procedures.

(2) I met with the Indigenous administrative assistant to be shown the systems used in the school.

(3) I identified and changed administrative procedures that were inefficient and ineffective.

(4) I organised staff meetings to discuss the changes.

OBSERVATION

When I met with the outgoing Principal, she talked about security systems and accounting systems. We met at the school where she explained the high security needs and we surveyed the vandalism which had occurred over the holidays and the various processes in place to repair the damage. When I met the administrative assistant, she told me about accounting procedures and how we could streamline these and maintain accuracy and accountability, particularly where the school had grant funds or funds from the Parents and Citizens groups.

I found that there were inefficiency problems; the school had failed the last audit report, there were over-expenditure and inefficient practices in many areas. In particular, there were security problems and a surprisingly large amount of money spent on stationery, consumable materials and phone calls. An example of inefficiency was that the cleaners would often forget to alarm the office areas and the school would get a bill for \$25.00 for each alarm that was not turned on correctly.

I moved to reduce this inefficiency. For example, I looked up the processes for training cleaners to operate the security system and I checked out Education Queensland's expectations for ordering resources and accounting for budgets. I found that the problem with regard to overspending on stationery and consumables was that teachers and teacher aides were allowed to help themselves to materials in the storeroom without adequate recording of what was taken. There was only occasional recording and this was to ensure that more stationery and consumables were ordered. There was also no accountability for personal phone calls or ensuring that classrooms were left tidy and secure at the end of the day.

With the help of the administrative assistant new procedures were developed where I could monitor the use of resources and phone calls. These included requiring staff to request resources in writing and to provide a justification for needing them (including the

purposes for their use). I discussed my problems with regard to efficiency with the staff at a meeting and introduced a new system.

To make the teachers responsible for expenditure, I developed key learning area committees which met each fortnight to discuss the budget expenditures. The committees were not successful because teachers saw them as an extra pressure on their time and because the needs of the early years' teachers were different to the middle and senior school, so it was difficult to reach consensus for the expenditure of the funds.

The committees became a focus for teacher dissatisfaction; teachers would often comment that the amount allocated to each budget was insufficient and that the procedures were unfair. Typical comments were, "Does this fit in with the Queensland Teachers' Union rules?" and "Who does she think she is? Doesn't she know how hard we work at this school, and now we have to do it with less." The teachers found it difficult to justify resources they wanted to purchase and to develop equitable ways to distribute resources across the school.

REFLECTION

My meeting with the previous Principal reinforced my perception that there was a lack of *pride* in the students at the school as the level of vandalism was high. There was no real concern from the school personnel or the Community about the amount of money that had to be spent on repairs or equipment replacement.

By implementing and trying new processes and procedures in order to ensure accountability of resources, the staff began to understand that I expected them to be accountable for their actions and that Education Queensland did not "owe" them for being at Doongal State School. Many people were not happy about the restrictions, but it sent a message that I expected professionalism in all aspects of the school. I believe that *organisational ability* is an important component of leadership and that *high expectations* are crucial for staff as well as students.

This cycle also highlighted the need for effective *communication*. The key learning area committees did not succeed because I did not *trust* the staff enough to let them have the freedom to decide on resources. These committees gradually faded away. It was only when a teacher discovered a new resource or the current resources were getting low that the committees had a meeting. I was too controlling over the expenditure in the *Finding*

Out stage. I felt that there had been a lot of wasted resources and I wanted to change the school culture which had developed with regards to unaccountable expenditure. *Peer sharing* was not evident in this cycle due to a lack of *trust*.

Communication

PLAN

My plan during this cycle was to investigate the current systems of communication throughout the school and to refine these if necessary

ACTION

(1) I consulted with the whole staff at a staff meeting regarding their most preferred systems of communications.

(2) I tried to realistically implement these systems.

OBSERVATION

I found that the main form of communication seemed to be the “grapevine” which was not reliable. I decided to implement a better form.

The consultation process regarding better communication channels relied on only a few staff members who had previously experienced established communication structures within a school setting. There were not many staff members who contributed to the discussions, however there seemed to be considerable “buy in” when it was decided that a weekly memo would be distributed and a daybook implemented where everyone could contribute to ensure that communication was effective.

The staff at Doongal State School were inexperienced and few had spent much time in other schools. When the daybook was implemented there were occasions when it was used inappropriately to criticise a staff member publicly. For example, one teacher wrote, “If you choose to turn up hung-over to work, please remember to do your duty or swap with someone else”. I was concerned at this but I did not confront the people who wrote the comments in the daybook.

REFLECTION

Looking back on this cycle and the staff’s responses, it is evident that effective *communication* is important in a school like Doongal, that I did not do enough at this point to develop an effective system and reduce abuse of the system, and that

communication in a school is very important for the development of *trust* amongst the staff. The staff members who abused the daybook inhibited the development of trusting relationships in Doongal. Dealing with incidents of abuse more appropriately may have facilitated the quicker development of trusting relationships. Once again, this highlights the importance of *peer sharing* and that effective sharing relies on *trust*.

I should also have provided training on the use of the daybook and protocols around internal communication. This incident shows that *professional development* as a factor of change is important.

4.1.2 PERSONNEL

In this section, I report on three cycles. These came about because of my need to learn about the people I was working with. I started with the teachers (who were non-Indigenous) and then moved on to the teacher aides and administrative support staff (who were all Indigenous). I did this because I thought the people whose prime purpose was delivering the curriculum in the classroom were the most important and the ones I needed to be most effective each day. I believed that if the teachers were able to teach their classes then the school would operate smoothly.

Teaching staff and effective teaching and learning

In this early period (January-March 2003), there were 24 staff, 8 of whom were either new to the school, new to Indigenous teaching and learning, and/or new in terms of teaching experience (i.e., first years) (see Appendix B, Table B-1). No teacher was Indigenous.

PLAN

I had two main plans, namely, to find out about the staff within and outside the school; and to induct teachers new to teaching in an Indigenous Community in Indigenous social mores and Indigenous pedagogy issues.

ACTION

(1) I sought advice from the outgoing Principal regarding the teaching staff. I listened and took notes on her observations. I asked for this advice in order to begin to understand the group dynamics.

(2) I arranged social activities to get to know the teachers.

(3) I also observed teachers around the school.

(4) I enlisted the help of Education Queensland's Indigenous Education and Training Alliance (IETA) based in Cairns and now known as Indigenous Schooling Support Unit (ISSU). IETA ran a two-day workshop in Cairns for teachers new to Indigenous schools prior to the commencement of the school year.

OBSERVATION

When the outgoing Principal and I went for a walk around the school, I noticed the state the teachers had left their classrooms in at the end of the year. There was a large amount of rubbish in each room and it did not appear to me that any attempt had been made to tidy or clean up for the incoming teachers and pride in their classrooms was not evident to me.

One of the outgoing teachers had been the computer expert and there would be no one who would understand the system now that he was gone. This was very frustrating to teachers as there was little or no availability of computers in classrooms.

It was quite common for the teaching staff to socialise on the weekends. Mostly, I would not attend these functions as I believed that teachers needed some time to relax socially without the "boss" there. Occasionally, I would organise a social event at my own home which was located about 30 kilometres away on a cattle property. It was in these social situations that I would talk with the staff about their interests and talents.

During the social activities I attended, I discovered that there were four staff members who had musical talents. There were others who had expertise in the sporting arena and others who enjoyed art. These relaxed activities were a good opportunity to suggest that teachers share these talents in the school. The teachers were keen to do this and before long we had a rugby league team as well as a teacher and teacher aide touch football team. This was initiated by the teachers to include the teacher aides.

I did notice though that there were a few teachers who began to be over-burdened with extra-curricular activities.

There was a group of three teachers who began to emerge as a power group because they had a lot of interaction with me and were the main people I consulted to discuss issues as they arose.

Although I learnt about the people on my staff, there were people I didn't get to know as well as others. One teacher commented that she "...did not feel valued" by me. People who were more outgoing tended to get more attention than the quieter ones.

The IETA workshop provided me with the opportunity to meet the new teachers and talk to them about their expectations for the school year. During a break in the organised program, I asked a Cairns Elder who was at the workshop to take us out to some places of significance to Indigenous people so that it would give us a chance to bond as a group. I think most of the new teachers were not really aware of the situation we would be going into on the first day of school. The Cairns Elder took us to a site where a whole tribe of his ancestors were murdered by white settlers and he talked to us about how he felt, and the impact it had on his people. This was very powerful and I began to see a real empathy emerge from our group for Indigenous people.

As we talked about it after the visit, I learned that the new teachers were nervous about starting at Doongal but, at the same time, were full of enthusiasm as this was to be their first teaching appointment.

REFLECTION

At the time, I realised that there were people whose talents were not recognised and I did not mentor and nurture them as effectively as I could have. I tended to focus on those who had a similar philosophy of education to me. These people tended to grow under my leadership and develop the confidence to take risks in their teaching in order to improve, while the others did not and only stayed at the school for a short time. It seemed to me that the people who stayed for a short time often were not able to self reflect or admit that they did not have all the answers. I found them difficult to work with and would often engage in avoidance techniques rather than support.

It was also evident that the time we spent together at the IETA workshop enabled us to get to know each other and build rapport. Being able to share this experience brought us together as a group. This was not felt by the continuing teachers who were not present at the workshop.

Looking back at the teachers, I now see that there were about four teachers who were ingrained in an existing culture at the school where there were low expectations and teachers thought that teaching was about how many holidays, leave and transfer points

they were entitled to. The others had tried to make a difference but it all appeared too hard. There did not appear to be high staff morale amongst the existing teachers. This highlighted to me at the time that I needed to build *pride and self worth* in the teaching staff.

The experience of the new staff members and myself being escorted by the Cairns Elder to a sacred site began to build a cohesiveness amongst the group. I think that the teachers were shocked by the honesty of the speakers at the workshop and saddened by the atrocities explained by the Elder. There did appear to be a stronger bond between the teachers and myself as a result of this experience. This highlighted *communication* and *peer sharing* between these small groups. The Elder from the Cairns Community and the IETA workshop shows the influence of *external experts* on change. The workshops provided expert input on pedagogy and ESL learners which was the first time many of the teachers had been exposed to this.

Mentoring new teachers

PLAN

I planned to act as a mentor to new and inexperienced teachers through individual meetings, general supervision and group discussions.

ACTION

(1) I organised a meeting with each staff member to talk about their teaching programs and to find out from them what support they needed in terms of professional development and general supervision.

(2) I walked around the classrooms daily to check in on everyone. I would spend the first hour every day going into classes, talking to teachers and students about how they were and trying to find out if there were any problems which needed to be sorted out before the school day began. I used this time as a chance to coach and mentor new teachers regarding teaching strategies and observe them in their classrooms.

(3) At the end of each day, I offered staff a debrief session in the staff room so that we could all come and talk about the day and learn from and support each other.

OBSERVATION

There were four staff members who had been at the school for two or more years and due to the turnover rate of Principal, had found themselves in a position of power whenever a new Principal arrived as they had knowledge of the school and Community. Beginning teachers were not supported well in this stage as I was new also and trying to learn the job myself. There were no experienced teachers who would step up and act as a mentor to these new teachers.

The formal teacher supervision sessions (see Appendix F) highlighted a clear lack of ability of teachers to adequately plan for their classes. The curriculum plans they brought to these meetings were of a very poor standard. Teachers would say that it didn't matter what they planned as the students never finished the work. Three teachers told me during these sessions that "Planning is a waste of time. The students never get through their work or don't show up and I never get through a unit of work with them." Most teachers were planning day-to-day and many admitted that they were losing confidence and hope each day. I tried to be supportive of the teachers during these sessions and empathised with their plight to teach the students. Although I was not satisfied with the level of competency in planning, I did not challenge any of the teachers at this time. It was surprising to me also that some of the better planning was produced by the teachers whose classes displayed the poorest engagement of student learning.

The debriefing sessions at the end of the day were a chance for everyone to share their experiences and draw strength from each other. Four of the new teachers were finding the teaching very stressful and I am not sure that I really had enough left of myself to try to help them which made me increasingly frustrated. It was difficult for the new and inexperienced teachers to share with the continuing staff for fear of sounding like a failure. One experienced teacher would always talk about the obstacles of his day and make others feel more comfortable. This was a tremendous opportunity to build rapport with staff and develop staff cohesion. It also gave me the opportunity to find out what was going on in classes I could not get to and the needs of the teachers. Four teachers said, "I like the debriefing sessions because I feel like I am not so stupid and everyone is trying to cope with the same things." I did this as a strategy to build a cohesive team and let all teachers and teacher aides know that they were not the only person feeling like they were struggling.

REFLECTION

My plan to act as a mentor to staff was not followed through – firstly because I did not have any experience or solutions to the problems and, secondly, because I found it difficult to mentor and supervise at the same time. I was unable to provide the knowledge required to assist the teachers as I lacked the knowledge myself.

The supervision sessions provided me with the understanding that classroom academic *pedagogy* was more important than planning. It was clear that the teachers who were able to present interesting and engaging lessons which attracted students to attend classes were not necessarily the best-planned teachers. These teachers tended to utilise the local environment and take the time to talk with the local Community which also highlighted the importance of *community connection*.

The staff cohesion that was developed through the debriefing sessions and socialisation activities allowed the staff to develop relationships in order to support each other without fear of ridicule. This showed me the importance of the development of *peer sharing* and the importance of *time* for change.

Teaching support and administrative staff

The teacher support (teacher aides) and the administrative staff at Doongal were Indigenous. There were 9 teacher aides, comprising 4 females and 5 males (see Appendix B, Table B-1). There was 1 female administrative assistant. The role of the teacher aide was to support the teacher in the classroom to implement the teaching and learning program. Generally, though, teachers used them as behaviour managers.

PLAN

My perception of lack of engagement by the Indigenous staff (teacher aides and administrative assistant) influenced my plan during this cycle to ensure that they turned up at work on time and were effective within the classroom. I planned to: (1) communicate this expectation to the Indigenous staff through the administrative assistant; (2) take time to learn all that I could about the Indigenous staff; and (3) ensure that the Indigenous staff were included as important members of staff in all areas of the school.

ACTION

(1) I approached the administrative assistant to talk to the Indigenous staff about turning up to work on time, calling the office if they were not coming into work and making sure that they were helping out in the classrooms.

(2) I began investigating all I could about the Indigenous teacher aides and administrative assistant through observations and direct conversations.

(3) I made it clear through staff meetings and staff memos that it was an expectation that Indigenous staff attend and contribute to staff meetings.

OBSERVATION

The administrative assistant held a meeting with the Indigenous teacher support staff and passed on my message. I sat in this meeting but did not say very much at all; instead I preferred to observe the interaction. The Indigenous staff listened to the administrative assistant regarding punctuality and classroom effectiveness, but I noticed that they were not pleased to hear the message. They questioned the administrative assistant about their inconsistent pay and inconsistent hours of work. Some Indigenous staff had been deducted three hours of work per week due to student numbers and this had a significant impact on their pay. I did not witness much improvement in punctuality or performance as a result of this meeting.

My discussions with the outgoing Principal regarding the Indigenous staff did not paint a good picture; the good staff morale she had mentioned, I later learned, only referred to the non-Indigenous staff. I was not confident about interacting with the Indigenous staff at this point as I really did not understand them or the way I could utilise them in the school. The Indigenous staff usually did not socialise with the non-Indigenous teachers. During this Finding Out stage I found the Indigenous staff to be reserved and very rarely initiated conversation.

No Indigenous staff (teacher aides) showed up to the first staff meeting. I had not personally invited them because I had assumed that they would come along as it was a “staff” meeting. Upon investigation, I discovered that, traditionally, Indigenous staff were not included in these meetings. I then told all staff at the meeting that I expected the Indigenous teacher aides to attend a staff meeting every week because they were indeed staff and we needed their input. I asked teachers to pass this on to staff. This did not

occur as smoothly as I would have liked. Most Indigenous staff members attended the next staff meeting but did not really contribute to the meeting.

REFLECTION

During this stage, I perceived a lack of engagement by the Indigenous staff. Looking back, I believe that there were no high expectations of the indigenous staff. I later discovered the importance of fostering *Indigenous leadership* through empowering the Indigenous teacher aides, however during this stage this was not evident and led to a disconnected workforce. The lack of involvement of Indigenous staff contributed to the overall poor performance of the school. My *vision* was to include the Indigenous workers in the running of the school and I tried different methods to *communicate* this. Initially my efforts did not result in improved involvement.

My own lack of confidence and understanding of Indigenous staff led me to request the administrative assistant to run the meeting. I was fearful of the Indigenous staff due to my lack of understanding. I was uncertain about how they would react to my requests and expectations and as a result there was very little change during this stage in regard to the Indigenous staff. The lack of Indigenous teacher aide *empowerment* could have been a contributing factor to their disengagement.

I believe that the Indigenous staff did not have a clear understanding of their job description as this had never been explained to them. This was one of the reasons they were reluctant to contribute to the running of the school. There needed to be an induction program for the teacher aides so that they had a clearer understanding of their role. Just as the non-Indigenous teachers had received an induction into teaching Indigenous students, the Indigenous teacher aides needed an induction into working with non-Indigenous teachers and schooling. The use of *external experts* would have assisted in this process.

The Indigenous teacher aides were unsure of me as the leader because they had been let down by so many other non-Indigenous leaders in the past and were left in a state of confusion and wariness. I am not sure how this could be overcome quickly as I believe it takes time to build trusting relationships. This is another example of the importance of *trust*.

It also is now evident that reluctance to contribute was probably also due to the role that was assigned to teacher aides in previous years where they were subordinate to

teachers and had little input into decision making. This reflects the importance of developing *Indigenous leadership*.

4.1.3 INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY

In this section I report on five main cycles. These cycles are categorised as Indigenous students' lifestyles, Indigenous students' language, Community and behaviour management, Community support, and other government agencies.

Indigenous students' lifestyles

PLAN

My plan during this cycle was to find out about the backgrounds of the students through talking to people and experiencing the Community for myself. I also planned to expose myself to the language of the Community.

ACTION

(1) I asked the Indigenous teacher aides and the outgoing Principal many questions about which children lived where and what they would do in their time away from school and about effective discipline techniques.

(2) I also walked around the Community, observing what life was like for the students.

(3) I attempted to implement strategies I had used previously in my career.

OBSERVATION

The teacher aides told me that "The kids are wild, there is no discipline. They need a good floggin'." The teacher aides felt that the children were not given enough limits and many of the teacher aides were victims of crimes perpetrated by the children such as vandalism to their property. The outgoing Principal described the students as uncontrollable. She then went on to tell me a few scenarios from the previous term. She explained that many students went home for lunch at 11.00am and would not return. Academically she stated that the students were not achieving well but that was not the fault of the school because the Community didn't force them to come to school or care about education for the children. At the time I took on what she said and began to formulate in my own mind the behaviour management strategies I would use and I implemented a reflection room.

On my walks around the Community I saw a lifestyle for the children that was very different to the lifestyle my own children had. Children would sleep at different houses during the week and go to different relatives for food, depending on who had food in the fridge. It was not uncommon for students to go to the teachers' houses to ask for food. I learned that this was a community culture where the children were indeed raised by the entire village. The lifestyle was very free with few rules governing the movements of the students after school. I also noticed the language spoken in the Community was Aboriginal English.

On the first official school day, students headed to the assembly area. I was amazed at the amount of chaos. Students would not listen to instructions and were running around everywhere. No amount of shouting by teachers or teacher aides could do anything to settle the students down. I am not sure how we managed it but students eventually went to their classrooms and teachers were able to mark their rolls to see who had returned for 2003.

Teachers were in general unable to control the extreme behaviour exhibited in the classroom. They often felt relief when a student went home rather than continue their behaviour. Initially I tried to round these students up in the streets to get them to come back to school, but I found that this was usually a futile attempt as the students would run away.

The reflection room I implemented ended up with around 40 behaviour management issues to deal with every day. Most of these students would go home rather than face disciplinary action and teachers were reluctant to carry out a duty in this room.

REFLECTION

Looking back, I can see that my reactions to Doongal were a result of witnessing a lifestyle that was completely different to the lifestyle I experienced and had experienced as I grew up. My reflections now are not as negative as they were in 2003.

Reflecting on this, I now see how important was the time I spent in the Community observing the students out of school. I witnessed a very free life for many students: they could walk around the Community visiting various family members or playing with other children at the creek, local swimming pool or café. I was also able to listen to the language used by the students in their social context which was Aboriginal English.

I talked to the local people; they felt that the children were out of control, that many parents did not pay enough attention to what their children were doing. This insight, along with others, led me to see that getting to know the Community would assist me with the students, particularly in implementing effective behaviour management strategies and in purchasing appropriate resources and professional development (this was an area in which I felt I was not achieving well during this Stage 1). I also believed that this might help me to understand the Aboriginal English used by students and Community members.

Thus, the consultation with teacher aides can be seen as *expert input*; it gave the aides the opportunity to be the teachers and this *empowered* them in their roles. I came to believe that the Indigenous teacher aides were the experts on the children living in their Community. They came to believe that they had something important to offer; I believe they felt empowered through these conversations as I was valuing the input they offered. This process was also an example of *community connection* as it was the first time I had consulted with the Community about what was best for their children. It was also an example of how change comes from interaction.

Indigenous students' language

PLAN

I planned to learn from Education Queensland experts about Indigenous languages. I then planned to purchase appropriate resources.

ACTION

(1) I spent a lot of time talking to the Indigenous Education and Training Alliance (IETA) organisation based in Cairns in order to learn as much as I could about Indigenous students' language.

(2) New resources were purchased to assist teachers to meet the learning needs of the students and many teachers participated in professional development activities aimed at behaviour management and the teaching of language to Indigenous students.

OBSERVATION

Until this stage of my career, I previously had nothing to do with ESL (English as a Second Language) learners. I noticed that the students had difficulty understanding what I was saying to them and I had difficulty understanding the students. The teachers had

similar problems. Many students did not engage in the lessons in the classrooms and would misbehave or go home as a result.

The staff at IETA talked to me about ESL for Indigenous students and informed me of some programs to assist teachers such as “Walking, Talking, Texts” and “FELIX” which were culturally appropriate language programs that had proved successful for Indigenous students in Cairns. I purchased the programs for the school and teachers enjoyed the professional development but without a deep understanding of the students, new resources and strategies were not implemented with much success during the Finding Out stage. The professional development provided by IETA began to change the way teachers approached teaching in their unique classrooms. I heard teachers start to talk about the impact of ESL but there was a deeper understanding required.

REFLECTION

Looking back, I can see this, along with connecting with the Community and the Indigenous teacher aides, as one of the turning points in my principalship. I came to see the power of appropriate *pedagogy* in behaviour management and learning.

The teachers who used the ideas from IETA, and the new materials, began having more success in the classroom because they were taking learning styles into account. They were more aware of the language differences and therefore engaged the Indigenous teacher aides to interpret for them.

I spent many hours talking to the patient people at IETA who had already conducted much research and had a wealth of knowledge about how to teach Indigenous students effectively. I was continually inspired by the enthusiasm, expertise and passion of the people who worked there. As well as *classroom pedagogy*, this utilisation of new material showed the importance of utilising *external experts*.

I also found that once they engaged the students, teachers tended to have better morale, mental health and enthusiasm.

Community and behaviour management

PLAN

I planned to involve Community members and teacher aides in behaviour management because the students had witnessed a number of non-Indigenous Principals

at the school and displayed very little understanding or respect for the language and strategies I was using.

ACTION

(1) I met the local Council members at an induction program at the beginning of the school year. I involved the local Council in the management of serious incidents which occurred at the school.

(2) I asked the Indigenous teacher aides for an interpretation of what the children were saying as I found it difficult to understand Aboriginal English during this cycle. The language that I was using to discipline the students was often foreign to them also and I could see that they had difficulty understanding my language and reasoning.

OBSERVATION

A week-long induction program was my first introduction to Community members. The issue of Doongal State School having had six Principals in 2002 was raised on several occasions and I believe that there was little hope that I would last for a reasonable length of time, in fact the comment was made, "this is really a job for a male." I did not think that the Community had confidence that I would have success in the school and for the first few weeks I also had some doubts.

My behaviour management methods were not really effective as there was very little parental support. I could not use the threat of calling in a child's parent as I had in my previous role as Principal because they were difficult to find and would not come along to the school in most cases. Any disciplinary action, such as detention or restitution would not be followed through because the students would usually run away before completing these.

There was an incident in the playground during this stage when students started an all-in brawl. They were using golf clubs, whips, fence palings and anything they could find as weapons. After I broke up the fight I collected the weapons and decided that I had no choice but to take them to the Council so that it could help me deal with the problem. The Council Chairman was very supportive of the predicament I was in with the continuing violence at the school. He took the names of all the students involved and gave them to the local Justice Committee who met with each student and their parents/caregivers to let them know that weapons would not be tolerated at school and if

they continued with this behaviour there would be a consequence. This was very effective as very few weapons found their way into the school after this event.

REFLECTION

The language I used with the students was inappropriate for their understanding. Students often did not understand the words I would use to explain the inappropriateness of their actions. Utilising the Indigenous teacher aides to assist in the discipline process helped to clarify understanding for the students and inform the students' caregivers about the inappropriate behaviour at school. *Persistence* and *communication* were the two attributes I needed to employ at this time.

There was a lack of consistency in behaviour management across classes and between teachers. The language used by teachers was all different and confusing for students. What was acceptable for one teacher was not acceptable for another. To me, suspension was not an option for discipline as I wanted to see the students at school; there were teachers however who did not agree and became upset if I did not discipline through suspension for inappropriate behaviour. By establishing a clear behaviour management policy in consultation with the teachers, much of the disagreement could have been avoided. There was also a need for *high expectations* in behaviour management.

The communication I undertook with the Council led to community action that had a positive effect. This was strong support for *community connection* and *Indigenous leadership*, and also for seeing that the actions that bring change often involve *interactions* between different people; here, myself, the teacher aides, the Council, and the Justice Committee.

Community support

PLAN

I planned to get Community support through: (1) existing networks within the school; and (2) the local radio station.

ACTION

(1) One teacher, who was in his second year at Doongal, seemed to have good relationships with Community members. I asked him to talk to his contacts and get some strong Elders up to the school to assist with behaviour management.

(2) *I also went to the local radio station in Doongal to let the Community know about upcoming events and to introduce myself over the radio. In this interview, I requested local Community members to come along to the school to participate in Parents and Citizens meetings and other school events.*

OBSERVATION

There were different Elders for different family groups living in the Community and I was warned against getting the wrong Elder to discipline the wrong child as this would have unpleasant ramifications and would be offensive to some family groups.

On the rare occasion that a Community member would come to the school, I would try to talk to them about coming along and helping out. The behaviour of the students was so extreme, however, that they would witness chaotic scenes in the administration office area and politely decline their assistance. They would often say to the misbehaving student, "I will tell your mother/uncle/father about this!" I am not sure what the consequences were for the student or that the relative was informed at all, as the behaviour generally continued.

I knew that I needed to learn about the Community and who the best people were to begin building relationships with. The teacher with the best Community contacts was instrumental in introducing me to Community members and I began to build relationships with people, especially the Council Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

By utilising the local radio station I was able to reach a larger audience to let them know about the school. People commented that it was good for them to know what was going on.

REFLECTION

During this *Finding Out* stage, I observed a community at a loss about how to improve the behaviour of its youth. Members of the Community were reluctant to attend the school to sort out behaviour problems as they did not have any more strategies than the teachers had. We were all struggling to find a solution. I knew that I needed to engage the Community in the schooling process but I was not sure how to do this. Again this shows the importance of *community connection*. I was in a culture which was foreign to my own with no idea how to change things. Looking back, I showed *persistence* as I could have easily given up and gone back to New South Wales, or simply decided to get

through my two years as best I could without worrying about improving things at the school.

I was unsure about how to approach and interact with the Community members. The fear of breaking cultural protocols or saying something unintentionally offensive was constantly on my mind. I felt like a foreigner and did not know where to start. I felt like I was letting the Community down by not being able to provide the answers to improve education at Doongal State School. I had developed *empathy* with the Community. Utilising local media and visiting the Council showed the importance of *communication*.

Other government agencies

PLAN

During this stage, I planned to make links with the other government agencies operating within the Community, such as Queensland Health and the Police Service.

ACTION

I did not have to go out of my way to meet the local police – they would be regular attendees at the school as I would contact them frequently to intervene in school violence. Queensland Health was a little harder for me to link with. The Guidance Officer at the school made contact with them initially and planned a whole-of-government forum to meet once a month to discuss concerns.

OBSERVATION

The police officers were in two distinct groups – the non-Indigenous police and the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Police (QATSIP). The QATSIP police were generally the officers who attended the school to assist us to placate violence and remove students who were violent towards staff and other students. The regular attendance assisted me to begin to develop a relationship with them. However, there were occasions when we had an emergency and they would not attend. Staff cuts and non-attendance seemed to be the reason our ability to get them to the school declined during this Finding Out stage.

The whole-of-government meetings initially were an opportunity to talk about our concerns and implement strategies to support each other in a very difficult community. Queensland Health and Education Queensland were the main organisations represented. Although these meetings were scheduled on a regular basis, I can only recall attending on

three occasions due to them being cancelled because people were unavailable due to the workloads in their own workplaces.

REFLECTION

No preventative programs were implemented for violence. The police would attend the school as a reactive measure for violence. The incidents where I actually engaged the police declined over this stage because I became better at diffusing situations and because I began to accept that this violence was part of school life at Doongal State School.

There had been a history of non-collaboration between the school and the health service. Personality clashes had made it difficult to forge a good working relationship and each agency misunderstood the other in terms of procedures and protocols. The relationship began to heal but it never really became a good working relationship. I came to realise that lack of *communication* can influence change at this level. I continually tried to develop a relationship with these agencies even when meetings were consistently poorly attended.

4.1.4 MYSELF

In this section, I report on two main cycles. These cycles are categorised as reflecting and looking for alternatives.

Reflecting

PLAN

My plan was to reflect on my own leadership.

ACTION

Self reflection was something I tried to practise daily; I also developed relationships with key people within the school and Community in order to develop feedback loops to inform me about what was happening at the school.

I tried to act as an authority figure on Indigenous education. I relied heavily on one of the experienced staff members to give me insight into Indigenous issues and would often direct the less experienced staff members to this teacher for assistance.

OBSERVATION

Whilst I found leadership to be extremely rewarding, I was also challenged by the complexity and the many and varied facets and expectations of the position. Since my

previous administration experience had been in New South Wales, I found the acronyms and processes in Education Queensland difficult to grasp. When a teacher came to me for advice I could see some uncertainty in their expression when I gave them advice. Instead of admitting that I really didn't know the answer, I would continue to talk until they accepted what I was telling them.

During this stage I was confronted by teachers expecting me to have all the answers. Always providing answers for the staff made them less likely to consider their own solutions to problems. I found that staff members would come to my office to ask for direction for minor incidents. They would also question some of my behaviour management decisions and I would ensure that the staff members I built alliances with knew my reasoning and would relay this to any doubting personnel. I tended to micro-manage the teachers by wanting to be in control of all situations in the school. I would ask for collaboration on particular issues but often disregard the group decision and go with my own ideas anyway. There were many tears shed in my office by staff who were feeling that they just could not cope. I would try to console them by telling them that they were doing a good job and that we all were in a difficult situation but that we were doing the best we could. Not all staff could be convinced of this and two decided to leave the school.

I was unsure about the Indigenous staff. I was not sure if I could expect high standards from them and I was worried about offending them in my communication with them. It is for this reason that I elected to use other staff members to communicate with the Indigenous staff.

The behaviour of the students was a challenge every day. I was at a loss as to how to deal with the extreme behaviour and felt like a failure in my role as Principal. I lacked the ability to effectively communicate with the students due to the language and cultural barrier.

Key Community people would quite often let me know of their dissatisfaction with the education system during my walks around the Community. They felt that the education system had let down the Community because the academic levels of the students were so poor.

REFLECTION

During the Finding Out Stage, I knew that the way the school was operating could not be maintained for any length of time without serious health consequences for me and the staff. Many sleepless nights were spent worrying about the state of the school and debating whether I should get up and go the next day. I did always get up and go the next day because I could not bear the thought of the teachers being at the school having to cope with the day without any leadership. There was no one to take my place if I was away and I knew that, if I stayed home, I would spend the whole day worrying and feeling guilty about not being there for the staff. I often wondered if I had what it took to be the Principal of the school. I began to think that I did not have the experience to be an effective leader, but I kept going.

Looking back, I realise that I rarely allowed collaboration. I would ask a question and ask for staff input but I rarely agreed to any action that I had not already decided upon. This would have been frustrating for the staff. I began to learn that being a good leader was not about always coming up with the right answer, but instead building the capacity of the people around me to solve problems and come up with creative solutions to the problems. My role should be to facilitate the process and provide the necessary resources to put the actions into place. This style of leadership would have ensured ownership of the process and independence among the staff. This highlights the need for staff *empowerment* and *trust*.

Being a good leader means that, in all contexts, people will take notice of how you behave in social situations as well as in the workplace. It was a new experience for me to gain automatic respect by acquiring the Principal title and I needed to learn how to interact with all the staff from this status. I learnt that people will pay attention to the things that you pay attention to. For example, if you believe in a tidy playground, people will make sure they pay attention to this to gain your approval. There is a power relationship between a Principal and other staff members and no matter how strong the relationships were that I developed with the staff, the authority I had deterred others from challenging my decisions.

Looking for alternatives

PLAN

I planned to investigate how other Principals in Indigenous schools had achieved or were achieving success.

ACTION

(1) Even though I was reluctant to take time out of the school I knew I had to try to find some solutions to our situation. My first action was to admit to the staff that I did not have answers for Doongal. The second action was to find a successful Indigenous school.

(2) I carefully selected two teachers and two teacher aides who had emerged as leaders in the way they mentored and supported others, and took them to visit Cherbourg State School because I had heard through the District Office that Chris Sarra, the Principal, had implemented some strategies which had made a difference for those students. Cherbourg was also an Indigenous Community school that had similar issues to Doongal when Sarra arrived as Principal.

OBSERVATION

Every day I could see, in the teachers' faces, the effects the environment was having on them. It was too hard for some to make it to work for the whole week. When I admitted to the staff that I did not know how we were going to move forward, I think that this was frightening to them as I was supposed to be the leader with all the answers. I had heard that a staff member had made a comment at a party, "How can we follow if we don't know where she is going!" To me, this was a display of my personal strength to be able to admit that the problem was bigger than we could handle as a group and we needed to get some expert advice.

The excursion to Cherbourg was a very powerful tool in Doongal School's transformation. The group was amazed that the students at Cherbourg looked like the students at Doongal but they were calm and well behaved in the classrooms, classes were full, and students were engaged in learning. There were student-made posters around the classrooms stating "Cherbourg State School – Strong and Smart". Sarra would talk to the children about being "Strong and Smart". Whilst I was there, he had to discipline a student. He asked the student, "Is what you are doing strong and smart?" and the student replied, "No". Sarra replied, "At this school, we talk about being strong and smart, that

means that you have to act strong and smart. What do you have to do to be strong and smart?” and the student responded, “Sit down and do my work”.

The success of the Strong and Smart initiative was striking. This was the most prominent strategy we observed in our visit. The success of the initiative rested with whole-Community ownership of the concept to challenge the status quo of the Community. The Principal was the driving force behind the initiative; however it had been well received by not only the staff and students but also many Community members.

Sarra stated that he needed to challenge the concept of being an Indigenous person that the students had developed. For the Doongal Community the same challenge needed to be taken up.

Sarra talked with our group about having high expectations of the students and staff. He told us to “raise the bar”. He told me not to accept poor performance from the Indigenous teacher aides, and to expect them to be strong and smart, because the children would be modelling the behaviour of the teacher aides. This would not have been a good thing as the teacher aides were not displaying a good work ethic at this point.

Our group was able to witness a lesson in Values Education and “brain gym” activities. Both of these strategies worked to settle the students and give them some quiet time through meditation. Teachers and teacher aides were expected to draw on the students’ backgrounds to make schooling interesting and relevant for them.

The Indigenous teacher aides were not sitting around idle; instead, they were taking the class while the teacher worked with a small group of students or they were running small groups for the teacher. There was a sharing of power in the classroom. Students knew that the teacher aide was as important as the teacher. Teachers respected the cultural expertise the teacher aides brought to the class.

The excellent relationship Sarra had developed with Community members was also evident. Many Community Elders were observed around the school and in classrooms. An Elders’ room was established on the school site. Sarra spoke to me about the importance of good Community relationships and suggested that I get around and visit some people in the Community making sure that I took a respected Elder to introduce me around.

REFLECTION

At the time, I felt a bit like a failure. I expected that, as the Principal, I should have all the answers to lead this group of people to improve outcomes. I knew that they were all looking to me for this leadership and I was not sure I could provide it. I had credibility as a Principal of two years' previous experience but no credibility as a Principal in an Indigenous school.

However, looking back, it was the beginning of actions that appeared to have a positive effect on Doongal. It enabled me to see that we all had to work together. As Sarra (2005) wrote in his thesis:

We all had to challenge, understand, and ultimately reject the very negative perception of being Aboriginal. This alternative Aboriginal identity was to become the Strong and Smart Aboriginal identity. The next part of the challenge was for the school to become an environment that genuinely embraced a new Strong and Smart Aboriginal identity. Our school had to be more than just a place that developed a strong and smart identity – it had to be a place that embraced a strong and smart identity; a place where strong young Aboriginal children could be! (pp. 169-170)

As Angela03, although I was very inspired by what I saw at Cherbourg, I was still apprehensive about how successful I could be at Doongal. Sarra is an Indigenous male and I believed that this gave him a distinct advantage towards success. As a non-Indigenous female, I knew that I could implement some of the strategies Sarra had shared but I could not go about the implementation in the same way or with the same results. Thus, looking back as Angela09, although I would have to modify what I did, the trip to Cherbourg highlighted, in the strongest way, the need for external expert input.

In hindsight, by thinking that Sarra's Indigenous status made it easier for him to improve outcomes for students at Cherbourg State School, I was making an excuse for the poor performance of the students not only at Doongal but all Indigenous students and my staff. The majority of people who educate Indigenous students are non-Indigenous females, so I knew that I had to find a way to make it work.

Interestingly, my admission that I had no ideas about moving the school forward allowed the staff to understand that I was human and that we all needed to work as a team to ensure that the school did move forward – I was the accountable officer for most things

but we were all in it together. Through building relationships, the staff began to understand that we were all going to be in it together and we had to work together to be part of the solution. This is evidence for *empowerment*. The sharing of weakness displayed *humility*.

Investigating other models of success inspired me and energised me to improve outcomes at Doongal. It showed the ability to seek *opportunity in the face of adversity*. I was able to witness firsthand the effectiveness of the strategies implemented. It gave me a clear understanding of what our goals should look like and how we should move towards achieving the goals; this highlights the importance of *vision*. It also demonstrated to us that building *pride and self worth* in students was a catalyst for change.

4.2 STAGE 2: ADAPTING (APRIL-DECEMBER 2003)

This stage reports on approximately the next eight months (April to December 2003) of my occupancy as Principal of Doongal State School. The supporting evidence for the plans/purposes of this stage is presented in Appendices A-F.

4.2.1 SCHOOL

In this section, I report on three main cycles. These cycles are categorised as rebuilding after the fire, rebuilding staff morale, and continuing with the administration of the school.

Rebuilding after the fire

In March 2003, a fire destroyed a large part of the school. Four senior classes were without a classroom for a week before demountable classrooms were delivered to the school.

PLAN

My plan was to rebuild the school better than it was before the fire through a consultation process to ensure the right resources were purchased and to use this as a new start.

ACTION

(1) To rebuild the school I consulted with the government building contractors (QBuild), the District Office and the local Community. Community members were

consulted on the type of building design and facilities within a fixed budget which would best meet the needs of the school. A Community consultation committee was set up.

(2) I consulted with all staff who were asked to consider which resources should be purchased and an extensive consultation process was undertaken with book sellers and education experts.

(3) I ordered new teaching resources and stationery. This was an ideal time to make sure that new resources would be appropriate to the student learning styles and compatible with our new philosophy.

OBSERVATION

A lot of my time and energy was expended ordering resources, consulting on building plans, choosing colour schemes and stocktaking. This took a lot of my time away from the strategic leadership of the school. The Community consultation committee was consulted extensively regarding what it would like in the school rebuild. This committee consisted of five local Elders and seven Indigenous teacher aides. Their expectations were often unrealistic in terms of Education Queensland guidelines. One Elder, Mary, who was on the committee stated, "We want an Elders' room and a cultural room so that our kids can learn about culture." Building such a room was not in line with Education Queensland policies but we managed to designate an area of the school for this purpose.

The staff consultation process was quite extensive. Although there was a need to purchase new resources, most people wanted to purchase the "right" resources. Some teachers spent a lot of their own time researching various programs to best meet the students' needs. This process seemed to galvanise staff understanding of effective pedagogy as they had to think carefully about what they were teaching and the best resources to assist them in their teaching.

The ordering of new resources was an extensive process. It was difficult to navigate through the insurance claim process. The tyranny of distance was also very frustrating for all staff as orders were usually not delivered for three weeks after the order date. This meant that teaching had to be creative; there were no longer quick lessons provided through reproducible photocopies. Lessons became more investigative and hands-on in nature.

REFLECTION

The students were devastated about their school being burnt. It did not look like a nice place with burnt desks and books everywhere. There was a period when absenteeism was higher directly after the start of term two as students were fearful about coming to school. This is evidence that an unattractive environment does affect the *pride* students feel about their school.

The Indigenous teacher aides appeared to be angry at the arsonists who started the fire. They would often say that the school was “coming good” and then the fire destroyed it all. They were very supportive of the non-Indigenous teachers and would often spend their own time gathering and making resources to assist in the classroom. This was an opportunity for teachers to consider what valuable resources were and think about the value of what they were teaching. It gave teachers the chance to implement *effective pedagogy*.

Luckily, school support personnel and District Office personnel worked together to assist in the rebuilding process. It was an ideal time to implement new, refined administrative processes. This could have been more effective had I been more experienced in school administration myself. It was mainly a time of trial and error. I did not have a clear understanding about insurance claims or rebuilding a school. The end result was a new building and the most up-to-date resources for students. This time highlighted the need for *organisational ability*.

Overall, looking back, the fire was a positive for the school. We got a better building and teachers rallied around the need to rebuild, focusing on *pedagogy* and learning in a way they had seemed not to do before. The ability to seize *opportunity in adversity* seems in hindsight to be a necessary characteristic if activities that can possibly make the school better in terms of learning outcomes are to be implemented.

Rebuilding staff morale

PLAN

The fire had an impact on all the staff at Doongal State School. People were feeling upset about someone deliberately burning down their school. As a result, I planned to rebuild the morale of the staff.

ACTION

(1) To rebuild staff morale, I suggested that we look at the fire as a chance for a new beginning. I acknowledged my disappointment about the fire with the staff but also talked about the journey we had embarked on and how we could not let this change our focus.

(2) Senior guidance officers were called to the school to counsel staff about their loss. This was a good opportunity for them to talk about how they felt and try to focus on the future.

OBSERVATION

Just prior to the Easter break and the fire, I could feel a real sense of solidarity among the staff; they were keen to continue the momentum after the break with a few teachers planning visits to bookshops and libraries to access resources for their return. My suggestion to see the fire as a new beginning seemed to unite most staff members and it did become a chance for a new beginning. The Indigenous teacher aides became more involved in the lessons as they were needed to assist teachers with the hands-on activities and the increasing group work.

Teachers were often very resourceful in their attempts to continue to educate the students. Teachers would teach outside more often, taking the students to study the local waterways or various locations around the Community. There would often be classes taught underneath trees. Teachers needed to change their classroom pedagogy to accommodate new surroundings and found this to be successful. One teacher commented that more students attended when the class was held outdoors.

After sessions with the school Guidance Officer, two staff members admitted it was too stressful for them and they requested to be moved from Doongal State School. Teachers said they felt deflated because they had all been working hard to overcome the many obstacles and had invested a lot of their own time painting their classrooms to encourage pride and improving their own practice by purchasing their own resources to engage students. Many personal resources of teachers were lost in the fire.

REFLECTION

*My main focus was on mobilising the staff towards our goal to improve the academic outcomes and build *pride and self worth* of the students. The fire was not*

personally devastating for me, however it was for others. On reflection I could have been more *empathetic* towards those who were greatly affected. I did feel that I was being pulled in too many different directions and found it difficult at times to maintain my own focus.

The staff overall showed amazing resilience and their ability to work together to continue to improve outcomes for the students was commendable. This shows the need for *support*. I wanted to ensure the continued progression of the school and was determined that I was not going to let the fire stand in the way. *Persistence* was an important attribute to show at this time.

Involving Community Elders and Indigenous teacher aides in the rebuilding process assisted in building *Indigenous leadership* and *community connection* as their input was valued and acted upon which assisted in strengthening the relationship between myself and these Community Elders.

Continuing with the administration of the school

PLAN

Budgeting, assessment and reporting practices, timetabling and community events needed to be coordinated and implemented regardless of the impact of the fire. I planned to revise a number of school practices in order to improve school administration.

ACTION

(1) I revised school times, including lunch breaks. Timetabling plays a major part in the administration of a school. Playground duty rosters, teacher aide timetables and timetables for the use of shared resources needed to be attended to as part of the overall administration.

(2) I reviewed the food sold at the tuckshop as I did not believe that it was food conducive of a healthy diet for the students and the budgeting practices were poor. Simple processes were implemented to ensure accountability of expenditure and tighter controls were implemented on the ordering of food in the tuckshop as the tuckshop budget was \$12, 000.00 over spent.

(3) I reviewed the reporting process because I believed the reporting process at Doongal State School prior to 2003 was very difficult for parents to understand. In 2003 we implemented a portfolio assessment and reporting process. Student assessment work

samples were collected in a clear ring binder to showcase their work. The reports were based on the Queensland syllabus outcomes for each level and parents were informed about their child's progress against these expected stage levels.

(4) I implemented a Christmas concert to finish the year where student academic achievement was showcased. All students received a book with a message inside. Special prizes were awarded for attendance, academic achievement, and citizenship. All classes produced a drama or singing item for the show.

OBSERVATION

To combat lunchtime violence the staff collectively voted to reduce the lunchtime break from 45 minutes to 30 minutes and finish 15 minutes earlier at the end of the day. A consultation process was undertaken with the Queensland Teachers' Union to ensure that rules were followed and everyone had a chance to have an equal say in the process. There was only one person who did not vote for this change. The shorter lunch break meant that the students had less time to be bored and get themselves into fights. Teachers and teacher aides were also encouraged to monitor playground games for the students during the breaks. Teachers were reluctant to do this, however teacher aides took an active role in playing touch football with the students, establishing a dance troupe or running handball competitions.

The school tuckshop in 2003 sold pies, sausage rolls, soft drink, chips and lollies. It was run by a well-respected Elder. I needed to very diplomatically convince her that healthy food would be better for the children during the day. This idea was resisted due to the projected fall in takings as the students would choose to go to the local café rather than buy healthy food from the tuckshop. We gave it a go and salad rolls, fruit and fruit juice became great sellers. The change of menu at the tuckshop meant that students were no longer walking around the school drinking from Coke cans and eating food high in sugar and fat. The teacher aides promoted the healthy eating around the Community and the local hospital staff provided information to parents. This was the first project that Queensland Health had joined with the Doongal State School to promote during my time as Principal.

The assessment portfolios were well received by the parents. Sixteen parents came to the school to let me know how impressed they were with this reporting system. Firstly, I was able to monitor what was being taught and how concepts were being taught in the

classrooms. I was able to monitor the quality of the assessment processes and the progression each child was making. The children who showed limited progression were identified and intervention strategies implemented to assist them.

The students had never performed for the Community at a Christmas concert before and they were very nervous and restless; however, the Community supported the event very well, filling the community hall. The teachers were not keen to have a concert as they knew it would be a hard task to get the students to perform. They had never presented on parade or been asked to do oral presentations for the class. I insisted that teachers present an item at the concert and give the students plenty of prior practises to ensure that they were comfortable before the event. I firmly believed that this was a way we could improve our community relations.

REFLECTION

Reducing the lunchtime break worked well in controlling violence. The lunchtime activity sessions could have been more productive if I had given a better structure to the teaching staff about how this could work. I needed to provide them with a better system for resources to take out to the playground and clearer instructions about how they could implement lunchtime games. The general consensus was that teachers wanted a break from providing instruction to students and just wanted to supervise while on playground duty. My belief was that once the games were established, teachers could take on a more supervisory role; this may have required me taking on more playground duty time myself to model this idea. This highlights that a lack of *support* can result in initiatives failing in their implementation.

The nutritious food served in the tuckshop assisted students to concentrate better in class. Students' skin became visibly clearer and they looked generally healthier as a result. The relationship between Queensland Health and Doongal State School strengthened due to Queensland Health workers witnessing our desire and efforts to improve student health.

I expected teachers to be accountable for the teaching and learning that occurred in their classrooms. Student portfolios for assessment and reporting were integral to ensuring accountability as it was easy to identify poor classroom pedagogy through student performance and work samples. This further highlights the need for *high expectations*.

The Christmas concert showed the Community that the school was serious about improving the academic outcomes of students. I think that the parents and the Community were surprised that the students would perform. The performances were not of a very high quality compared to Christmas concerts I had witnessed in mainstream schools, but they would prove to be the building blocks for a much better performance in 2004.

4.2.2 PERSONNEL

In this section, I report on four main cycles. These cycles are categorised as working with teachers, developing Doongal's slogan, improving classroom pedagogy, and working with teacher aides and administrative assistants.

Working with teachers

PLAN

With the negative impact of the fire hanging over the school, I decided that I needed to mobilise teachers into action or we would all begin to wallow in our own self pity.

ACTION

(1) We had a staff meeting on the Monday afternoon of the week following our visit to Cherbourg, where we discussed what we had seen at Cherbourg and how we could adapt this to a Doongal context.

(2) I attempted to get staff consensus on the new direction. I spoke to the staff about believing that they could make a difference for students. I told them that this would be a great journey but that everyone would have to give 100%, that this was not a place to be if they were here for the transfer points or the pay incentives.

(3) The Indigenous Education and Training Alliance arranged for all teachers at various times throughout the rest of the year to go to Cairns to work-shadow teachers from another Community school and I facilitated this happening. This was another strategy to professionally develop the staff in effective teaching and learning of Indigenous students.

OBSERVATION

Each person who was going to come on the journey had to believe that they could make a difference for students and had to be prepared to work hard. They were no longer

able to blame the Community for poor student outcomes; instead they had to ask themselves the question, "What am I doing that is contributing to the underperformance of students in my class?" All staff were asked to consider if they were prepared to do this. Those who did not want to go on the journey were asked to make an appointment with me to discuss alternative employment options for the next transfer cycle.

The group that had been to Cherbourg arrived back in Doongal late on a Friday afternoon, so there was not an opportunity to immediately share our experiences with the staff. Over the weekend, however, the teachers and teacher aides who had gone to Cherbourg had met socially with most of the teachers and informed them about our experience. By Monday morning, there seemed to be an atmosphere of anticipation and energy about the direction we would take. The teachers who were enthused seemed to have a wonderful positive energy about them. Many asked if they too could go to Cherbourg to witness what we had. The passion of the teachers who did go was enough to excite many others.

This was a time of trial and error. As a staff, we continually reflected on our progress. The baseline data we took was a wonderful way to gauge our progress and celebrate successes. About 70% of the teaching staff embraced the changes while the other 30% were either openly or passively resistant. Quite often these people would contact their Queensland Teachers' Union representative to complain about the programs or expectations I was insisting upon at the school.

The teacher work-shadow program sponsored by IETA had mixed reactions from the teachers. It was interesting that the teachers who returned to Doongal enthused and excited to implement some of the strategies they had learned were the teachers I would describe as self-reflective and willing to learn. Comments made by two teachers were, "It was great to see teachers succeed and teach to student needs", and "The language teachers used clearly demonstrated the difference between school and home language."

The teachers who were not so enthusiastic were the ones who I believe thought that they were already great teachers and had little to learn. Towards the end of the program, I found I could often predict the teachers' responses to the program before they went. One of these teachers commented "Those teachers were not doing anything I am not doing."

REFLECTION

*At the time, the teachers who were resistant to the new strategies angered and confused me. It was difficult for me to understand why they would be resistant. Looking back as Angela09, I realised that the old way of school operation was very comfortable for these teachers as there was little accountability for student outcomes. These teachers were comfortable only getting three students back to class after lunch as it meant less work for them. This further highlights the need for *high expectations* of teachers and *persistence*.*

Instead of talking about the transfer process for these teachers, it may have been better to talk to them about why they were not comfortable with this new direction. As this was new for me too, I probably did not have the confidence or the correct language or expertise in Indigenous education to challenge these teachers' beliefs. This highlights the importance of *communication*.

Because the school was a very difficult place to work and the data suggested that the students were not learning very much, I believed that new strategies would energise and mobilise all the staff. This was my *vision*. However, vision without knowledge can be ineffective; I always had the vision to improve educational outcomes for students but lacked the strategies. The visit to Cherbourg had provided some strategies to see the vision materialise.

Developing Doongal's slogan

PLAN

I planned to implement a Strong and Smart style program into Doongal State School. I knew that for this to work I needed to include all key stakeholders in the decision-making process.

ACTION

(1) To hold a meeting with all key stakeholders. This meeting was attended by all teachers, 10 out of 13 teacher aides, and 3 local Council members including the Mayor, two Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander police and one community health worker.

(2) To develop a slogan unique to Doongal. The agenda was to decide if a Strong and Smart style program could work in Doongal, and what direction it might take if we

were to give it a go. It was at this meeting that the slogan “Proud and Deadly” was developed for our school.

(3) The first action as a result of the meeting was to talk to each class about the Cherbourg model and address issues of violence and attendance as these were the two major factors staff had identified as inhibiting them from doing their job.

OBSERVATION

One of the teachers talked to the group about what we had witnessed at Cherbourg. It was my intention not to lay blame with any of the sectors (staff, students, community) but to focus on how we could work together to improve education in Doongal. The Strong and Smart program was discussed and we all began to consider how this might work at Doongal. It was decided that Strong and Smart was a slogan that meant something to the school community at Cherbourg, but we needed to have our own unique slogan that would mean something to us at Doongal. The whole staff began talking about a slogan that could mean something to Doongal State School. The consensus was that Doongal State School would be Proud and Deadly.

It was important that everyone involved had a shared understanding about the concept and the theory behind this style of program. All stakeholders needed to be clear about these two questions: What does it mean when we talk about being “Proud”? What does it mean when we talk about being “Deadly”?

The group at the meeting decided that being “Proud” was about having pride in yourself and your community. It meant that our actions needed to show that, as a community, we could hold our heads high because we were doing the best we could to improve things. Being “Deadly” was about being excellent and able to achieve excellence, especially academically at school. The word “Deadly” was not a word that I had previously used to mean excellence; however it was a word that was commonly used in the Doongal community. I needed to make sure that “Deadly” was used to refer to deadly with your mind and not deadly with your fists as was common to this point.

Teachers were armed with a clear understanding of the direction a Proud and Deadly style program would take us. It was my priority every day to visit each classroom and talk to them about what I had seen in Cherbourg and about the Proud and Deadly

concept for Doongal. This included a non-violent school and the expectation that students would attend every day.

My interactions with the students indicated that they embraced the concept. They would talk about being Proud and Deadly, and would often question peer behaviour by asking them to be “Proud and Deadly” if they were not behaving in the classroom.

While there was understanding of the Proud and Deadly concept, there was not 100% buy-in from non-Indigenous teachers. Comments such as: “I don’t think that as a white person I should be talking to Indigenous students about having pride in their culture.”

REFLECTION

*It seemed to me, as Angela03, that there was clarity forming around the group understanding of “Proud and Deadly”. Now, as Angela09, I can see that the process around unpacking the concept was instrumental in the initial implementation as everyone had the same understanding of the meaning of the slogan and how it was to be implemented. This shows the importance of ensuring there is a *vision* for future action, but it also indicates that effective vision is a community thing which is owned by the group, not imposed from above. What happened around *Proud and Deadly* was the result of group effort and input from many people.*

Even after this clarity was reached, I still felt uncomfortable. I found it difficult to encourage pride when things were in such a hopeless state. It was no good expecting people to say, “I am proud”, if there was nothing to be proud about, or “I am deadly” if you can leave Year 7 barely being able to write your own name. I knew that the academic outcomes being achieved were among the lowest in the State and the students were finishing Year 7 at Doongal State School with academic levels only slightly better than students in Year 2 around the State. This was nothing to be proud about. There was also the magnitude of violence in our school every day and the evident lack of respect for teachers at the school. This further shows the importance of *building pride and self worth*.

The school yard looked like a dump and the Community was very disappointed with the outcomes of the school; they had been let down many times in the past by non-Indigenous institutions in their Communities. Therefore, these issues needed to be addressed before I felt that we could truly have something to be proud about, otherwise

the words *Proud and Deadly* were just that – words! This again shows the importance of *high expectations* and the importance of *vision* which now had strategies being put in place to achieve this.

The implementation of a *Strong and Smart* style program was ultimately successful because the whole school community was able to have ownership. The slogan *Proud and Deadly* meant something to the stakeholders. All stakeholders had collaborated on what it meant to them and for the school so that a united front was presented to the students and the rest of the community. Again, the importance of *building pride and self worth, peer sharing* and *community connection* are highlighted.

The expectations teachers had for student behaviour now began to change. When students had been inducted into the *Proud and Deadly* program teachers were able to channel their behaviour management strategies through this philosophy. The change in student behaviour was not instant. Those teachers who were supportive of the program and who were able to make good relationships with students had the greatest success with behaviour management (these results can be seen in Appendix C).

The non-Indigenous teachers who were not supportive of the *Proud and Deadly* program were concerned that the expectations would be more than they could deliver. I clearly stated that I expected them to show *Proud and Deadly* behaviour. Upon reflection, I wonder if their resistance was due to ignorance. The behaviours displayed by the students were often very challenging and would result in assaults on teachers. These teachers were often unable to consider other behaviour management strategies which could have prevented the assaults from occurring. There were occasions when teachers could not prevent assaults, especially if students were under the influence of chemicals from sniffing petrol or paint.

Improving classroom pedagogy

PLAN

I believed that if teachers could make their classrooms engaging for students through improved pedagogical practice then poor behaviour would decrease and academic outcomes would improve, so I planned to improve classroom pedagogy across the school.

ACTION

(1) *During Term 3 (July-September), I again enlisted the help of Education Queensland's Indigenous Education Training Alliance (IETA), whose role was professional development for teachers in Indigenous schools. Ernie Grant came to Doongal and implemented his Holistic Framework (Grant, 1998).*

(2) *To improve classroom pedagogy, teachers believed that they had to be able to control behaviour first. Each teacher was asked to complete a Proud and Deadly plan which would clearly map out the goals and strategies for each classroom. Teachers were asked to identify the main issues affecting learning in their classrooms. They were then required to turn these issues into a positive goal. Strategies they would use to meet these goals were documented as well as indicators which would let them know they had achieved their goals. Teachers would have a formal supervision meeting with me once a term to discuss the progress of their Proud and Deadly plans as well as their teaching and learning programs.*

(3) *Teachers were asked to take data on behaviour contributing to the issues as a benchmark. Part of the Proud and Deadly plans that teachers were writing for themselves needed to include a section on how to engage teacher aides. They needed to encourage and work towards teacher aides becoming co-teachers in the classroom. I suggested that they do this by encouraging them to work with small groups, then to plan for small groups. Teacher aides could then take whole-class lessons extending to a session.*

(4) *All staff were trained in Education in Human Values in August 2003. This was a program we had witnessed at Cherbourg State School. This experience assisted in creating a more cohesive staff and teachers who really did begin to display values openly within the workplace not only in dealing with students but in their day-to-day lives.*

OBSERVATION

When Ernie Grant, an Elder from Far North Queensland, came to talk to the Doongal staff about his Holistic Framework (Grant, 1998), the purpose was to get teachers to begin thinking differently about their delivery of curriculum. I asked the teachers to put aside a lot of what they had learned at university about the delivery of curriculum and start from what they had learned about the students and their needs. I

believed that, by implementing Grant's Holistic Framework, the student learning styles would begin to be catered for.

After the professional development in the Holistic Framework, I started to see the students being taught in a more culturally relevant way, that is, lessons related to experiences of the students. Teachers began building relationships with parents and Community members and asking their advice on curriculum issues. The concept of teaching students around time, place and relationships was a strategy totally foreign to the strategies taught at universities but, to the credit of the staff who embraced the concept, it really seemed to work.

To start the Proud and Deadly plans, teachers were asked to choose an area they considered was stopping them from effective teaching and learning in their classrooms (e.g., swearing, non-attendance, teasing other students). A program to reduce this, formed part of their Proud and Deadly plan (see Appendix C for examples). The teachers and their teacher aides recorded data to reflect the frequency of incidents in the classroom over a period of time to indicate the effectiveness of the strategies the teacher was implementing. Teachers nominated strategies to assist them to achieve their goals as well as strategies to work in partnership with the Indigenous teacher aide assigned to their class.

The Proud and Deadly plans in Appendix C and the subsequent classroom data collected and recorded in Appendix C, clearly indicate that the areas the teachers had chosen to focus on were primarily inappropriate behaviour. However, two classes focused on academic levels in books read and sight words. By expecting teachers to choose one area and focus their attention on baseline data and implementing strategies to improve the data, they were able to narrow their focus and concentrate on implementing specific strategies effectively as the results indicate.

The discussions I had with staff let them know that I expected to see effective pedagogy and student engagement in the classrooms whenever I walked past. I did not expect to see teacher aides reading magazines in the corner or chaos in the room. I expected to see meaningful activities for students. I did not expect that students would be playing mindless games or, as I noticed of a Year 7 class, playing on the playground equipment for over an hour in the first session of the day. I made it clear to the teachers

that the enormous task ahead of us would require 100% effort from everyone and that meant that there was no room for slackness.

Each week a value was taught across the school and an award given on parade for students demonstrating the value of the week. Students became focused and concentrated. This enabled the teachers to get on with the task of teaching and creating their classroom as a place of learning, fun, enjoyment and creativity instead of conflict, tension, stress, anxiety and headache. I noticed teachers were happier because their efficiency increased; the students achieved more in every aspect of their learning; and relationships with each other, between children and teachers and amongst teachers, became warm.

Teachers were told that if the attendance in their class was low then they needed to review their programs and think about the relationships they were developing with students. Teachers began paying home visits to students who were not attending. This helped teachers to build a relationship with the families and an understanding of the students. Teachers who did this guaranteed good attendance in their classes. The local Catholic priest phoned the Education Queensland District Office in December 2003 and made comment that the whole school had undertaken a transformation – the teachers were happy, the children were happy and actually attending school, and there was a sense of calm around the whole school.

REFLECTION

The implementation of the Holistic Framework and Education in Human Values program was instrumental in achieving quieter, more settled learning environments for the students. This again highlights the importance of *external expert input*. I was concerned that, for the past 200 years, non-Indigenous Australians had been imposing values on Indigenous Australians; however there seemed to be a consensus that the Community approved of the values being taught through this program. This shows that there was a significant *community connection* in place.

Trying to *raise expectations* and *improve pedagogy* was an extremely difficult task. Those staff members who were enthusiastic about the journey to improve outcomes for the students were a pleasure to work with. Those who did not want to be challenged to improve their practice, I found very difficult to deal with. I often felt personally attacked by these people and began avoiding them rather than trying to work through our differences of opinion and ideas. I decided to focus my attention instead on those who I

could see were trying to make a difference at the school. This created a division amongst the staff and those not willing to improve their practice made sure that they received a transfer at the end of the year. At the time, I thought it was a weakness that I was not confronting recalcitrant teachers; however, looking back, it may have been a precursor to the development of the facilitative style of interaction with staff that was the feature of the *Proud and Deadly* plans.

As Angela03, I felt that the classroom trials shown in Appendix C were a clear indicator of success. From observations, I felt that the teachers were changing the classroom to where learning outcomes were improving for the students. More than this, once teachers could clearly see that the strategies were working from their data, success continued to build.

As Angela09, my reflection is that I concur with Angela03. The *Proud and Deadly* plans enhanced the teachers' teaching and the students' learning, at least in terms of observation. I believe, as a strategy implementation, they were a pivotal exercise to change the course of the school and my principalship. Up until this point, I had been very controlling of the decisions made in the school and had a clear lack of *trust* in school personnel. The *Proud and Deadly* plans put the accountability back onto the teachers. Teachers were *empowered* to decide what they wanted to change in their own practice and what strategies they were going to use to achieve their own goals. My role was to support the teachers to achieve their goals, to *trust* them to make progress, rather than lead the school in an authoritarian manner.

The *Proud and Deadly* plans also had another outcome; they had to be planned and implemented in partnership with the teacher aides. Therefore, they were the start of developing *Indigenous leadership* in the school. This was followed up by the actions in the next cycle.

Many strategies were implemented to support the *Proud and Deadly* program. Some staff commented that there were too many changes all at once and too much professional development to really consolidate programs. Professional development consisted of an Education in Human Values program, Brain Gym activities, and literacy and numeracy programs tailored to Indigenous learners. I did not feel that we had a lot of time to implement change and many strategies relied on others for success.

I believed that the vast majority of Doongal teachers were driven to their profession by idealism. They had the desire to make a difference in a child's life and their fulfilment and professional satisfaction was related to achieving this objective. However, Doongal State School was perhaps one of the most difficult schools to work in. Much of teachers' energy was taken up in administering discipline, controlling the classroom and in behaviour management. Education in Human Values required the teachers to encourage the children to use a language of values, become positive thinking and problem solving with positive attitudes to learning. This highlights *vision, persistence and high expectations*.

Working with teacher aides and administrative assistants

PLAN

My plan was to utilise the teacher aides in the classrooms and establish a climate of equality between the non-Indigenous teachers and the Indigenous teacher aides.

ACTION

(1) Teacher aides were informed by me that they were part of the staff and that they were expected to attend staff meetings. This involved the school paying overtime hours so that they were not attending on a volunteer basis. I told them that they were expected to contribute to the decision-making in the school.

(2) The IETA-sponsored program allowed the teacher aides to visit and work-shadow teacher aides from another school where curriculum delivery and classroom pedagogy was working really well and good outcomes were being achieved. Doongal teacher aides went with their class teacher to the school for a week and were mentored by more experienced teacher aides. Teacher aides were also given the opportunity to participate in a Train the Maths Tutor course through the Queensland University of Technology (QUT).

OBSERVATION

At the staff meetings, I realised that the non-Indigenous teachers sat in the comfortable chairs around the tables and the Indigenous teacher aides either stood up or were allocated old student chairs around the outside of the room. The staff room was not big enough to fit the whole staff comfortably for a meeting. I would try to directly address teacher aides for input into school decision making, however they were usually reluctant

to comment. To combat this, I rearranged the staff room and purchased new chairs to accommodate everyone. The removal of a wall into the kitchen area ensured more space for the staff. The furniture was then physically arranged so that everyone had an equal place at the remaining tables.

The teacher aide work-shadow program was offered to all teacher aides; however about 40% did not take up the opportunity due to fear of flying in an aeroplane or their unwillingness to leave the Doongal Community for a week. Many teachers were reluctant to allow their teacher aide to be out of the classroom for other professional development programs. However, when the teacher aides returned to their classrooms, they had new skills and confidence to assist students. The feedback from the Indigenous teacher aides who participated in the work-shadow program was always positive. They made comments about how involved the teacher aides at the other school were in their classrooms.

I noticed that the teacher aides who had an equal power base in the classroom were more able to try and implement their new skills. Teacher aides who were treated as subordinates and not allowed an equal partnership within the classroom did not implement their new skills. Teacher aides in this situation often became disillusioned with their job and would drop off in attendance and eventually leave the school. I heard three teacher aides comment that “kids were too bad” and “teachers had no control.”

REFLECTION

My early observations of the Indigenous teacher aides in the classrooms led me to believe that they were lazy and uninterested in the job. However, upon reflection, I realise that there were a number of contributing factors to their behaviour in early 2003.

I do not think that the induction for teacher aides was any good – in fact there was no induction. They did not know what was expected of them. This was highlighted by the improvement observed upon the return of the Indigenous teacher aides who went to the IETA program to observe other teacher aides. I believe that because there was an imbalance of power in the classroom, the Indigenous teacher aides did not feel confident to show initiative in many situations. Teacher aides were also given the task of behaviour management or working with the more challenging students – they were not given any training for this and did not have any strategies, making them feel inadequate.

I believed there needed to be an equal power relationship in the classroom. I made it clear to teachers that even though they had a teaching certificate, the teacher aides were the experts on the children and the culture and needed to be treated as equal. Teachers needed to include teacher aides in the planning process and build up their confidence so that they could teach small groups of students enabling a team-teaching situation. It was great to see that, in some classrooms, the teacher aides would be teaching the less challenging students so that the teacher could focus on students who required additional support. The teachers who did not adopt this philosophy found it difficult to recruit and maintain a teacher aide in their classroom. Word would travel around the Community regarding the teachers not to work with. Therefore by *empowering Indigenous staff*, leadership capacity will grow and is a significant contributor to success in Indigenous education.

The program provided by QUT reinforced school activity with the teacher aides. It provided them with the skills that they could use and test in the classroom and gave them a sense that they were valued because they were given a significant opportunity for learning, again raising their self esteem.

4.2.3 INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY

In this section, I report on four main cycles. These cycles are categorised as working with students, implementing the *Proud and Deadly* program with students, marketing the *Proud and Deadly* program, and mobilising the Community into action.

Working with students

PLAN

The behaviour, attendance and academic outcomes achieved by the students were not acceptable to me as the Principal of Doongal State School. I planned to raise expectations of student behaviour in order to improve academic outcomes.

ACTION

(1) I made it clear to students that violence would not be tolerated at Doongal State School and that I would be involving the police, parents and Elders in incidents of violence within the school. I followed through with this.

(2) We cleaned up the school grounds in order to be proud of our environment.

(3) Students were given incentives on a class basis for improved attendance and celebrated excellent work on parade each week.

OBSERVATION

Many students felt unsafe in their classrooms but still had the innate desire to learn. Students who were sent to my office for poor behaviour were challenged about the appropriateness of their actions. Similar to the Cherbourg model, I would challenge the student by asking, "Is your behaviour showing that you are Proud and Deadly?" and then talking to the child about what it means to be Proud and Deadly. I would talk to them about the importance of coming to school and the importance an education would have in their future. For repeat offenders, or students who did not respond to this, I would always try to find a family member to come and talk to the student to reinforce this message. This approach was effective most of the time. I tried not to suspend students for poor behaviour as this would only put them further behind in their academic studies; instead I would try to implement consequences of natural justice or some type of restitution appropriate to the behaviour.

There were occasions where teachers were assaulted by students. The consequence for this was always suspension. Students would then also be referred to the local Justice Committee. I would then talk to teachers about what they could have done differently to avoid such a confrontation. Sometimes however, the teachers were powerless to avoid such attacks. I made it clear to students that violence towards teachers would not be tolerated at the school and this message was clearly relayed to parents and Community members through the newsletter and local radio station.

The state of the school grounds was not acceptable. More garbage bins were ordered and all staff were encouraged to be good role models and pick up rubbish instead of walking past it. Students, staff and I scrubbed off the graffiti around the school and reinforced that this vandalism was not acceptable. The school became a much cleaner place with a dramatic reduction in graffiti.

Every week on assembly teachers would publicise their unexplained absences. The class with the least unexplained absences was given a free ice block for each student. The winning class at the end of the year was given a day off for a trip to the city for lunch at a popular restaurant.

REFLECTION

Looking back, the central action on behaviour and attendance, along with the *Proud and Deadly* plans implemented by teachers in their classrooms (see Appendix C), began to change student behaviour. In hindsight, the strategy of focusing specifically on one behaviour at a time was effective; student behaviour improved. It seems that, for Doongal, the clarity of vision that comes from focusing on one thing, the sharing of the class data, and the celebrations of success offered by the teachers, were effective. The graphs in Appendix C indicate that during 2003 inappropriate behaviour incidents reduced and desired academic outcomes increased.

The impression is that the students ultimately wanted to please their teachers, especially those teachers who were able to develop good relationships with their students. Surprisingly I noticed that, when a specific behaviour or academic achievement was the focus for a class, the incidents of misbehaviour overall decreased and teachers became happier in their classrooms resulting in better student attendance and engagement.

By cleaning up the school grounds, students began to see that they were being supported by the teachers and myself in the journey to be *Proud and Deadly*. It was evident to them that the teachers were proud to be in the Community and willing to support them in their education.

The incentive schemes worked well and over time the number of students eligible to attend the end of term excursions increased. I would have liked intrinsic motivation to effect change but the external motivation seemed to work well. The visual graphs were a weekly reminder of performance and were evidence of *success*. This seems to indicate that making staff and students complicit in activities leads to improved learning outcomes and should be an important part of any facilitative make-your-own-plans strategy for enhancing schools like Doongal.

Implementing the Proud and Deadly program with the students

PLAN

Most teachers had embraced the concept of a Proud and Deadly program. For it to be successful, I needed to plan to implement the program with the students.

ACTION

(1) Teachers and teacher aides were instructed to use the language of *Proud and Deadly* when talking to the students and ensure that there were formal lessons on the philosophy of the program so that no child was unclear about what the expectations were around striving to behave in a *Proud and Deadly* way.

(2) We had some posters made that were of a very high quality showing children smiling and engaging in school activities. These posters were professionally produced in order to demonstrate the value of the program and as a marketing strategy.

(3) The school song was composed in conjunction with the staff and students. Students were asked to think of words or phrases that could be turned into a song to reflect what it means to be *Proud and Deadly*. A very talented teacher added the music which was an easy tune for the students to sing (see Appendix F).

OBSERVATION

After hearing the teachers talking about the program, students had decided that they really did want to be *Proud and Deadly*. I would often hear them say to others in the class who were misbehaving, “C’mon that is not being *Proud and Deadly*.” I would then see the misbehaving student begin to do the right thing. This behaviour was rewarded at a school weekly assembly and more formally at the Christmas concert awards night.

The posters were sought after by the Community and displayed in most Community buildings. I never witnessed any of these posters being defaced.

Every day in their classes and on parade once a week, the students would sing their song about being *Proud and Deadly* with passion and belief. Elders would come along and watch proudly as their children demonstrated hope for their future. I would often observe tears from regulars and guests.

REFLECTION

Most students took on the language of being *Proud and Deadly*. The power of the music and the combination of the teachers, teacher aides and the Community in general backing the program and working together ensured that students embraced the program.

Although the students could all talk about being *Proud and Deadly*, there was not a miraculous change in all behaviour. This shows that *time* is important for change to occur. Some of the students with more challenging behaviours would make a mockery of the

words and verbalise that they rejected this philosophy and would prefer to behave in the same manner they always had.

Although I believed that the program was implemented with some success, I was concerned that students could say, “I am Proud and I am Deadly”, but the academic levels really didn’t give them anything to be *Proud and Deadly* about. I was always a little concerned that the students might go off to another school full of hope and pride and then quickly realise that they were at the bottom of the class and their pride in themselves would suffer. Despite this I did not have any other strategies to call upon and *persisted* with this program.

However, in all the school did and required of teachers in their *Proud and Deadly* plans, we tried to follow up the *Proud and Deadly* approach in normal lessons. The idea was that teachers would stress that attendance, engagement and learning were proud and deadly. This was to try to change the students’ personal identity – to one where they saw proud and deadly as working hard at school and learning.

Marketing the Proud and Deadly program

PLAN

I planned to market the Proud and Deadly program effectively to the Community because I believed that the change required could not be achieved if the school worked in isolation from the Community.

ACTION

(1) I invited the Community to a meeting that was held in Guilford with all the school staff. At this meeting, I asked if I could speak openly and honestly about the school and the issues as I saw them. I also talked about the success of the school in Cherbourg and my belief that a similar program in Doongal could have the same success.

(2) In terms of the parents of the students at Doongal State School, I enlisted the help of the teacher aides to spread the word about the Proud and Deadly program. I asked them to drop in and see parents on their way home from work and talk about the hopes we had for the students as a result of the program.

OBSERVATION

The Community members who attended the meeting were enthusiastic about the program and stated that they would reinforce this program around the Community. They displayed our posters in prominent buildings around the Community and began to adopt the language of Proud and Deadly.

The Indigenous teacher aides were the main drivers in marketing the program to the parents, particularly the long-term teacher aides. They had faith that things were changing and were genuinely excited about the future. This was evident through better attendance at work and their willingness to take on extra duties.

REFLECTION

I think that because the program had been successful in Cherbourg, people were already prepared to give it a go. I think that they knew that the school was in a bad place at that time and needed something to re-vitalise it and make it a safe place for students. Marketing a program such as this was made easier given that Cherbourg had already been a success. Most of the Community members had heard about the success at Cherbourg and were prepared to have a go at Doongal. Again *external expert input* was critical.

The Indigenous teacher aides were integral to the promotion of the program. By empowering them to be a part of the changes, they were more willing to go out of their way to talk positively about the school. *Indigenous leadership* was also a factor in the promotional success because the Indigenous teacher aides were expected to take on leadership roles around the school and understood that they were equal partners in the program.

Mobilising the Community into action

PLAN

After my visit to Cherbourg, I planned to visit parents in their homes to introduce myself and build a relationship with them.

ACTION

(1) In April 2003, I went to the homes of 40 students to talk with their parents about their expectations for Doongal State School. Remembering Sarra's words, I enlisted the help of a respected Community Elder, Jim. Jim took me to students' homes so that I could introduce myself to parents and talk to them about my plans for the school.

(2) *At these meetings I would try to get parents to agree to come to the school to assist with cultural studies and discipline.*

(3) *I also asked parents to get students back to school who were roaming the streets during school hours.*

OBSERVATION

The feedback from these meetings was extremely positive. Parents passed on the word that I would make a difference for their children at Doongal and that they were prepared to assist where they could. I would go and have a cup of tea with the parents and talk about the school expectations and ask them about their own aspirations and expectations for their children. At these visits, parents would tell me that they wanted a good education for their children so that they could get a good job and earn money to give them a choice about where they would live. They would also say that they did not think that their children were as smart as “white” kids because they could not learn to read and write as well as other children they came into contact with. I asked the following questions of parents: What do you think about Doongal State School? What do you think needs to change? How can you as a parent help?

The responses received were surprising because I realised that the parents of Doongal State School had the same aspirations for their children as I had for my own children. Of the 40 parents interviewed, 22 said that the school was a Community school which meant that the children did not do the same work as the children from Guilford. They said that their kids were not as smart as the white kids. Parents wanted homework and better behaviour management. They all knew that it was not a place where an excellent education could be obtained.

Four of these parents indicated that they would come and help out in classrooms and teach some local Aboriginal studies while six others said that they would like to work as a teacher’s aide in the classroom. Three parents said they would not help out at the school because the children were “too bad”.

During these interviews, I told parents that I could improve things at the school but would need their support. This meant that if I needed them to come and collect their children for poor behaviour that they would be there to support me in improving the discipline and thus the learning at the school. I told them that they could no longer blame

the “white teachers”, but they needed to work with them to give the children the best chance to achieve academically and therefore in the “white” world. Parents also agreed to be more diligent in getting students to school each day and sending those children back to school who were seen roaming the streets during school hours.

REFLECTION

I expended great amounts of energy being accepted by the Community and gaining their commitment to collaboration, and better outcomes for students. However, there was a long way to go. Doongal had a history of “do-gooders” coming and going, usually to the detriment of the Community.

Visiting the homes of parents was an extremely powerful strategy. The talk around the Community was very positive about me and what I was planning to do for the school. This shows the importance of *communication* and *community connection*. One positive outcome from this strategy was the verbal support I received from parents if I needed their assistance to manage their child’s behaviour. Many Community members and parents agreed to assist this way, and for a while there was great support. However, slowly these people were harder to find when called upon. I think that quite often they did not have the skills themselves to deal with the students in a school setting. The desire was there but the skills and knowledge were lacking.

Surprisingly, a number of parents said that they would like to put their name down on the list to be considered as a teacher aide or to teach Indigenous language or cultural studies. There were others who said that the problem was too big and they didn’t feel that there was anything they could do.

By visiting parents, I showed that I was prepared to work with them to improve the education for their children. The respect gained by going to them instead of expecting parents to come to the school was a powerful strategy. I believe parents then felt more comfortable coming to the school as there was a familiarity with me and they felt that I was approachable. They knew from the start that I wanted to improve the school and that I would be lifting the expectations of the students and staff. At these visits I was able to get a personal commitment of support from the parents I visited.

The promises of assisting with language or helping out in the classroom were rarely carried out, but I felt that there was support to improve the discipline at the school. When

I would need to take a child home because of their inappropriate behaviour, caregivers were generally supportive and would discipline their child. This shows the development of *community connection*.

The term “community support” looked different for Doongal State School. When the school needed the Community to rally around, support was there. However, there were no volunteer helpers in the school and it was difficult to get parents along to meetings – in fact, all participants in Community meetings were teacher aides who worked at the school. Occasionally a Councillor would come along.

It may have been more effective to run community education programs to assist parents with parenting or literacy and numeracy. There needed to be a place at the school, such as a community room, where people could feel comfortable to come and sit for a coffee and a chat. Getting out and meeting people was an excellent strategy to create a feeling of confidence among the Community but I really could have gone a step further and made sure the school was an inviting place for Community members. This highlights the effect of *empowerment*.

4.2.4 MYSELF

In this section, I report on two main cycles. These cycles are categorised as meeting my own expectations and changing my leadership style.

Meeting my own expectations

PLAN

My plan was to lead by example. I planned to demonstrate that I was a Proud and Deadly Principal at Doongal State School.

ACTION

(1) I needed to ensure that I had high expectations of myself and the way that I acted and confronted situations at the school and in the Community.

(2) I tried to be consistent and fair in my behaviour management decisions and supportive to the staff members.

(3) I consistently used the language of Proud and Deadly when dealing with school personnel and community members.

(4) I made sure that the way I presented myself in public was reflective of the importance I placed on my position as Principal of Doongal State School and I expected the same from the staff.

OBSERVATION

Every time I addressed the staff or people from the Community, I tried to come across as being passionate about what we were doing at the school. This seemed to inspire people to want to learn more about the Proud and Deadly program and resulted in additional support for the school.

In terms of consistency, it was difficult to be consistent all the time. I had an understanding of student backgrounds and would often give behavioural consequences based on background knowledge rather than the behaviour management structure within the school program which I had been part of establishing. One teacher commented that her job would have been easier if I had been consistent; however this was only the opinion of one teacher.

The language that I used with the staff and students needed to reflect my expectations and also ensure that I was supportive and nurturing to all. I noticed that the slogan “Proud and Deadly” was beginning to be used extensively across the Community.

Some teachers did not present for work appropriately dressed. I would talk to teachers individually if I felt that their attire was not acceptable. Some teachers took offence to this but most teachers addressed the issue. Teacher dress did improve as staff morale improved.

REFLECTION

At the time, as Angela03, I felt that the Community needed to see that I was committed and passionate about where I was taking the school, and I felt I was successful in this as I felt that the Community was supportive during this time. I also believed that by keeping my personal standards high, I was able to convince people that I really was serious about bringing about change to the school. This time was one of renewed energy for me; staff morale was elevated in general and the group energy was beginning to gain momentum to bring about the change we all desired.

Looking back as Angela09, I still feel that this was a period in which Doongal improved in terms of student outcomes. There was support from the Community; many

Community members and parents offered to assist the school. However, slowly these people were harder to find when called upon. I think that quite often they did not have the skills themselves to deal with the students in a school setting. The desire was there but the skills and knowledge were lacking. However, I do not think that this reduces the importance of *community connections* in a school like Doongal; it just means that *persistence* is also important.

As Principal, I did have a leadership role at Doongal and in this Stage 2, I decided with the way I operated to build it on *trust*. For this approach, I had both supporters and detractors, usually related to the effect of the decisions I made on them.

Changing my leadership style

PLAN

My plan was to evaluate my leadership style and make changes to improve my effectiveness as a leader.

ACTION

(1) Continue to strive to achieve my vision to improve the educational outcomes for the students.

(2) Reflect on my leadership attributes and make some changes.

OBSERVATION

The promotion of the Proud and Deadly program through the posters, school song, radio communication and general usage of the phrase was designed to change the school culture and, in turn, lead to a larger focus on student academic outcomes.

In Stage 1, my leadership style was top-down; I was the chief decision maker. It was all that I knew as my previous Principalship had been in a school with few other staff members requiring me to be the sole leader. As is evident in my descriptions of Stage 1, this was not successful at Doongal and I was left to admit I had no answers.

In Stage 2, I changed to a more facilitative approach as I felt that, due to staff numbers, Doongal staff needed to develop leadership roles themselves. Thus, teams were established and a flatter leadership structure developed. The teams were given more autonomy and decision-making power as well as trust that their decisions would work.

My impression was that once teams were established and they could see that they had a specific role to play in the school, progress began to be made and the vision of enhanced learning outcomes began to become real.

REFLECTION

During this stage there were changes within the school and changes within myself. During the first stage I had a vision but limited strategies to achieve the vision. After my visit to Cherbourg I was armed with strategies and a conviction that things could change.

My relationship with the staff also changed. I learnt to *trust* and *empower* the staff rather than lead in an authoritarian manner. I began to trust that they had solutions to the problems and could work out their own place in the success or failure of Doongal. This occurred as a result of my admission that I really did not know how to improve the situation on my own.

The support I offered to the staff changed from “just in case” support to “just in time” support. My support was offered to assist staff to achieve their own goals as they identified in their *Proud and Deadly* plans. It was more a “hands off” approach to empower staff to make their own mistakes and decisions, but to guide them in the direction I was committed to taking.

My relationship and the way I worked with the Community also changed. During the first stage I tried to work with the Community through the established structures such as the local Council, the police and health workers. During this stage I began building relationships at the “grass roots” level by going to the homes of the students and making personal contact with parents.

4.3 STAGE 3: RE-IMPLEMENTING (JANUARY-AUGUST 2004)

This stage reports on approximately the next eight months (January to August 2004) of my occupancy as Principal of Doongal State School. The supporting evidence for the plans/purposes of Stage 3 is presented in Stage 1 *Finding Out* and Stage 2 *Adapting*.

4.3.1 SCHOOL

In this section, I report on two main cycles. These cycles are categorised as continuing to monitor school data and continuing with the administration of the school.

Continuing to monitor school data

PLAN

The improvement in student academic outcomes was positive in 2003. I planned to build upon this success and continue the positive data trend.

ACTION

(1) Teachers were asked to continue to collect baseline data for the New Year. In particular, focus was on attendance and reading levels.

(2) New students and their families were interviewed prior to enrolment to clearly articulate behaviour expectations.

OBSERVATION

The whole school community was encouraged to continue with the improvements we had seen during 2003. New students to the school were also inducted into the Proud and Deadly program. Each new enrolling family would have a meeting with me where I would talk about the school and what we offered in terms of curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Behaviour management systems were discussed and I made sure that there was a contact number or person should the child need disciplinary action involving parent intervention.

Staff and students were encouraged to keep expectations high (see Appendices A and C), where student behaviour and academic achievement were monitored through the collection of data articulated in Proud and Deadly plans.

The behaviour management policy was adhered to and followed through in the early part of the year to establish expectations. Students knew the consequences of their actions and behaviour began to improve. Students who continually displayed challenging behaviour had their parents or carer called and in some cases the parents/carers moved them to another school as they did not wish to continually come and assist with the behaviour management of the child.

Taking account of teachers' data and observations, it became evident that there was a direct relationship between expectations and student behaviour. Student behaviour appeared to improve more significantly in classes where teacher expectations were high.

The data taken by teachers changed from being behaviourally-based in 2003 to academically-based in 2004. The academic data improved across the entire school and there was a week in June 2004 where there was not one major behaviour management issue. The school was calm and teaching staff more settled and confident in their ability to make a difference for the students.

REFLECTION

At the time, I felt that things improved in terms of student outcomes with respect to attendance, behaviour and learning. The feedback from classrooms was good, morale was high and teachers and teacher aides thought that progress was being made. I began to celebrate this feeling with the staff, although I also reminded them that there was still a long way to go. And, at times, I wondered if there was a significant improvement or if we had become used to the behaviour and tolerated more; turning a blind eye to inappropriate behaviour.

Now, as Angela09, I still feel that there was progress in behaviour and learning in Stage 3, particularly after looking at data from teachers and tests. I understand the feeling that observations could reflect greater tolerance instead of progress, but I believe there was progress (particularly by June). On reflection, I feel that this was due to improved *pedagogy* and teachers becoming more familiar with, and building *better relationships* with, their students. The school became an easier place in which to work and staff morale was good. I believe that the way the school continually focussed on the *successes* achieved was important, it made everybody complicit in this success.

I also feel that the enrolment interviews were valuable as students and carers were clearly told about expectations. This is a strategy which should have been implemented from the beginning of 2003 as it was a chance to meet parents and begin to develop a working relationship with them. I was always careful to let parents know what we would do for their child as well as the responsibility their child had at school. This further reinforces the importance of *communication* and *high expectations*.

However, there was still more improvement needed. New staff continued to complain about the difficulties they faced.

Continuing with the administration of the school

PLAN

Although, behaviour and learning had become central to the school planning, I tried to ensure that the school was administered in a way that would support the endeavours in behaviour and learning. I therefore planned to redecorate the front office and the staffroom so that the entrance was more welcoming and the staffroom more accommodating for all staff.

ACTION

(1) I remodelled the Administration area so that the school looked inviting.

(2) I encouraged staff and students to treat every person who entered the school with dignity and respect. I communicated this to the staff regularly at staff meetings.

(2) I remodelled the staffroom so that it became large enough to accommodate all of the staff.

OBSERVATION

The front office area looked very untidy. The waiting area had old chairs that were very unappealing. There was a book stand with old pamphlets falling out everywhere and the area was very cluttered and dirty.

I decided that the administration area of the school was in need of a facelift and enlisted the help of a builder to help me re-model. I found some old photo albums in an office drawer and had these on display for parents and the Community to look at when they came to the school. The photos were very popular. Community members and parents would come to the school specifically to look at the photographs. Students who were sent to the office for misbehaviour would also calm down very quickly once they started looking at the photos. The school entrance was now more inviting for Community members and visitors.

The staffroom was too small for the number of staff at the school and it also had old furniture. The toilets often were not properly cleaned and the walls dirty. Once the work was completed and new furniture had been purchased, I noticed that more people would come to the staffroom to eat lunch or have a chat. Everyone was comfortably accommodated during staff meetings.

REFLECTION

Looking back, there was a lot of serendipity in what happened. For instance, having the photos on display was a strategy that worked by accident. I did not understand the impact that this would have. The students, Indigenous staff and Community members felt more comfortable coming to the school once the photos were displayed.

Similarly, re-modelling the administration area and the staffroom made people feel more comfortable about utilising these areas. There was more room in the staffroom to accommodate the whole staff and the area looked cleaner, tidier and more inviting.

The effect of the improved administration building and the displaying of photos showed that it is important to ensure that space supports the major thrusts of change; that is, that buildings support the main imperatives of the change, which in this Stage was building *pride*, improving *morale* and calming *behaviour*.

4.3.2 PERSONNEL

In this section, I report on four main cycles. These cycles are categorised as continuing to implement the *Proud and Deadly* program, building the capacity of the Indigenous teacher aides, supporting teachers to improve classroom pedagogy, and celebrating success.

Continuing to implement the Proud and Deadly program

PLAN

Due to the success of the Proud and Deadly program in 2003, I planned to continue to implement the program in 2004. This would require inducting the new staff into the philosophy of the program.

ACTION

At the beginning of 2004, during the two pupil-free days, as a whole staff we evaluated the strategies implemented in 2003. There were six new teaching staff and one new teacher aide (see Table B-3, Appendix B). The two-day evaluation served three distinct purposes:

- (1) To induct the new staff into the Proud and Deadly program;*
- (2) To decide which strategies were worth continuing; and*
- (3) To develop a shared vision and understanding of our goals for 2004.*

OBSERVATION

To induct the new staff into the Proud and Deadly program, existing staff members were asked to give a short presentation about their own Proud and Deadly journey so far. We collaboratively discussed what Proud and Deadly meant to us as a school staff and documented this for the new staff.

An existing staff member, Paul, gave an account of Doongal State School in 2003 and explained the impact that Proud and Deadly had on the school. The general consensus amongst the staff was that the Proud and Deadly program had been invaluable to the successful changes throughout 2003 with one teacher stating “Proud and Deadly has been the best thing for the kids. It really defines how we expect everyone to be”. The existing teachers presented work samples to show how much students had progressed during 2003 and talked about what the school had been like prior to the implementation of Proud and Deadly.

It was stressed to the new teachers that Doongal had developed a shared vision around Proud and Deadly and that this meant a lot to the old teachers. It was made very clear that the expectation was that, if you were a staff member at Doongal State School, you needed to embrace this program and be prepared to work hard to build on the success of 2003.

There was a lot of discussion about relationships, not only with the students but also the Community. It was highlighted to new teachers that those who would have the most difficulty would be those who did not make good relationships with the students and those who were not willing to mix with the Community. One of the continuing teachers explained that, to do this, teachers would need to move beyond their comfort zones and try new strategies that did not need to be implemented at their previous schools. New teachers were told that they would not be given automatic respect, but they would have to earn it with students and community. Talking to people and making home visits would be crucial to their success as a teacher at Doongal State School.

The only strategy the staff did not want to maintain was the Christmas concert because they felt that it was too hard to get the students to perform. I felt that the value of the concert was the intention to showcase the students to the Community and suggested that teachers provide opportunities throughout the year for students to perform so that they were more comfortable with this activity. Reluctantly they agreed and the final

concert of 2004 was a great success. A resident from the old people's home told me, "It was the best thing I have ever seen in Doongal" and they couldn't believe the talent our young people showed. The school song, posters and portfolios were to continue in 2004.

However, after the first few weeks, new teachers started complaining about teacher aides not turning up to their classes and the poor behaviour of the students in their classes. It became clear to me that the new teachers were experiencing the same difficulties as I had in the previous year.

REFLECTION

At the time, the new staff seemed enthusiastic about taking on the Proud and Deadly vision. I was also very happy with how the 2003 teachers presented their reflections on the program. Looking back from 2009, I believe this support from the teachers was strong support for the Proud and Deadly approach and appears to be real evidence of improvement in 2003.

However, I do not think that this 2-day induction properly prepared the new teachers for life at Doongal. I believe it was a mistake not to invest as much time and energy into establishing the vision with the new staff as I did in 2003 with the old. I expected that the new staff would learn about the vision through the existing school climate. It seemed to me that the strategies they used at previous schools were not working at Doongal and the improved teacher aide attendance had not carried over to the new year. There was a need to explicitly develop new staff's abilities to establish a good relationship with the teacher aide and the development of *trust*.

In 2004, the staffing philosophy was to recruit teachers who had teaching experience. However, I found it difficult to get the more experienced teachers to move out of their comfort zones and try new methods of teaching. These teachers were also accustomed to teacher aides in the mainstream setting who would work with small groups of students and assist with setting up activities or completing tasks for the teacher. The teachers who did not develop a relationship with the teacher aide assigned to them found it difficult to find an Indigenous teacher aide to work with them. The Indigenous teacher aides who were at the school in 2003 had been developing leadership attributes which lead to high self esteem. When new teachers did not recognise and utilise the expertise of the Indigenous teacher aide, the relationship did not develop. This further highlights that

by fostering *Indigenous leadership* the Indigenous personnel in the school will become far more effective.

Although new teachers were told about how successful the *Proud and Deadly* program had been, they were shocked by the academic standards of the students and behaviour exhibited in the classroom. This was a crucial time for all staff to support each other. It was difficult for new teachers to come into a culture established in the school during 2003 as they did not have clear knowledge of the journey. This shows the importance of *peer sharing* and *support*.

Looking back, it seems to me that this cycle was crucial for building *credibility*. The new staff coming into the school were not convinced that the school was heading in the right direction. They were continually told that the *Proud and Deadly* program had been a success. They needed to see tangible results which allowed them to *trust* that things would continue to improve.

Building capacity of Indigenous teacher aides

PLAN

Some of the new teachers found it difficult to understand the importance of “power sharing” with the Indigenous teacher aides in the classroom. I planned to build the capacity of the teacher aides by providing professional development and educate new teachers to work effectively with the teacher aides.

ACTION

(1) To empower the Indigenous teacher aides in the classroom by requiring them to write their own Proud and Deadly plan.

(2) To implement teacher mentoring and skill-sharing sessions to assist new teachers to work effectively with their teacher aides.

(3) To try to change the power balance across the school by ensuring more Indigenous people were employed as teachers in the future.

OBSERVATION

The Indigenous teacher aides in the school were happy to be brought into Proud and Deadly by the making of their own plans. They told me that, in the past, they had

rarely been consulted about the direction of the school or felt like they had a key role to play.

The teacher aides were required to write their own Proud and Deadly plan (see Appendix F for examples). The Proud and Deadly plans of the teacher aides differed to the Proud and Deadly plans of the teachers in that the teachers' plans were all behaviourally or academically based. Teacher aides included strategies to improve student outcomes that were related to cultural activities in general. An example of this is one teacher aide who decided that his goal would be to implement a dance troupe at lunchtime to involve the boys in a cultural activity. Another example is a teacher aide who wanted to implement a painting class at lunchtime. The teacher aides also had to nominate a strategy to assist them to work with the classroom teacher. Three teacher aides said that they would assist with the planning process while two others said they would work with the teacher to implement cultural studies into the classroom.

As the teacher aides became more confident and prominent within the classrooms, they began having more input into the teaching and learning. As a result, students began to attend school more regularly. Teachers also became more confident. The teacher aides began to emerge as leaders in the school which was excellent role modelling for the students. Indigenous teacher aides were asked to write their own Proud and Deadly plans to ensure they kept learning and working with teachers and were made to feel that their contribution to the classroom was just as important as the non-Indigenous teacher. It emerged that Indigenous teacher aides who were comfortable with the classroom teacher were enthusiastic to take charge of the whole class for the whole day with the registered teacher acting as the class assistant. This was a major achievement for the whole school community.

The teacher mentoring program within the school allowed teachers to visit other classes and observe the interaction of the teacher and teacher aide. This style of professional development was implemented to assist those teachers who were having difficulty working effectively with the Indigenous teacher aides in their classrooms and the local Indigenous people.

In 2004, there was one Indigenous teacher. This was an invaluable resource for the school. Students and teacher aides had a role model in a position of authority in the classroom. It was due to the impact of the Indigenous teacher that I began talks with a

Queensland University to establish an offsite teaching degree program at Doongal. This became operational in 2005.

The process involved in trying to establish a teacher training program for the Indigenous teacher aides was very frustrating. There was no other program to model that I knew about. There needed to be at least fourteen Indigenous teacher aides involved in the program for it to commence and it was difficult to recruit people. The commitment was for four years, however the Indigenous teacher aides tended to lack confidence in themselves. The literacy and numeracy of some applicants was too low for them to gain entry to the program.

REFLECTION

Looking back, the work done in supporting the Indigenous teacher aides gain a greater role in Doongal was important. As Angela09, I know their importance in successful Indigenous schools. I continue to find it difficult to understand that the Indigenous teacher aides had not been involved in school decision making because the teacher aides knew the children, parents and Community better than the non-Indigenous teachers or a non-Indigenous principal ever would.

Building the capacity of the teacher aides was crucial to success in Doongal. Non-Indigenous teachers needed to treat the Indigenous teacher aides as equals in the classroom and value the knowledge they brought. By insisting that the Indigenous teacher aides write a *Proud and Deadly* plan a clear message was sent about how much they were valued and how important I believed that they were to the overall success of the school. This highlights the roles of *empowerment* and building *Indigenous leadership* to successful Indigenous school change.

At the time, Angela 03 saw building the new-teacher mentoring and the University teacher aide training program as central to the *Proud and Deadly* approach and excellent programs in their own right. In hindsight, as Angela09, I would concur; it seems evident that a successful Indigenous school program would have:

- (1) an ongoing new-teacher mentoring program (alongside *Proud and Deadly* plans) to ensure *sustainability* across time (particularly for a situation where teachers stayed for only 2 years); and

- (2) a training program to turn Indigenous teacher aides into teachers as the fulfilment of *Indigenous leadership* (particularly for a situation where few Indigenous people have leadership roles in a school).

However, the teacher mentoring program tended to create a culture of professional jealousy. The teachers who took the role of mentor were often criticised by other staff members behind their backs, however much I tried to make it clear that the expectation was that the Indigenous teacher aide needed to be treated as an equal in the classroom and supported and trained by the class teacher in order to improve their effectiveness. Further, the reality of teacher aide training was not what I expected; I did not understand that although there was the desire on the part of the teacher aides to become teachers, many lacked the basic literacy and numeracy skills and without these it was not an achievable goal. The teacher aides who did eventually enrol in the course needed a lot of additional support. Although the University and Education Queensland worked hard to make the training work, it was often not possible to provide all the support required and in these instances, the teacher aide would simply drop out.

The powerful justification of mentoring and training is that Indigenous leadership builds *pride* and changes Indigenous *identity* in a positive manner. The fact that Angela03 successfully started *Proud and Deadly* plans and set up a new-teacher mentoring and a teacher-aide training program is to her credit. However the fact that both the mentoring and training programs were fraught with difficulties tends to imply that the changes put in place by Angela03 may be, and were, ephemeral. This result also shows the limits of *peer sharing* and recognising *success* as strategies for change. It also shows the importance of *time* in change. Stages 2 and 3 were very short in terms of the time needed for such basic change as *Proud and Deadly* promised. It also led to the next cycle.

Supporting teachers to improve classroom pedagogy

PLAN

Teachers who were new to the school tended to employ teaching methods more suited to mainstream students and became increasingly frustrated at the lack of progress they made with these methods, so I planned to implement strategies to improve classroom pedagogy for the new teachers.

ACTION

(1) New teachers were given the opportunity to go with their Indigenous teacher aide to job-shadow at an Indigenous school in Far North Queensland. There were also opportunities for teachers to observe others at Doongal State School in their classrooms and learn from each other.

(2) Ernie Grant's (1998) Holistic Framework and other specific literacy programs for Indigenous learners continued to be implemented and I offered teacher programming sessions.

(3) Proud and Deadly plans were discussed with me during supervision meetings.

OBSERVATION

My daily walks around the classroom highlighted the engagement of the students in the classrooms. Teachers would often have a number of different activities running at the same time and the teacher aide would be assisting as a second teacher. There were occasions when students would act out but these were decreasing and teachers were often aware of the cause or root of the students' behaviour. I noticed that there was more self reflection among teachers.

I would provide after-school workshops in planning and programming for all staff and classroom pedagogy did improve. Lessons were no longer piecemeal and I could clearly see teachers designing integrated units of work which incorporated a cultural aspect as a result of the professional development around Ernie Grant's (1998) Holistic Framework. Planning improved and teachers said that this assisted them in their practice. Teachers began to understand the planning, teaching and assessing learning cycle which was evident in the student portfolios. Students would proudly display their work around the school and would often request that I hang their work in my office. There were more students being sent to see me in my office for producing great work than for misbehaving.

Supervision meetings continued around staff Proud and Deadly plans. Teachers and teacher aides would talk to me about their progress towards the goals they had identified in their plans and I would discuss support options or negotiate new goals where necessary (see Appendices C and F).

REFLECTION

On reflection, the experience of Angela03 was that improved classroom pedagogy, in terms of Indigenous learning styles and Proud and Deadly approach, led to improved behaviour management, attendance and enhanced academic outcomes for students. Teachers who were able to engage students in their classes through good planning practices and varying their teaching style to cater for Indigenous learners, as well as the ability to build positive relationships with students, improved academic outcomes for students. This still appears to hold from the hindsight of Angela09.

There were teachers who were not prepared to reflect on their practice and change teaching practice to take account of the context of Doongal and the culture of the Indigenous students. They continued to teach in the style they had developed over the years; and continued to be frustrated and to blame the students and Community for poor behaviour. In many ways, looking back, this failure of teachers that could not adopt a *Proud and Deadly* teaching approach is almost the strongest evidence for the efficacy of that approach.

As Angela03, I would have liked to have been stronger in my conviction and challenged them about this. The fear of Union action by these teachers often stopped me from confronting them. Looking back as Angela09, I am less troubled by my lack of challenge. My approach seems, in reflection, to be collegial and facilitatory. Confrontation with recalcitrant teachers could have hurt the facilitation of the supportive teachers.

Looking back at what worked, supervision sessions using the *Proud and Deadly* plans as the basis were an effective way for me to monitor the progress of staff on their personal journey as well as improving student outcomes. This further highlights the importance of *high expectations* and the power of a common *vision*.

Celebrating success

PLAN

Intrinsic rewards were not enough for all students to strive for so I planned to implement extrinsic rewards during this stage to consolidate the successes and provide the momentum for these to continue.

ACTION

(1) *I offered many external rewards for desired behaviour. The class who had the least unexplained absences for the week or the class who had improved the most in their unexplained absences was given a pizza party. Students who had two or less unexplained absences for the term were taken on a trip to the city to see a movie and have lunch at a popular restaurant. The class of the week (in terms of attendance) was given an ice block each after parade on a Wednesday and the student of the week from each class was given a chance to pick a novelty from the prize box (these students were chosen for their application to school work and behaviour).*

(2) *I celebrated any successes. Once a month we would celebrate, at a staff meeting, improvements each teacher had observed in their classroom, or anything the staff felt was worth celebrating either as a personal success or as a school success.*

(3) *The local radio station would broadcast our newsletter each week ensuring that the successes were shared with the Community.*

OBSERVATION

The rewards system appeared to support the Proud and Deadly program (and the teachers' plans). Students were motivated to improve behaviour and learning by these rewards. They gave an intrinsic stimulus to the deeper pedagogy changes. The sharing of success with the staff worked to improve staff morale and give everyone a lift emotionally. Doongal was still a challenging place to work but it was made manageable through a team approach and the support most staff gave to each other.

Against this, the rewards system was very expensive for the school to maintain and I was concerned about the longevity of the system. There was also a conflict with the Healthy Choices program which needed to be considered for the future. However, as the school climate began to change to focus on learning and students genuinely enjoyed coming to the school, the need for so many rewards was no longer there. The expectations were increased and students were given targets to achieve instead of just improvements.

Publicising success throughout the Community ensured the Community was kept informed of the progress. Many negative events were talked about around the Community which had an impact on the school and the Community perception. When the positive

stories began to be heard people took a greater interest because they could see that there was hope for a better future in education for the students.

REFLECTION

Looking back as Angela09, I believe that, if you want to achieve behaviour change, then you need to model and reward the behaviours that are working towards your expectation otherwise the students will not know that they are on the right path or be motivated to continue.

There is a lot of debate about intrinsic and extrinsic rewards but, in the case of Doongal State School, I believe that the extrinsic rewards assisted to develop a desire to attend school and with the improved teacher pedagogy this then became an intrinsic motivation.

As well, by promoting the successes through the local radio station parents and Community members were also aware of the expected behaviour and began supporting the school in this. This adds support for *communication* and *community connection*.

4.3.3 INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY

In this section, I report on two main cycles. These cycles are categorised as implementing a cultural program and implementing an anti-violence program.

Implementing a cultural program

PLAN

I planned to implement a cultural studies program so that teachers could work with the Community and begin to understand issues impacting on schooling.

ACTION

(1) To write a whole school literacy and numeracy program which incorporated a cultural studies program.

OBSERVATION

When teachers were appointed to Doongal State School, I noticed that it would take them at least a term to begin to work out what they needed to teach the students. Effectively, students at Doongal were only ever getting three terms of any reasonable teaching.

During 2004, teachers were given the task of collaboratively developing whole-school plans in literacy, numeracy and cultural studies. While literacy and numeracy plans could be easily adapted from syllabus documents, the cultural studies program could not. The staff decided that the cultural studies program was not to be an “add on” but rather needed to be the driver of an integrated curriculum as it would be through cultural studies that English and Maths would be taught. It was also decided that this was not a program that could be written by the non-Indigenous teachers but required the help of the local Community.

The writing of the cultural studies program became the task of Paul, the teacher who had developed excellent relationships with many Community members. He showed genuine interest in learning about Doongal culture and was best placed to source the expert knowledge of the Elders. Paul and I had many discussions about what the program would look like, and what the important issues were according to the local Elders. We wanted the students to learn and understand the positive aspects of being an Aboriginal person. We also felt that they needed to be informed about why some of the Community found themselves facing issues of unemployment, alcoholism and violence. We wanted to face these challenges and inspire students to make informed choices about their future.

Some of the teachers felt uncomfortable teaching cultural studies. Comments such as, “How can I teach culture to the students when I do not understand it myself?” were often made. This was an area I was not prepared to back down on. Teachers were expected to meet the needs of all students in the classroom and I believed that a cultural studies program was of high importance.

REFLECTION

This program was successful because there were enough school staff with good Community relations to ensure that local Community members assisted with the teaching of the program or were interested enough to come along on culture camps which were organised for the Years 5, 6 and 7 students. Without the assistance of the local Community, this type of program would not have been possible. This supports *community connection* and *support* as key factors to success.

A cultural program sent key messages to both the students and the staff. The students could see that we were following through on the *Proud* part of the slogan. It was

clear that the teachers were truly valuing the local culture and reinforcing the positive aspects to the students. The message to the staff was that they had come into a different culture and the responsibility was on them to embrace the local culture. This reinforces the need for building *pride and self worth*.

The cultural program in Cherbourg was prepared and taught by an Indigenous teacher and the Indigenous teacher aides. Upon reflection the program in Doongal would probably have achieved greater results if the Indigenous teacher aides had been given the responsibility of teaching the cultural program. Not doing this resulted in a chance to reinforce Indigenous leadership being missed.

Implementing an anti-violence program

PLAN

Violence was a major concern in the Community. I planned to confront the issue of violence within the school.

ACTION

(1) An anti-violence program was implemented after I was approached by a female Elder, Connie. Connie ran the Women's shelter and consistently saw firsthand the impact of violence in the Community.

(2) To continue to implement the Education in Human Values program.

OBSERVATION

Books were designed which reflected the local culture and an anti-violence message. These stories were presented to the students accompanied by local dancers and Elders. Connie would come to the school each week to read the story and talk to the students about the impact of the violence she witnessed each day.

The behaviour of the students during these sessions was not very good. Connie became distressed at the lack of respect she was shown by the students. Connie was not a teacher and received very little support during her sessions from the class teachers in regard to behaviour management. After two sessions, the teachers decided that her message was important and they would assist both Connie and the children to make the program a success.

The anti-violence program complemented the Education in Human Values program which was continuing to run in the school. As classes became more settled and students more engaged, I noticed that the quiet time and meditation aspect of the program began to fall away. Although the students continued to learn about the “value of the week”, the program nevertheless became less prominent around the school. Concomitantly, so did the anti-violence program.

REFLECTION

As Angela03, I was really pleased that the teachers supported Connie in her efforts to implement the anti-violence program, though I was sad at the students’ treatment of an Elder.

Looking back, although the students’ reactions to the program were alarming and gave an indication of deep-seated long-term problems in places like Doongal, it had one positive outcome for the teachers. It highlighted for teachers just how far they had come in the development of their own practice. They felt shocked that the students would misbehave for one of their own Elders, but at the same time pleased that they had better control over the students.

The silent sitting and meditation strategy that formed part of the Education in Human Values program was a strategy that could only be used by the teachers who had good classroom management. It did seem to help with violence in the classroom but only if the teacher showed good management and good strategies (as opposed to poor management and the inability to get classes settled to implement the strategy).

Looking back, the difficulty with silent sitting and meditation could have been a sign that there were too many new strategies implemented too quickly for some teachers. This highlights that teachers need *time* and the experience of *success* to effectively implement new strategies. It also means that improvement is a complex interaction of many components. Those for whom silent sitting and meditation worked often reached this point through a spiral in which many strategies improved. For example, better management led to better values classes which in turn led to better relationships and allowed more flexible pedagogies, and so on.

4.3.4 MYSELF

In this section, I report on one main cycle. This cycle is categorised as maintaining staff motivation.

Maintaining staff motivation

PLAN

I planned to learn about how I would lead and motivate my staff so that the positive momentum could continue.

ACTION

(1) Staff meetings once a month included a sharing-success time and individual rewards were given to staff members.

(2) I organised social situations, such as a touch football team to play in the local competition on a Tuesday night as well as social barbecues.

(3) I continued to monitor the Proud and Deadly plans.

OBSERVATION

Just as extrinsic rewards were offered to students, I believed that it was important to reward and celebrate the success achieved with the staff. Staff members were publicly acknowledged when they had achieved good academic results or had achieved a goal in their Proud and Deadly plan.

The touch football team was also very successful. It mainly consisted of teacher aides but the teachers would generally come and cheer the team along. Usually it was only the younger and sports-minded staff who were involved so it was not an activity that included everyone. The teacher aides seemed to really enjoy playing and it was a great way to inspire team spirit.

The social barbecues were a chance for teachers and teacher aides to get together. These events were generally well-attended by teachers but not as well-attended by the teacher aides. There would usually be a staff member who would bring along a guitar and a sing-a-long was generally part of the night.

The data collection process that took place as a strategy to achieve the goals of the Proud and Deadly plans was shared at staff meetings. Teachers and teacher aides would share with the rest of the staff the progress they were making on their goals. Two

teachers stated that this helped to keep morale high and gave them the opportunity to help each other out if a teacher or teacher aide was having difficulty improving data.

REFLECTION

I think it was important to celebrate not only the successes we had as a whole staff but also individual achievement of goals. This let the staff know that I was aware of what they were doing and pleased with their performance. I tried to be fair and made sure that I celebrated something about every person's efforts. This was hard on occasions when I had counselled a staff member about performance. This may have been seen as false praise.

The social nights brought us together as a group as the relationships developed on a deeper level. This allowed people to assist each other through the tough times. There were staff members who found it difficult to make relationships with others. These staff members attended the social activities but I could tell that they were uncomfortable about doing so.

Having good staff relations is one thing, but to try to motivate people to follow you down a particular road is another. I tried to appeal to staff to continue to strive towards the next success for the benefit of the students but this was often hard to carry out when teachers would feel that the students were not trying or were abusive towards them. I would continually remind the staff about what the school was like at the beginning of the year before and how far we had come. This shows the impact of *persistence* and *empowerment*.

The sharing of the *Proud and Deadly plans* was a good opportunity for *peer sharing*. This allowed teachers and teacher aides to share their *success* and *support* each other in the achievement of their identified goals.

4.4 STAGE 4: EXITING (SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 2004)

This stage reports on approximately the next four months (September to December 2004) of my occupancy as Principal of Doongal State School. The stage is described under the usual four headings but, as it is the final stage, relies on practices, ideas and data that emerged from Stages 1 to 3.

4.4.1 SCHOOL

In this section, I report on three main cycles. These cycles are categorised as comparing pre and post data, refining the school curriculum plan, and planning for the future.

Comparing pre and post data

The instruments from which the data discussed in Section 4.4.1 were derived are listed in Appendix A. They have been categorised as: (a) Education Queensland-generated instruments; and (b) research-generated instruments.

PLAN

As my time as Principal of Doongal State School was coming to an end, I believed that it was important to compare data from early in 2003 to the data collected towards the end of 2004 in order to establish whether change had actually occurred or if I had changed to fit in with the status quo. To this end, I planned to systematically collect data on academic outcomes, behavioural outcomes and community, staff and student perceptions.

ACTION

Most of the systemic data available via Education Queensland notes that Doongal State School, in terms of student performance, was well below the State mean. These data do not however reflect the distance travelled. My action was to collect data from 10 Doongal State School parents, 40 students, and 13 staff (see Appendix D), to augment data already collected through the Doongal classroom trials and Proud and Deadly plans (see Appendix C).

In all, I collected data from the following:

- (1) *Education Queensland-generated instruments: Parent Opinion Survey: Parent Satisfaction, 2002-4; Staff Opinion Survey: Staff Satisfaction, 2002-4; Student Satisfaction Overview, 2002-4; Year 2 Diagnostic Net; and Years 3, 5 and 7 Aspects of Literacy and Aspects of Numeracy Tests.*
- (2) *Research-generated instruments (surveys): Doongal Parent Survey: School Change, November 2004; Teacher and Teacher Aide Evaluation of Change Survey; and Doongal Student Survey.*

- (3) *Research-generated instruments (Doongal classroom trials 2003): Year 1 Trial – Behaviour management (PE); Year 2 Trial – Behaviour management (teasing); Year 4 Trial – Behaviour management (disruptions); Year 6/7 Trial – Behaviour management (kicking, teasing, hitting); Year 6/7 Trial – Behaviour management (swearing); Year 3 Trial – Academic outcomes (number of books read); and Year 5 Trial – Academic outcomes (sight words).*
- (4) *The Proud and Deadly teacher plans*

OBSERVATION

The Parent Opinion Survey (see Appendix D1) was randomly distributed to families of students from Doongal State School by Education Queensland. The survey was sent home to parents via teacher aides who often assisted parents to fill them in. The results of the survey indicated that parents felt that there had been an improvement in what the school had provided for the students, with the mean score increasing from 2.4 in 2002 (below the State mean) to 2.7 in 2004 (equal to the State mean).

The Doongal Parent Survey: School Change (see Appendix D2) was devised by me to elicit whether parents had perceived that there was a change at the school from 2002 to 2004. It was taken to homes by teacher aides to 25 randomly-chosen families with children attending the Doongal State School. Assistance with reading and recording was offered to each participant by the teacher aides. Only 10 surveys were returned. All surveys were anonymous. The areas covered in the survey were: school change, community partnerships, school initiatives, and Principal leadership. The results of this survey, detailed in Appendix D2, indicated that the majority of parents surveyed were positive about the changes that occurred in 2003-2004 and the Proud and Deadly program.

Teachers and teacher aides were asked to complete an Evaluation of Change Survey (see Appendix D6). The responses indicated that the introduction of the Proud and Deadly program had assisted teachers to gain control of their classrooms. Staff felt that the working relationships with the teacher aides allowed for better classroom cohesion and enabled teachers to better organise appropriate lessons for the students.

In terms of my leadership, the staff felt that I should have stayed at Doongal State School for a longer period of time, but that the changes I had implemented had a positive impact on the school.

Interestingly, the 2002 EQ Staff Opinion Survey result reflected the views of staff at the time when six Principals attempted to lead the school. Many teachers surveyed here had been at the school for lengthy periods ranging from 1 to 8 years. The new culture being introduced in 2003 meant high expectations of staff as well as students. Clearly staff began to embrace the new way of doing business. This is not to underestimate how challenging the journey was and satisfaction levels still remained below the State Mean as a result of these complexities. Figure D-10 (Appendix D) indicates that, across the years from 2002 to 2004, staff satisfaction increased quite markedly in an upward trend towards the State Mean.

Unexplained absenteeism was readily acknowledged as a major issue at Doongal State School. Many children were either not attending school, or leaving the school at various stages throughout the day. Children would leave through boredom, or their inability to understand Standard Australian English. Many would leave if they were disciplined by their teacher for inappropriate behaviour. Doongal State School human resources did not stretch far enough to chase every student who left the school. As a result it was decided as a school community to implement strategies to encourage attendance and look at classroom practice to determine if there was a way to encourage students to attend school more regularly. Extrinsic rewards such as ice blocks for the class who had the least unexplained absences each week and a pizza party for the class with the least unexplained absences at the end of each term were provided. Students who individually had less than 3 days unexplained absence for the term were taken on a trip to the nearest city for a fun activity such as water slides and a popular restaurant for lunch. Attendance increased from 40% in Term 1, 2003 to 89% in Term 4, 2004 (see Appendix D7).

Although attendance improved, student behaviour was more difficult to manage. Class sizes were larger and the number of children with little practice at attending school increased. Teachers began to become burnt out and suffered stress-related illnesses. Staff absenteeism began to rise.

REFLECTION

The non-Indigenous teachers within Doongal found themselves in some very challenging situations. New teachers often expressed similar thoughts and feelings to those stated in the Preamble and Chapter 1. Quite often teachers requested a transfer out of the Community after a few weeks as the expectations of teachers in Doongal are quite different to the expectations of teachers in other areas of Queensland. Teachers who did stay articulated the challenges of their role but also the rewards which they personally received as they witnessed their ability to make a difference for the students, not only academically but personally. Frequent changes in Principalship over the past few years at Doongal had resulted in a cynicism on the part of the Community, and lack of leadership and progress for the school and it had impacted on the enthusiasm of staff members. This shows that *vision, persistence, organisational ability, and credibility* are essential to build confidence in the school setting and develop *trust* between the school and the community.

The data collected clearly demonstrates an improvement in student, parent and staff satisfaction across the two years. The survey responses may have been positively skewed due to the power relationship involved in the Principal/teacher dynamic and the student/teacher dynamic. It is interesting to note that parents considered improved relationships between staff and students and celebration of successes contributed to the school improvements. These surveys and results can be seen in more detail in Appendix D and are further discussed in Section 5.1 of Chapter 5.

Refining the school curriculum plan

PLAN

The school curriculum plan had been implemented at Doongal State School but needed refining to make it user friendly for the new teachers coming to the school in 2005. My plan was to work with the Head of Curriculum to refine the plan.

ACTION

(1) With the Head of Curriculum, teams of staff members were given the task of writing school curriculum plans so that the new teachers would not waste six months trying to figure out what to teach the students.

(2) Teaching packs were made up for each grade with resources, lesson plans and an overall scope and sequence plan for each key learning area.

(3) All resources and lessons were written in a cultural context.

OBSERVATION

To ensure that teachers and the new Principal had the best chance of building on the successes of the previous two years, I ensured that all curriculum plans were completed and easy to use for the incoming teachers. These plans would allow teachers to concentrate on relationship building rather than worrying about working out what to teach. Some plans were better than others; however there was a significant improvement in the quality of planning from the beginning of 2003.

Teachers made up curriculum packs for each year. At the end of a specific unit of work, teachers would collect all the relevant resources and make up a box which included the unit plan so that it would be easy for the teacher the following year to access the resources for year level units. The units included information on local languages and culturally appropriate material for the new staff members.

The unit plans and resources all had a cultural basis. Teachers spent many hours making their own resources as there were few culturally appropriate resources on the market.

REFLECTION

These plans provided a practical resource for the new staff to access to build on the academic success of the previous two years. The new staff and Principal would still need to establish their own standards and develop their own teaching styles as we had in 2003.

It was a very generous gesture for teachers to make up unit packs. Some teachers spent many hours of their own time preparing resources for the teachers coming in the new year. I believe that this is because they had a genuine love for the students and the community and desired the best for both. This demonstrates that they really had developed *pride and self worth*.

Effective pedagogy was highlighted by the inclusion of languages and cultural components in the unit planning.

Planning for the future

PLAN

Although my time was coming to an end, I planned to continue to effectively administrate at the school.

ACTION

To work with the administrative assistant to ensure that the processes and budget would pass the audit as the previous audit had not received a good report early in 2003.

OBSERVATION

Many processes had been implemented to ensure compliance with Education Queensland processes. These processes were nothing unusual but many had not been implemented previous to 2003. The implementation of these processes sent a clear message to the school staff that I expected professionalism and I would hold them accountable should this standard not be adhered to. One teacher commented about the Code of Conduct training, “Why would we need to do this, they [Education Queensland] should be thanking us for being here, not threatening us”.

The results of the school audit indicated that the school had managed to pass.

REFLECTION

By implementing clear processes, school staff began to understand that the rules would not be broken for them because they were in Doongal. It was clear that I expected the same professionalism of the teachers that would be expected at any other school. This demonstrates *organisational ability and high expectations*.

4.4.2 PERSONNEL

In this section, I report on two cycles. These cycles are categorised as inducting the incoming Principal and continuing the *Proud and Deadly* program.

Inducting the incoming Principal

PLAN

An Acting Principal had been appointed with my imminent departure. I knew that my staff and I had improved outcomes both socially and academically for the students and I planned to share the strategies we had used with the new Principal.

ACTION

(1) To meet with the incoming Principal.

(2) To discuss policies, processes and a brief description of the Proud and Deadly journey with the new Principal.

(3) To introduce the new Principal to the staff, the Council members and Elders who had been influential at the school.

OBSERVATION

The new Principal, Bob, was male and around 50-55 years old. His experience had been primarily in the high school setting. The Executive Director had made it clear to him that there had been significant changes at the school and that he was expected to continue the positive changes.

A one-day handover was not sufficient to talk through the major issues impacting on Doongal State School. I knew that the success of the teacher aide university program would rely on the support they received from the new Principal and other staff members. I believed that increasing the number of Indigenous teachers on the staff was a strategy to ensure the Proud and Deadly program would continue well into the future. There was little time to discuss behaviour management techniques, strategies for working with the Community or to share my own journey at Doongal State School.

I took Bob to the Council to meet some of the local Community members but there were not many Councillors around that day. We did see a couple of Elders and Bob seemed quite comfortable interacting and assuring them that he would continue to improve things at Doongal State School.

REFLECTION

The new Principal had not been well inducted to the position and was left with many questions. Although I talked about the *Proud and Deadly* program, I felt that it was my program and I think I relayed this to the new Principal. I knew that we had very different philosophies about Indigenous education but I did not feel that the new Principal was interested in my view and I accepted that he needed to find his own way with his own program. There was no authority to enforce the continuation of the program.

This follows on from the discussion of teacher aide training from Stage 3 where there were indications that the *Proud and Deadly* program may not be fully bedded down

and not be sustained past 2004. The indications from 2005 and 2006 were that the new Principal did not support the program and that the other components put in place to support it, such as support from the Community and materials prepared by teachers, were not sufficient to maintain it.

Continuing the Proud and Deadly program

PLAN

The Proud and Deadly program had been integral in improving student welfare and staff morale. I believed that the program should continue into 2005, so I planned to put structures in place to ensure this happened.

ACTION

(1) Discuss with continuing staff how they would continue to implement the Proud and Deadly program.

(2) Discuss with key Community members the role they would play in continuing the program.

OBSERVATION

During the Exiting stage I was aware that I had been transferred to a school in South East Queensland. The success of the Proud and Deadly program was evidence to me that the program needed to continue into 2005. There were 50% of the staff who were also being transferred at the same time. At our weekly staff meetings we would discuss how the program would continue with the staff change over. The staff who were not transferring were enthusiastic about continuing the program. The continuing staff decided that they would promote the program through their class activities and continue to use the language of Proud and Deadly.

I believed that the Community could influence the new Principal and insist upon the continuation of the Proud and Deadly program. I spoke to key Community people about the success I had perceived as a result of the program and how they could continue to influence the improvements in the school. Four of the Community members said that they were hopeful that the improvements would continue and that the Community as a whole was getting stronger and looking forward to a positive future.

REFLECTION

The program philosophy should have been documented for the new staff as the *Proud and Deadly* journey had ownership by the existing staff but the new staff did not have knowledge of the journey we had taken or the *Proud and Deadly* philosophy. The communication of the program was not effectively executed. I had not written up a formal program or adequately explained how building pride and self worth could impact on the overall program. There should have been discussions about how this program could have been built on and improved for 2005. Follow-up surveys indicated that the *Proud and Deadly* program was not being implemented in 2005. The school song was not sung on parade and only a few posters remained.

4.4.3 INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY

In this section, I report on two main cycles. These cycles are categorised as gaining support from the Community to continue the *Proud and Deadly* program and promoting the program in the media.

Gaining support from the community to continue the Proud and Deadly program

PLAN

I decided that I needed the Community to be a driving force behind the continuation of the Proud and Deadly program. I planned to address various Community groups to ensure that they continued to be involved in the school and the direction it would take.

ACTION

(1) I attended a local Council meeting to inform them of the hand over process and indicated that the Proud and Deadly program was supported by the existing staff members and should be retained into 2005.

(2) I spoke to the health professionals and the local police force to let them know that the program was to continue.

OBSERVATION

My observation of the local Council reaction was that they believed that the Proud and Deadly program was now part of the school and there was no question that they wanted it to continue into 2005 and beyond. The Council was enthusiastic about working

with the school as many people acknowledged the dramatic improvements and wanted these to continue.

The police and health professionals did not seem as interested as the local Council. Many of these professionals were also leaving the Community as they had served their time, but they still acknowledged that they had seen improvements at the school.

REFLECTION

I felt a degree of guilt about leaving the Community. I believed that I really should have continued at the school for another year to consolidate the improvements. I justified my leaving by saying that it was in the best interests of my own family as my son was due to begin high school and I wished to start him at a school he would not have to leave for his entire high school years. My two years was not enough time to bring about sustained change.

The Council showed a degree of *trust* in the school as they were wanting to continue with the *Proud and Deadly* strategies after I had left the school.

Promoting the Proud and Deadly program in the media

PLAN

For many years Doongal Community had received negative media coverage due to the violence and other socially unacceptable incidents which occurred. The school had shown positive improvements and I planned to publicise these in the media in order to promote pride in the whole Community.

ACTION

(1) I contacted a reporter at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) who had previously been to Doongal Community. The reporter came to Doongal to report on the school improvements for the Stateline program.

(2) The Murri Minute is another program which promotes Indigenous issues within the Central Queensland area. The producers had heard about the Proud and Deadly program and came to the school to record our school song which was broadcast on the local television station.

OBSERVATION

Appendix E is a transcript of the Stateline interview for the ABC which shows that the Community was about to give up hope that they could expect a good education in Doongal. It also illustrated the feeling amongst the students and staff that the strategies implemented had impacted on the school in a positive way. The airing of this program caused great excitement around the Community.

The Murri Minute was a wonderful experience for the students as they were able to work with the crew to produce the school song. The segment received quite a lot of coverage on the television and assisted in building pride and self worth in the Community.

REFLECTION

I am always sceptical of the media, as I have had previous experiences where good news stories have been given a spin and have become quite damaging to the school and the community. The Stateline program and the Murri Minute were very positive media coverage and they highlighted the impact the *Proud and Deadly* program had on the Community and the students of Doongal State School.

4.4.4 MYSELF

In this section, I report on two main cycles. These cycles are categorised as reflecting on my own leadership and educating my colleagues about the *Proud and Deadly* program.

Reflecting on my own leadership

PLAN

While conducting this research, I planned to conduct a follow-up survey called a Reflection Survey of teachers who had been at Doongal State School during my Principalship, to learn about my leadership through their reflections.

ACTION

I tracked down four teachers who had been at Doongal State School during 2004 and conducted a follow-up survey (see Appendix D8).

OBSERVATION

A follow-up survey was undertaken in 2007 with four staff members from 2004 who had remained at the school in 2005. The participants were chosen for reasons of contact ability and location. The survey and results are located in Appendix D8.

The responses indicated that staff morale during 2004 was high and there were strategies implemented which ensured positive behaviours were rewarded within the school. There was also a feeling among the teachers surveyed that they felt valued as a staff member and liked being part of the decision-making process.

Interestingly the respondents felt that they were challenged to become better teachers through challenging themselves to use a variety of teaching styles to meet the needs of the learners. The respondents also each said that they grew as a person as well as a teacher.

REFLECTION

Although there had been change at Doongal State School, it was evident from the survey responses that there was still a lot of work to be done in order to continue to improve outcomes for Indigenous students. In terms of my own leadership, the reflections of the staff members indicated that feeling valued and having a clear direction were the cornerstones for success.

The respondents to this survey indicated to me that in 2005 the *Proud and Deadly* program was no longer implemented and they witnessed a noticeable decline in staff morale and student achievement. This demonstrates that *building pride and self worth* does contribute to improved school morale.

Educating my colleagues about the Proud and Deadly program

PLAN

The success of the Proud and Deadly program I believed needed to be shared with my Principal colleagues in order to improve outcomes for Indigenous students everywhere.

ACTION

I talked at a number of conferences to share the success story.

OBSERVATION

My audiences would primarily be workers within Indigenous education and Principals of schools with a high Indigenous population. Quite often other Principals would challenge the need to teach Indigenous students in a different way or allocate additional resources to them. They said that they felt that Indigenous students should be treated the same as all other students. There seemed to me to be little understanding of the backgrounds that many Indigenous people had and there certainly was a lack of empathy for Indigenous students. Many Principals felt that the Government had let them down by taking away funding which targeted Indigenous students but still expected that outcomes for Indigenous students would improve.

REFLECTION

I was passionate about what we had achieved at Doongal State School and I believe that this message was effectively delivered to my colleagues. I did however lack an understanding of Indigenous education in Queensland and the history of Government policies which impacted on schools. I was also lacking a solid knowledge base to answer questions that were asked of me. What I did do was to raise the awareness of my colleagues that they too could make a difference regardless of their gender or race. This shows that *persistence* and *peer sharing* as well as *finding opportunity in the face of adversity* were important factors, as I continued to communicate what I believed to be right when some of my colleagues appeared to have closed their minds to improving academic achievement for Indigenous students.

Chapter 5: Analysis

In the previous chapter, the practices undertaken by me as Principal of Doongal were described in terms of plans, actions, observations and reflections, predominantly in the voice of Angela03. Now we return to the voice of Angela09 as we discuss these practices and the results that were achieved in terms of the literature.

This chapter compares Chapter 4 to the literature so that it can meet the objectives of this thesis – to reassess impact, reanalyse attribution and develop theory. This is done in five sections: an initial one overviewing changes from 2003 to 2004, *Results, impact and attribution* (Section 5.1); and four sections on theories to do with factors that the Chapter 4 results appear to indicate positively affect school change in terms of student outcomes, *School factors* (Section 5.2), *Principal Leadership factors* (Section 5.3), *Change factors* (Section 5.4), and *Non-indigenous Female Principal factors* (Section 5.5).

5.1 RESULTS, IMPACT AND ATTRIBUTION

At the end of 2004, data from systemic and school sources were gathered so that I had the same types of data as were available at the start of 2003. The start of 2003 and end of 2004 data were: (a) compared with each other in order to reassess impact (answering the question of whether the practices were successful in improving the school in terms of student outcomes); and (b) considered in the light of the Chapter 4 descriptions of practices to reanalyse attribution (answering the question of to whom and to what should any successes be attributed).

5.1.1 SCHOOL STAFF AND STAFF FACILITIES – END OF 2004

The school maintained its staffing numbers in 2004 so that there were 24 staff comprising: 1 Principal, 9 classroom teachers (P-7), 4 specialist teachers (Behaviour Management, PE and Music, Learning Support, Guidance Officer), 9 teacher aides (8 classroom, 1 behaviour management), and 1 administrative assistant. (See Table B-3 in Appendix B for details – pseudonyms are used to denote the teachers, specialists, teacher aides and administrative assistant.)

As can be seen in Table B-3, the number of years experience of teachers and support staff increased significantly. This was mainly due to Casey and Janeen requesting to be transferred **into** Doongal State School after many years of teaching experience. There was a 40% turnover in teaching staff from 2003 to 2004. Teacher aides remained fairly constant.

The morale in 2004 was better than in 2003; the staff said that they felt valued and liked being involved in decision making. Teachers and teacher aides were engaging with each other more freely. Staff seemed to have a feeling of anticipation about the new year ahead. Staff felt that the *Proud and Deadly* program had challenged them to be better teachers and to grow as a person. They were very positive about their role in bringing about change at Doongal State School.

As described in Section 4.4 of Chapter 4, surveys given out at the end of 2004 showed the following:

- (1) Teachers said that the *Proud and Deadly* program had enabled them to gain control of their classrooms and have better working relationships with their teacher aides.
- (2) Teachers said that their better working relationships with teacher aides enabled them to have better classroom cohesion and to organise appropriate lessons.
- (3) Staff responses showed that their satisfaction levels had increased markedly towards the State mean.
- (4) However, staff felt that time was too short and Angela should have stayed longer.

As a result of the fire in 2003, the school was given a new building which was very modern. This was designed following community consultation. Four teaching spaces were replaced by two with a kitchenette in between the two classrooms. A new tuckshop was also constructed allowing easier access for students and better work space for tuckshop workers and volunteers.

The staffroom was remodelled and repainted after consultation with the staff. A modern kitchen facility was added and the staffroom expanded to ensure there was enough room for all staff to meet and eat together.

5.1.2 STUDENT ENROLMENTS AND HEALTH – END OF 2004

There were 183 students in Doongal State School spread across Preschool and Grades 1 to 7. (See Appendix B, Table B-4 for enrolment numbers per class in 2004.) This represented an increase of 42 students compared with 2003 (see Appendix B, Table B-2), partly due to the fact that 15 students who had previously attended Guilford State School enrolled in Doongal State School. Community Health provided a range of health-promoting programs in the Doongal Community ensuring the improved health status of the students. This was gauged through the skin tone of the students as well as the improved body weights and lack of skin lesions. Students were able to concentrate more on daily lessons due to improved overall health. Student hearing due to Otitis Media was still poor, however, teachers were better at using the sound systems within their classrooms.

5.1.3 STUDENT ATTENDANCE, BEHAVIOUR AND ACHIEVEMENT – END OF 2004

Attendance improved from around 30% (“on the spot” data from District Office) in 2002 to 87% in 2004. Behaviour improved notably in terms of disobedience and language (e.g., teasing, swearing, shouting) and actions towards other students and staff (e.g., hitting, kicking) as evidenced in Appendix C. Doongal parents stated that they felt there had been an improvement in the school. However, due to better attendance resulting in larger class sizes, staff still felt challenged and stressed by student behaviour.

Student achievement improved from 2002 to 2004 in terms of the state-wide systemic literacy and numeracy instruments, namely, the *Year 2 Diagnostic Net* and the *Aspects of Literacy and Aspects of Numeracy tests: Years 3, 5 and 7*. This improvement is detailed graphically in Figures 5.1 and 5.2.

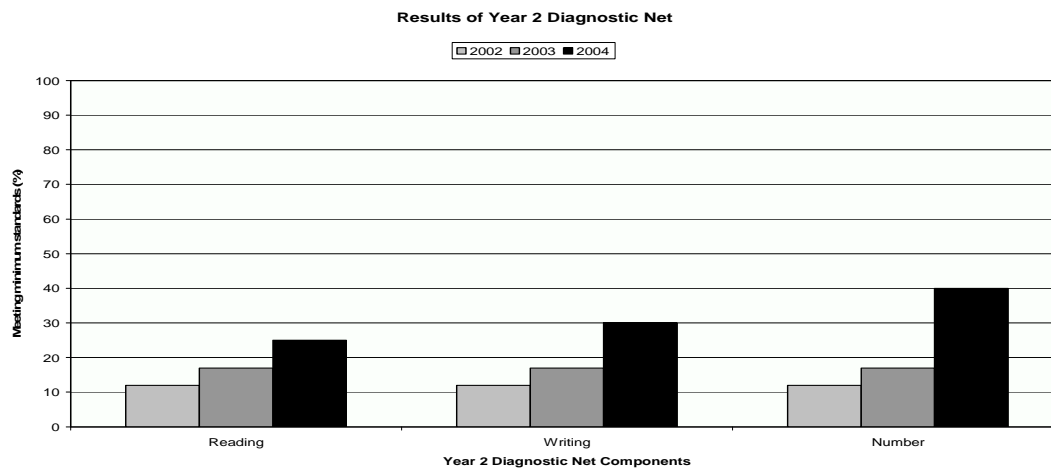


Figure 5.1. Doongal State School results of Year 2 Diagnostic Net for 2002-2004.

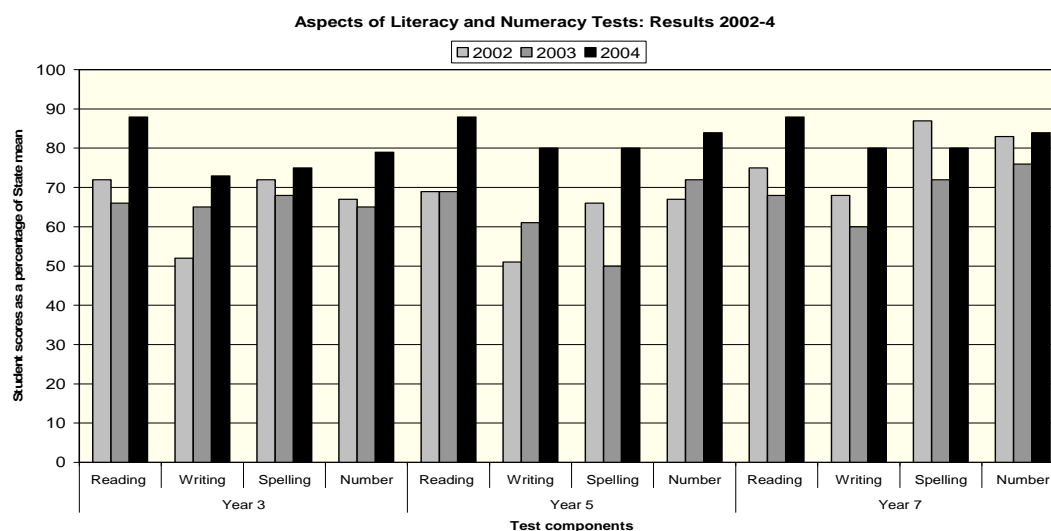


Figure 5.2. Doongal State School results of state-wide Years 3, 5 and 7 tests for 2002-4.

In addition to the Education Queensland data shown in Figures 5.1 and 5.2 above, internal data collected by teachers and other staff members also revealed improvements in student behaviour, attitude and academic outcomes (see Appendix C). Education Queensland believed that the results indicated a significant improvement and awarded me the “2004 High Achiever Principal Award” as the leader of school change.

5.1.4 REASSESSMENT – IN 2009

As Angela03, I believed that the school had changed. I had watched positive changes in teachers and teacher aides, and in students’ behaviour, attendance and test/Net results.

As Angela09, my reassessment is that Doongal State School did change for the positive in terms of student outcomes in the two years of my principalship, 2003 and 2004. Most obviously, this was in the attitude and morale of staff and students and the Community. The teachers and teacher aides felt that they were more able to support student learning, the students' attendance and behaviour markedly improved, and the Community felt that they were more a part of their school. The descriptions of what happened in Stage 3, in particular, showed a marked improvement for teachers, aides and students.

There were also improvements in Government testing results, most markedly in the Year 2 Net where 6 students met standards, the first students ever to do this in Doongal. However, whether these improved test results reflect a significant enhancement in learning, rather than an increase in knowledge of test techniques and motivation to try, is problematic.

However, it also should be noted that the *Proud and Deadly* program and its improvements in Doongal State School did not last past the end of 2004. It appears that insufficient time had been spent to build a sustainable program.

5.1.5 REANALYSIS – IN 2009

As Angela03, I believed that practices as Principal (that is, my leadership) were an important component of what was responsible for the change. The main change between 2002 and 2003-04 had been me. Positive changes appeared to follow new initiatives that I had implemented.

Looking back as Angela09, it is not so clear. It is evident that the setting up of the *Proud and Deadly* process (from the Cherbourg *Strong and Smart* model) had a positive effect, and that I had found a way to implement this process as a non-Indigenous female principal (I could not directly copy some of the methods of Sarra as he used some techniques only available to an Indigenous male principal). It is also evident that the *Proud and Deadly* plans were a major part of the success of my implementation.

However, the form of these successes shows that my component of the success should be seen in conjunction with other stakeholders at Doongal – the staff, the students and the Community. It helped that the two staff I took to Cherbourg came back enthused by the *Strong and Smart* approach. The success of the *Proud and Deadly* plans and the

training of the teacher aides relied on the strong cooperation and effort of these staff, and nothing would have moved if the Community members I visited had not decided to support the school and my actions.

Therefore, as will be seen in the theory development that follows in the next four sections, the success of change in a school like Doongal is an interaction of many factors and is not to be attributed to one person or one section. Principalship, or more directly principal leadership, will be seen as an umbrella of actions that enable and coordinate the actions that have effect.

5.2 SCHOOL FACTORS

The five key components for school success in Indigenous Community schools in light of the literature were: (1) *high expectations*, (2) *building pride and self worth*, (3) *Indigenous leadership*, (4) *effective pedagogy*, and (5) *connection to community*.

5.2.1 HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Looking across Chapter 4, *high expectations* was an important factor and was referred to many times in the chapter. These references included high expectations of teachers towards students; the community towards teachers; and the expectations of myself as the Principal towards the students, staff, and parents. Section 4.1 highlights that after visiting Cherbourg, it became clear that the school community needed to ensure that it consistently expected students to do well. Teachers who had seen the students at Cherbourg in classes and doing well in their learning did not have to be convinced. All teachers who were part of the work-shadow program at another Indigenous Community school were also made aware of the impact of high expectations in terms of the teaching of curriculum.

During the first few weeks of the *Finding Out* stage, it is clear from survey results and diary notes (Appendices D and G) that there were not high expectations of the students or the staff. The behaviour of some students and staff was very poor. When expectations were lifted the behaviour of both students and staff began to improve (see Section 4.2.1). Section 4.2.4 highlights that teachers knew what was acceptable and that Principal expectations were high, ensuring that consequences for both students and staff who did not try to meet expectations were carried through.

Teachers' expectations and standards at Doongal State School were constantly challenged; however there was a lot of support in the form of professional development offered to teachers to assist them to raise their standards of teaching and expect better outcomes from the students as evident in Section 4.2.4 and Appendix D. By challenging the behaviour of teachers and teacher aides, a clear message was sent about acceptable behaviour. People then knew they had a choice, to either improve their own practice, move to another school or undergo an underperformance program (see Section 4.3.2).

Teachers would often complain about student behaviour, attendance or inability to grasp concepts. Teachers were encouraged to seek out a child's parents and build a relationship with them so they could work together to improve the educational outcomes for that child. Teachers were encouraged to build relationships with the students to enable them to present the curriculum in a culturally appropriate and engaging way. The results of this research indicate that, by building strong relationships with students, negative behaviours decreased (see Section 4.4.1 and Appendices C and D). Teachers before 2003 had in the majority of cases failed to have high expectations of the students; this in turn led to parents having low expectations of the school and the outcomes achieved by their children which is demonstrated in Appendix D.

The fact that Doongal State School had 100% Indigenous students meant that there was no racial comparison in the classroom as highlighted in the literature by Trow (1997), however Rosenthal and Jacobson's (1968) claims that teacher expectations could be a self-fulfilling prophecy were true for the staff and students at Doongal. It was common to hear people talk about teaching Doongal students at a lower level or giving them a lot of free time in the classroom, because they could not handle a full day of learning, or that violence was accepted at the school because that was what the students witnessed in the Community (see Section 4.1.3). By challenging the beliefs of students, staff and community that the school could be a place of peace where violence was not accepted and a place of learning, they were able to begin to make that a reality. Doongal was not perfect and violence was not eradicated, but there were fewer violent incidents occurring on a daily basis as demonstrated in Section 4.4.1 and Appendix C. Having the expectation that violence would not be tolerated and the support from the Community ensured that the school became a more peaceful place as witnessed by the local priest (see Section 4.2.2).

The statements from the Community members who said that their children were not as smart as the children at Guilford State School (see Section 4.2.3) allowed students and parents to accept poor academic outcomes and not strive for excellence. Being Indigenous and academic did not conform to the expected social norms. Kelley and Thibaut (1954) asserted that a group norm was a behavioural rule that was accepted, at least to some degree, by group members. The results indicated that the group norm of Doongal State School was a culture of acceptance of poor academic outcomes (see Section 4.1.2). The language used to describe the students was often negative (violent, apathetic, lazy, uninterested, not as smart as “white” kids). By challenging firstly the staff about their own beliefs, then the students about how they were perceived and the Community about its acceptance of these beliefs, these negative perceptions began to change (see Section 4.2.2).

This study confirms Fanshawe’s (1999) study. Teachers at Doongal learned to be demanding of students and had faith in their academic ability. Teachers who were warm and supportive had better attendance each day than those who were not. Teachers and teacher aides who organised stimulating activities that were relevant to the students’ needs and with which the students could identify achieved better outcomes.

Having high expectations is not a new theory as a result of this research; however this research goes further than Fanshawe’s (1999) study as Chapter 4 highlighted that it is important to hold high expectations not only of students but also of Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff, the community and the leader themselves. High expectations are a well known and important factor in the success of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. This study reinforced Sarra’s (2006) research in terms of high expectations. As a non-Indigenous female, I needed to witness what high expectations looked like in an Indigenous Community school and clearly visualise for myself what I could reasonably expect from the students, staff and community. Importantly I needed to have high expectations of myself and demonstrate this in my interactions with the three groups.

5.2.2 PRIDE AND SELF WORTH

Pride and self worth was an important factor influencing Indigenous student achievement and was referred to nine times in Chapter 4, which demonstrates that by challenging the behaviour of students and staff employed at the school, the culture can

change. The *Proud and Deadly* slogan was used as a vehicle to bring about change at Doongal State School (see Section 4.2.2 and Appendix D). Once students, staff and the wider community had a concept of what it meant to be *Proud and Deadly* they were able to be challenged about whether their behaviour matched the mantra. If a child was not behaving appropriately in the classroom they would be challenged as to whether they were subscribing to stereotypes or striving to be *Proud and Deadly*. Indigenous workers were also challenged regarding their work ethic and their ability to be good role models for the students, and teachers were challenged regarding the appropriateness of the curriculum and the relationships they built with the children (see Section 4.2.2).

Values education was another strategy used to challenge behaviour and educate students about more appropriate behaviours. McConaghy (2000) states however that non-Indigenous people have been instilling attitudes of good citizenship in Indigenous people for many years. It is important to point out that the values education program implemented at Doongal State School encompassed human values such as caring, honesty, love, consideration and respect. These values were accepted by the Doongal Community as important culturally-based values to be espoused in the school. This was another vehicle through which behaviour of the whole school community could be challenged. The fact that school staff began talking in terms of values when talking amongst themselves created a more cohesive staff that was more tolerant of each other and students. Thus building pride and self worth in students was linked to effective pedagogy in the classroom and effective teaching was linked to the effective implementation of programs to build pride and self worth. The results of Chapter 4 highlight the following quote by Dhall and Dhall (2003):

It is through a problem solving approach based on a wider concept of education that the teachers can change the ethos of the school, build a common code of conduct, shared values and accepted norms of behaviour. This will enhance communication and contribute towards teacher satisfaction. (p. 4)

The negative stigma that can sometimes be associated with Indigenous people does impact on the expectations and life goals for Indigenous students in Community schools. By changing the language used to describe the children, such as *Proud and Deadly* and expecting students to be proud and deadly, teachers and students begin to believe in themselves and their future and perform accordingly at school (see Section 4.4.1).

The attribution of inferiority to being Indigenous impacts on Indigenous people's sense of self which can result in rage and anger displayed. The violence and rioting displayed by the students at Doongal was a demonstration of this frustration. This frustration is further compounded by the many obstacles Indigenous students need to negotiate to successfully find their way through the education system (Cooper et al., 2004). The programs implemented at Doongal State School to build pride and self worth contributed to lower levels of violence witnessed within the school grounds (see Appendix C).

Marx (1906) believed that human beings must prove the truth or falsity of their thoughts in every day interactions with the world. If a person discovers inaccuracies with their world view of identity within society they still cling to these ideological understandings of themselves, their class position and their cultural heritage. This consciousness about the inaccuracies is usually dormant and controlled by unconscious forces beyond the control of a child in school. According to Marx, a child may not have thought much about their future and the ways success in schooling may help them in later life. This could be because their parents did not go beyond grade 7, so they will accept the social position of their parents. The child may then think about what they were learning in class and how unrelated it was to their life, and how they were made to feel incompetent and unworthy of consideration and respect because they had failed to complete a worksheet or hand in homework. This influences their feelings of self worth. Sections 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 clearly indicate that by challenging understandings which have historically been thrust upon Indigenous people, there can be an improvement in feelings of pride and self worth.

Very little has been documented in the literature regarding challenging the negative perceptions of being Indigenous. Sarra's (2005) implementation of the *Strong and Smart* program at Cherbourg State School is the only example in the literature to my knowledge of a strategy used to challenge students academically and build pride associated with Aboriginality. It is as a result of the *Strong and Smart* program at Cherbourg State School that the *Proud and Deadly* program was implemented at Doongal State School (see Section 4.1).

At Doongal State School the development of the *Proud and Deadly* mantra provided a vehicle to drive all other agendas and challenge some of the inaccuracies of

the children's world view. When the language used about the school and the students changed, the attitudes of students, parents, staff and community also began to change (see Sections 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 and Appendix D). McConaghy (2000) writes that in the days of the missions up until the 1980s a significant feature of the missionary school was that they had considerable influence on the community. It was observed that children were often the best way of reaching their parents. It was through the school program that parents began to expect that their children could achieve academically and behave more appropriately at school.

Expecting students to achieve academically and display behaviour associated with being proud of who they were, allowed students to conform to the new expected norms as described in Section 4.2. This new behaviour was quickly spread to the parents and embraced throughout the Community. The posters and song were marketing tools for the new identity to be embraced at Doongal State School (see Section 4.2.3). This view is supported by St George (1985), Malin (1994) and Trow (1984).

Sarra (2005) agrees with the idea that changing the language associated with being a student from Doongal State School from very negative language, such as poorly behaved, low achieving, lazy and uninterested, to very positive language about being proud of who you are and ensuring your behaviour reflects what it is you want people to believe about you, can begin to change the stereotype. Similarly to Cherbourg, it was not until the students started to feel "proud" that they could get on with the business of being "deadly". Once the students knew what path we were going to take as a whole school they found it easier to conform to the expectations. Every staff member needed to agree with this direction so that students were hearing the same language from all staff members and they were expected to behave in a manner reflective of the slogan. For this reason the understanding of the slogan needed to be clear and well communicated.

This was perhaps the most challenging factor to implement as a non-Indigenous female. Doongal was a Community school where pride and self worth had been decreased due to a history of poor academic and social outcomes. The Principal's role was to raise self esteem and the students' ability to believe in themselves. My "whiteness" however made me a target of blame. I needed to show that I believed that each child attending the school could achieve academically and to create a school they could be proud of. Therefore, although the mantra was important, there needed to be authenticity behind its

implementation. This is supported by Valdes (1996), Li (2002), Langer (1987) and Mikulecky (1990) who all comment on the importance of a continuity of values between home and school and stress the importance of culture in schooling. The use of the word “deadly” was a word unique to the Indigenous community when used in this context. To translate the word into a school setting to use as a word meaning academic excellence was a powerful reinforcer of the home/school connection.

5.2.3 INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP

Indigenous leadership was a critical link between the Community members and enforcement of high expectations and was referred to nine times in Chapter 4. Indigenous staff within the school needed to be leaders, as Section 4.1.3 highlighted that when there was a lack of Indigenous leadership the workforce was disconnected. The Principal of the school needed to build the leadership capacity of the Indigenous staff. This was highlighted in Section 4.1.2. Non-Indigenous teachers needed to understand the value of the Indigenous teacher aide and what they could contribute culturally to the classroom (see Section 4.3.2). Chapter 4 results indicated that when the capacity of the Indigenous teacher aides was built through professional development and high expectations, a valuing by the school of culture was evident (see Section 4.3).

The Indigenous teacher aides were often under utilised which was highlighted in Section 4.1.2. There was no induction program for teacher aides to have a clear understanding of their expected role in the classroom. Indigenous staff should be encouraged and given the opportunity for professional development and further study to encourage more Indigenous teachers in our classrooms.

The work of Lester (2000), Purdie (2003), Piirto (2007), Sarra (2005) and Cooper et al. (2005) agree that Indigenous teacher aides need to be given an equal status to non-Indigenous teachers in the classroom. At Doongal State School, reinforcing that the Indigenous teacher aides had equal status in the classroom ensured that both the non-Indigenous teacher and Indigenous teacher aide were considered as a united team by the students. The Indigenous teacher aides were considered as the experts on the students, as they knew all about their families and their histories. This information was vital for the teacher to be able to plan appropriate lessons (see Section 4.2.2). Teacher aides are usually the long-term workforce in Indigenous schools. By providing leadership

opportunities for them they will continue the momentum of improvement when non-Indigenous teachers transfer to other locations.

5.2.4 CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY

The importance of *community connections* was referred to on many occasions in Chapter 4. In part, this was due to connection to community allowing other factors to materialise and is therefore of major importance to the improvement of Indigenous student outcomes. Creating a partnership with key community members is critical to success in Indigenous education according to the evidence in Chapter 4. The community needs to know what the Principal believes in and how community members can assist in realising this vision. The Principal needs to value the culture of the community and embrace this in decision making as demonstrated in Section 4.2.

The school needs to be connected to the community, that is, community members need to feel that they have a say in the school and they are welcome at the school. Non-Indigenous school staff need to actively seek out community members to assist them with the teaching and learning in the classroom (see Section 4.3). The community needs to be informed about what is happening at the school and assist with behaviour management when necessary (see Section 4.2 and Appendix D2).

Literacy research on family-school involvement suggests parental involvement in both home and school activities can increase academic achievement (Swap, 1993). The story outlined in this thesis suggests an incongruity between home and school contexts. Most parents prior to 2003 were distanced from their children's school lives and had little communication with teachers (see Section 4.1). In this study the results indicated that there existed a gap between the theory and practice of home-schooling partnerships. Most families had little communication with the school (see Section 4.1); they knew little about schooling in the present context, or what their children were doing at school. Parents were experiencing frustration, doubt and anger but did not ever challenge the school. It did not appear that teachers or school administration had tried to understand parents or take any initiative to communicate with them (see Section 4.1). Therefore the link between theory and practice was missing. As Ryan and Adams (1995) stated, the result was that:

The culture had set the home and school, the two main developmental contexts of childhood, into separate spheres and erected powerful barriers between

them, parents and teachers hewing to their separate roles with only a minimum contact with each other across the family-school boundary. (p. 3)

The issue of the connection between home and school is prominent in the literacy lives of the students at Doongal State School. I have presented parent perceptions (see Section 4.2.3 and Appendix D1 and D2) in order to prompt readers to reflect on how and why the parents had these perceptions and what their perceptions tell us about the home-school connections.

As a non-Indigenous female, creating a community connection can be frightening because you are the minority culture and in my case had little understanding of the Doongal Community culture. Sarra told me that I needed to make community partnerships a priority if I wanted to succeed at Doongal State School. He said I needed to go with an Elder from the Community and meet people. I needed to step outside of my comfort zone and physically go to the houses of the students and Community members. The literature refers to parents making the connection with the school, however in an Indigenous Community school, it is important for the school staff to make connections with the parents.

5.2.5 EFFECTIVE PEDAGOGY

Chapter 4 revealed that by the teaching of cultural studies within the curriculum, teachers were able to work with the backgrounds of their students and make learning relevant to them thus being more effective in their pedagogy. The importance of *effective pedagogy* was a significant factor in Chapter 4 and was referred to many times.

As well as providing instruction in a mainstream context, the teachers at Doongal State School needed to cater for the learning styles of the students (see Section 4.1). The students tended to engage in learning when teachers acknowledged and catered for their communal world view by incorporating group work activities and relating time, place and relationships as well as land, language and culture (see Section 4.2). Students' holistic world view differed from the non-Indigenous teachers' world views which were more individual focused. Teachers who were able to adjust their teaching to incorporate Ernie Grant's (1998) Holistic Framework achieved greater success in improving student outcomes (see Section 4.3). Nakata (1999) stated that students needed to learn not only within this cultural context but also within the mainstream. While the mainstream context

is essential for success within the mainstream culture, the results from Chapter 4 indicated that at Doongal State School the level of absenteeism and engagement was so poor that teachers needed to ensure that school was relevant for students so that they could experience success and develop a climate of risk taking before more mainstream concepts could be implemented (see Section 4.4). This also allowed students to see that teachers valued their culture and way of learning. The result of a more cultural context to teaching allowed teachers to use more hands-on approaches to learning and incorporate local languages (see Section 4.4).

The fire during Easter 2003, as referred to in Section 4.2.1, took away teaching space and forced teachers to abandon the pencil and paper methods for more Indigenous traditional methods during the rebuilding process. Although it was a sad time, it was also serendipitous in that it enabled teachers to implement different teaching styles and deeply consider which resources were appropriate for the students. The teaching methods teachers used incorporated local language and culture as well as mainstream language and culture which were an important component for success at Doongal State School.

It was interesting to note that some of the teachers who had the best written plans were not necessarily the teachers who had the most engaging classrooms. Effective pedagogy requires teachers to build good relationships with students and to develop a deep understanding of their needs and learning styles in order to ensure student engagement.

5.2.6 OTHER FACTORS

Staff empowerment plans were a factor emerging from Chapter 4. This required *documentation* of goals, targets and strategies. These will be discussed in Section 5.4. Cultural connections were made through effective pedagogy and the use of the *Proud and Deadly* language. These School factors alone however would not have been sufficient to bring about change. Principal Leadership factors (see Section 5.3) and Change factors (see Section 5.4) were required to interact with School factors for success.

5.2.7 INTERACTION OF SCHOOL FACTORS

Figure 5.3 shows how each of these key components for success in Indigenous education relates to each other. *Principal leadership* has an overall influence and will be discussed further in Section 5.3. *Principal leadership* is required to set the standard and

influence the *community connections*. The leader needs to build the capacity of the teacher aides to inspire *Indigenous leadership* within the school. This will impact on all other areas. *Indigenous leadership* is integral to enforcing *high expectations* and creating a vital link with the *community*. *Staff Empowerment plans* (particularly the documentation that emerged from them) will be discussed in Section 5.4. *Leadership, high expectations* and *community connections* also impact on the curriculum and *pedagogy* within each classroom to ensure that lessons are engaging and cater for learning styles as well as incorporate a cultural studies component. Both the Principal and the community need to have high expectations of the students and staff who teach in their schools. *Student pride and self worth* will result from high expectations and the implementation of positive language used by school personnel and the community.

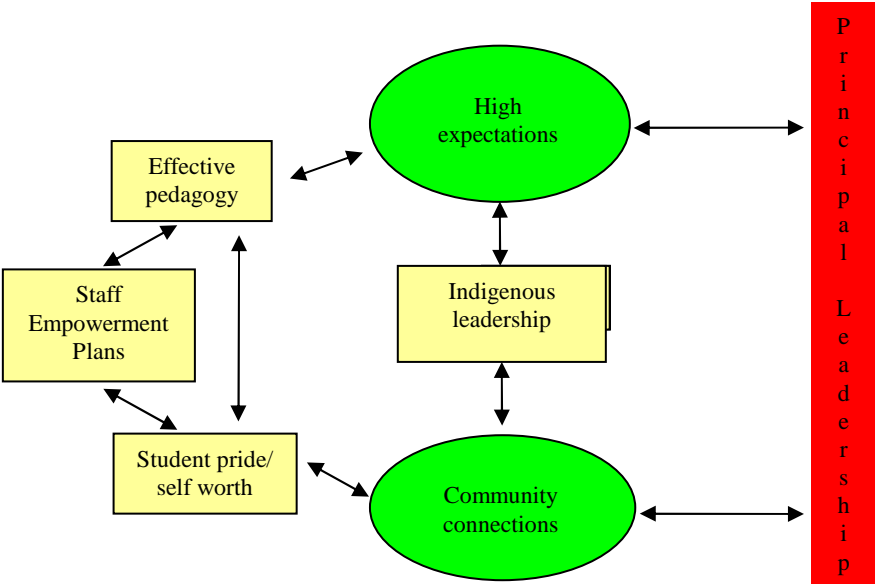


Figure 5.3. School factors that promote improved student outcomes in Indigenous Community schools.

5.3 PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP FACTORS

The five leadership traits of Bennis and Nanus (1985), namely *vision, communication, persistence, empowerment* and *organisational ability* are the traits through which I have analysed my own leadership practices with the addition of *empathy, trust, credibility* and *opportunity in adversity* as findings from Chapter 4, Sections 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4.

5.3.1 VISION

The importance of *vision* was referred to a number of times in Chapter 4 giving it major importance as a Principal Leadership factor. The results clearly indicated that the implementation of the *Proud and Deadly* vision was the catalyst for success. Once the process was put into place for the Community and the school staff to collaboratively establish a direction for the school, and once they had a clear understanding of the direction, real change began to occur (see Section 4.2 and Appendices C and D). If the vision had been established at only the school level without buy-in from the Community the success would not have been as great. Once the Indigenous teacher aides were satisfied that the *Proud and Deadly* vision was accepted by the local Council and Community they really began to genuinely embrace the concept (see Section 4.2). This is supported by House (2004), and by Barsade's (2002) "ripple effect", which sees leadership as the ability to influence the emotions of a group.

Staff survey results indicated that it was through this vision that things began to change (see Appendix D6). All staff and students were informed about the vision and it was reinforced regularly. There was no acceptance of behaviour that was any less than *Proud and Deadly*. The vision united staff because they all knew what it was they were working towards and the language was common across the school (see Section 4.3). This is supported by Sergiovanni's (1987) theory that states that what the leader is trying to achieve needs to be communicated to staff, parents, community and students and must have integrity. Henry and Johns (1993) articulate this type of leadership as employee centred and it resonates with French and Raven's (1968) bases of interpersonal power.

The Caldwell and Spinks (1992) model calls for a vision to bring about excellence. The *Proud and Deadly* vision did this. The literature on school change argues that effective transformational leadership requires clarity, consensus and commitment. By implementing the *Proud and Deadly* program through the collaborative process of community meetings and staff meetings, I was able to establish what stakeholders really cared about and create a vision around that (see Section 4.2). Elias et al. (2003) state that this creates ownership of the program, and this is what occurred with the *Proud and Deadly* program.

As the Principal, it was important that the vision I communicated was simple to remember and had meaning that was clearly understood by all stakeholders. *Clarity* of

vision is an essential component to successfully implementing a vision such as *Proud and Deadly* into Doongal State School.

5.3.2 COMMUNICATION

Communication is referred to many times throughout Chapter 4 which indicates that it is an important leadership factor. The initial meeting to discuss issues at the school and the *Proud and Deadly* strategy (see Section 4.2) ensured that Community members understood that the school community genuinely wanted to improve outcomes for the students. The communication of the vision as well as the difficulties in achieving the vision were communicated effectively. This was evidenced through the clear understanding that teachers and teacher aides had about the vision (see Section 4.2). The Community members knew that their support was needed to ensure progression and they gave a commitment to do what they could (see Section 4.2.3).

Parent enrolment interviews provided a good means of communication between the Principal and the parents. It provided the opportunity to talk to new parents about the expectations of their children at Doongal State School. Parents also understood the consequences that would be imposed on a child who chose inappropriate behaviour (see Section 4.3). Sergiovanni (1984) supports this strategy as he believes leaders need to be able to clearly communicate what they stand for. Feidler (1967) suggests that, as well as communication, the relationship between leadership and situational favourableness is important.

Student expectations were communicated through the vision of *Proud and Deadly*. There were many rewards offered in the early days for appropriate behaviour and the achievement of improved academic outcomes. These successes were publicised in the school newsletter and in the wider community (see Section 4.3).

Leadership involves the influencing of followers through the communication process and towards the attainment of goals. Poor communication initially hindered my efforts (see Section 4.1). It was important to learn about effective communication with staff and community. The language barrier and cultural differences initially provided barriers to effective communication with students, and Indigenous teacher aides. Once these obstacles were realised, the vision was able to be communicated.

5.3.3 PERSISTENCE

Persistence was referred to on several occasions in Chapter 4 and was a major contributor to the realisation of the vision. The *Proud and Deadly* vision was something I believed in deeply. I was determined not to give up in the early days when I believed that the Community had no confidence in me (see Section 4.1). I thought that my vision was right and that I would continue to try to implement it regardless of the criticism. Insisting that strategies were implemented by staff when they did not want to follow the vision is also evidence of persistence (see Section 4.2).

As a Principal it is vitally important that persistence is a personal trait. It would be of little value to have a vision but no persistence to ensure that the vision is realised as is evidenced in Sections 4.3 and 4.4. This is supported by Bennis and Nanus (1985); however Stogdill's (1974) personality traits suggest that these are not a predictor of leadership potential. Duffy (2003) agrees with this personality trait; he believes that a principal needs to be passionate about what they do and have a burning desire to do what is right for children, teachers and the school system.

Bennis and Nanus (1985) describe persistence as the ability to continue ploughing ahead regardless of obstacles. The road to improving student outcomes was not always easy. There were many obstacles thrown up along the way, including a major fire (see Section 4.2.1). Teachers were not always supportive and Community members often did not provide the support we needed. The ability of the majority of school staff to plough on regardless of these obstacles demonstrated the intense commitment held by the majority.

5.3.4 EMPOWERMENT

This is perhaps the most important Principal Leadership trait as it was highlighted a number of times in Chapter 4. During the early stage (see Section 4.1) it was highlighted that a non-empowering leadership style was evident. Staff did not take control of situations they were faced with; instead my leadership style was to have control over decision making and only provide token opportunities for staff members to have input into the decision making at the school (see Section 4.1).

During Stage 2 (see Section 4.2) staff were required to write their own *Proud and Deadly* plans to outline how they were going to improve outcomes in their own classrooms and how they were going to work with the Indigenous teacher aides. This

strategy took the focus away from the Principal as the only decision maker and instead empowered teachers and teacher aides to come up with their own solutions. This finding supports Frigo et al. (2003) regarding the pro-active engagement of workers and McRae et al.'s (2000) theory that effective leadership does not always begin with the leader but is lead and supported by the leader. Sergiovanni (1984) also supports the concept of a constructed reality, where the workers construct the reality they wish to work in.

Unlike the Principal at Cherbourg, I was not an expert on Indigenous culture and needed to find another way to bring about school change. Firstly there needed to be the admission that the answers were not available and it was necessary to elicit the help of all the staff and the Community to realise the vision. Although there was empowerment of the school staff there needed to be the provision of the support they needed to achieve their identified goals (see Section 4.3). Darder (1991) points out that there are issues of power differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people; by challenging these embedded assumptions, Indigenous leadership was able to emerge.

Ensuring that the Indigenous teacher aides were empowered and valued in the classroom enabled a richness of culture to evolve. The Indigenous staff began to take on a more proactive role in the school with behaviour management and built partnerships with the non-Indigenous teachers. This was perhaps one of the most rewarding outcomes of empowerment as there were Indigenous teacher aides who enrolled in a university course to become teachers and whose self esteem improved (see Sections 4.3 and 4.4). This goes further than the findings of Simpkins, Thomas, and Thomas (1982) regarding their devolution of power theory. It is supported by Caldwell and Spinks (1992) who touch on empowerment with their goal setting and needs identification processes.

5.3.5 ORGANISATIONAL ABILITY

Organisational ability was referred to several times in Chapter 4 giving it relative importance. Good principal leadership will require organisational ability. Principals operate within the boundaries of financial constraints and policies and processes which are not always conducive to the needs of the school (see Section 4.1). Organisational ability allowed me to understand the existing processes within the school which had not achieved Education Queensland benchmarks (see Section 4.2). These processes were

refined and improved in order to ensure that subsequent audit reports were satisfactory (see Section 4.4).

Organisational ability also refers to the capacity to monitor followers, learn from mistakes and improve performance (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). This was evident throughout Chapter 4 as procedures were tried and tested to improve the overall administration of the school. The work of Beare (1989) and Elias et al. (2003) support the findings of this study; they argue that it is important to have an environment of good processes and support.

5.3.6 EMPATHY

Empathy was not a Principal Leadership factor which was mentioned in the literature; however it was a factor which came through in Chapter 4 and was highlighted several times.. The effect it could have on the staff was particularly evident when empathy was not shown to the teachers after the fire destroyed the school (see Section 4.2.1). In Section 4.2 there was a realisation that certain events affect people in particular ways. It was not that there was no empathy towards the teachers for their loss of resources; it was that there was a need to look to the future and not dwell on events that couldn't be changed. If a little time had been taken to show more empathy and organisational ability it may have avoided upsetting people at this time. Frigo and Corrigan's (2003) study highlighted advocating for students, staff and families; this study highlighted the need for the existence of empathy as a precursor to advocating.

A deep empathy for the Community was highlighted in Section 4.1 and the situation they had found themselves in. This empathy with the community was a factor which inspired persistence in achieving the vision. Therefore empathy is an important Principal Leadership factor. This builds on the work of Grogan (1996), Davis (1996) and Dunlap and Schmuck (1995); they argue that a fundamental concern for the welfare of children and staff is a key to effective female leadership.

5.3.7 TRUST

Trust was not a factor that emerged strongly in the literature; however it has emerged strongly in Chapter 4 making it a major Principal Leadership factor. It was not until there was trust that things began to change. There was a distinct lack of trust evident in Stage 1 (see Section 4.1). As a result of not letting staff make decisions the leadership

style was controlling and authoritarian. Stage 2 (see Section 4.2) demonstrated a turning point in leadership style. It was after the admission that the leader/Principal did not know how the school was going to move forward that trust in others to find solutions to problems emerged. This ensured that staff took responsibility and ownership of the problem and the solution (see Section 4.2).

The *Proud and Deadly (Staff Empowerment)* plan was the strategy used to place trust in the staff to come up with their own solutions to the difficulties they were experiencing in their classrooms. The staff had to trust the Principal to support them to achieve their goals and the Principal had to trust that the staff would endeavour to meet their goals (see Section 4.2). This is supported by Owens and Steinhoff (1976) who assert that a group needs to commit to a decision and be involved in the action; however they do not refer to trusting people to achieve the goals of the decision. Davis (1996) refers to trust in terms of followers trusting the leader. This study has clearly shown that the leader needs to also trust the followers for them to develop ownership of the solutions.

Trust was also evident between the Principal and the Community. There had been a history of mistrust. It was likely that through building community connections, trust began to develop and community members became more supportive.

5.3.8 CREDIBILITY

Credibility emerged as a Principal Leadership factor, particularly in the second year of the study and has been referred to three times in Chapter 4. In the first year there was credibility as a Principal because of previous Principal positions, however there was no credibility as a Principal in an Indigenous Community school (see Section 4.1).

Credibility was earned through the sharing of data. The data that were collected showed definite improvements in student behaviour and learning. This allowed new staff members to see that the vision and strategies used to achieve the vision were credible (see Section 4.3). Clarke (1994) supports this view that a leader needs credibility to influence followers. The fact that the Principal had been part of the changes in 2003 and was able to give expert advice to the new staff ensured credibility. Continuing staff had shared the data and were convinced that the direction of the school was the right one. It was easier to convince people to support the vision when credibility was evident (see Section 4.3). Winkler's (2004) view that relationships need to be strong before success can occur is a

precursor to the effect credibility can have on success. This is also supported by Greenfield (1986).

5.3.9 OPPORTUNITY IN ADVERSITY

This has emerged in Chapter 4 as a Principal Leadership factor and was highlighted several times in Chapter 4. The ability to see opportunity when the situation was adverse ensured that staff morale remained high. The Reflection Survey (Appendix D8) highlighted that this was important for staff. It assisted in staff morale and staff absenteeism, which can in turn affect student absenteeism. *Opportunity in adversity* is a Principal Leadership factor which allowed me to continue to work towards achieving the vision when the situation seemed to be adverse. This has been highlighted throughout Chapter 4. There are no references in the literature for this Principal Leadership factor.

5.3.10 INTERACTION OF PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP FACTORS

Each of the Principal Leadership factors is interrelated. Firstly the leader needs to have a *vision*. This vision will not be realised unless there is *persistence* therefore these need to be present first and clearly articulated to all school staff through *communication*. Vision and persistence are therefore an initial major requirements. This model shows *credibility* is earned through the evidence of success or previous success and through the Principal's knowledge and expertise of the community. *Communication* and *organisational ability* are central and of major importance to the process of good leadership. A Principal needs to clearly articulate their vision and have the capacity to monitor their staff, learn from their mistakes and consequently, improve performance. Principals need also to be *optimistic* (and in particular, draw *opportunity from adversity*) when things are not going the way they would like them to go and also express *empathy* for students, staff and community. Vision and persistence need to be evident through Principal Leadership, and along with *empowerment* these are the major factors contributing to success.

Trust will lead to *empowerment* which is clearly demonstrated as a major contributor to staff ownership and motivation to improve student academic outcomes. Once staff are empowered, they will begin taking ownership for their own classrooms and the issues they are facing which will ensure they come up with their own solutions.

These Principal Leadership factors are represented diagrammatically in Figure 5.4. These factors when all present will work with the School factors and Change factors to bring about change.

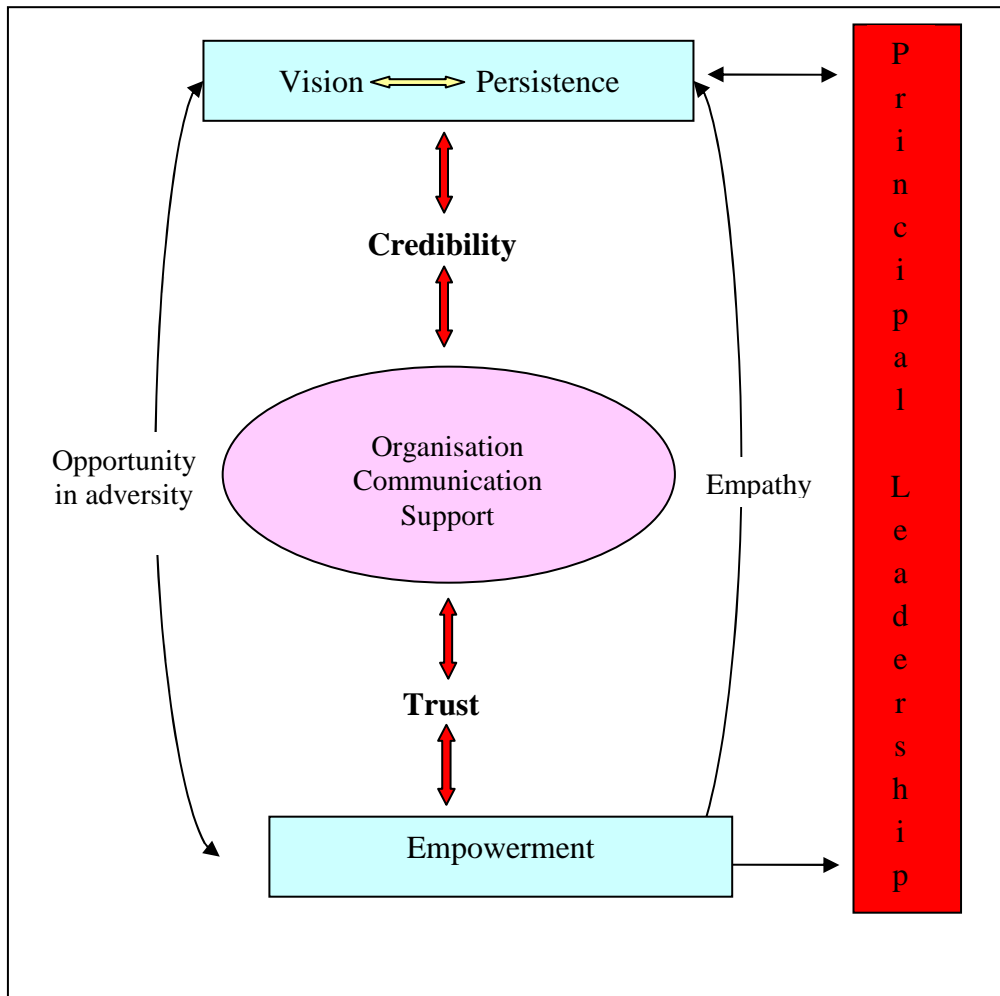


Figure 5.4. Principal Leadership factors required to improve student outcomes in Indigenous schools.

5.4 CHANGE FACTORS

The Change factors emerging from the literature and results include: *external expert input, support, peer sharing, success and time*. The notion of *staff empowerment plans* has emerged from the Results section (Chapter 4) where they were referred to as *Proud and Deadly plans*.

5.4.1 EXTERNAL EXPERTS

The impact of *external experts* was referred to a number of times in Chapter 4. Of major importance was the influence of Cherbourg State School and the empowering of

Indigenous teacher aides to provide vital information to the non-Indigenous teachers (see Section 4.1). The professional development provided, such as Education in Human Values, Ernie Grant's (1998) Holistic Framework, Brain Gym activities, behaviour management techniques, Walking, Talking Texts and mathematics professional development, was implemented with the clear understanding that it was important professional development to ensure the achievement of the *vision* (see Section 4.2). The findings of the thesis support the findings of Baturu and Cooper (2006) who assert that an outside expert needs to have input into desired change.

The professional development implemented was not only a result of a leadership decision but the collaborative input of Education Queensland experts, school staff and the Community which is in contrast to Duigan and MacPherson (1992) who assert that leadership decides what is to be valued and what excellent teaching methods are. The open and honest discussions and the climate of trust amongst staff as well as the desire to improve student outcomes supports Clarke and Hollingsworth's (2002) study which showed that the school environment had a significant influence on teacher growth.

5.4.2 SUPPORT

This Change factor was referred to several times in Chapter 4. Teachers were given *support* through the provision of additional resources and the opportunities to discuss the implementation of their new skills and ideas gained through external expert input during supervision sessions (see Section 4.2). Two different types of support emerged from Chapter 4; "just in time" support and support from professional development programs. The importance of these two forms of support is argued by Tunica (1995), Clarke (1994), Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002), Craft (1996) and Hoban (2002). This study found that support that is provided to staff when there is a problem will often make the staff more receptive to implementation.

Folds (1997) stated that professional development must recognise and support teachers experiencing cultural isolation and that non-Indigenous teachers labour to deliver an inappropriate curriculum in Community schools with a lack of Community support. Initially this was found to be true; however, as the Community noticed that the teachers were reviewing their own practice and students began enjoying coming to school,

Community support improved (see Section 4.3). Relationships between teachers and parents also improved as a result of the leadership expectation that this would occur.

5.4.3 PEER SHARING

Peer sharing was evident in Chapter 4 a number of times. The staff morale and social climate which had been established ensured that the staff felt safe within the group to take risks with their teaching and reflect openly on their practice during the debriefing sessions and the supervision sessions (see Sections 4.1 and 4.2). Peer sharing was effective because there was a culture of teachers trying to improve their own practice, which supports literature by Harris and Lambert (2003) and Wenger (1998) who state that when teachers are given the opportunity to work and learn together, enhanced quality of work is produced, and in this way leadership capacity is built.

Tunica's (1995) view that the teacher learning process depends heavily on the individual's ability to reflect on their practice and experiment with new ways of teaching has also been a finding of this research and is highlighted in Section 4.3.

5.4.4 SUCCESS

Success was highlighted a number of times in Chapter 4 and was a significant contributor to the change process. The results of good professional development when well executed in the classroom ensured that student classroom experiences improved as evidenced by the student survey results (see Appendix D4). When the quality of students' experiences improved, teacher satisfaction improved as students enjoyed coming to school and behaviour gradually improved. Success was effectively measured through the collection of data (see Section 4.4). The teachers and teacher aides regularly took data to gauge progression and be an indicator of the success or otherwise of various interventions and programs. Beck and Murphy (1993) highlight the significance of the collection of performance data and that success requires the Principal to provide guidance to improve performance that is data driven.

Professional development provided by the Queensland University of Technology for the Indigenous teacher aides was contextual for themselves and the Community. The teacher aides who felt that they were valued in the classroom and had formed a good relationship with the non-Indigenous teacher were able to try out new skills and had more success implementing the concepts they had learned than the teacher aides who did not

have such a good relationship with the class teacher. This supports Winkler's (2004) view that relationships are the key to success and Chaffey's (2004, cited in Piirto, 2007) work on the impact of the relationship between the teacher and the Indigenous teacher aide. Telford (1996) however asserts that success in Indigenous schools should be measured by happiness and well being as well as test scores. Fullan and Hargraves (1992) argue that school improvement is related to organisational good health.

5.4.5 DOCUMENTATION

This factor has been a finding for this research and has been referred to several times in Chapter 4. It was the foundation of the success of the *Proud and Deadly* or *individual staff empowerment plans* (see Appendix C and F). These plans were written by the teachers and teacher aides indicating their own goals and the professional development requirements to achieve these goals. This research indicates that these plans were integral to the success achieved at Doongal State School because the teachers and teacher aides had ownership of their goals to improve social and academic outcomes in their classrooms (see Section 4.2). This was an empowering strategy which evolved as the ability of the Principal to trust the staff developed and they could find their own solutions to the problems (see Section 4.3). The findings of this study go beyond Likert's (in Hendry & Johns, 1993) employee-centred leadership style as staff were empowered to find the solutions to problems.

The plans do not have to be labelled *Proud and Deadly plans* when used in other contexts. In this section they will be referred to as *Staff Empowerment plans*. The theory is that the plan should be individual with accountability for the achievement of the goals to rest with the author of the plan (see Section 4.3). The inclusion of the plans contradicts French and Raven's (1968) theory that the leader influences other people's behaviour to attain goals.

This inclusion of the Staff Empowerment plans is a new addition to the Change factors. The importance of the plans in the change process needs to be highlighted for future reference. The external expert input was provided through the visit to Cherbourg. This provided clarity regarding a way forward for the staff at Doongal. The Staff Empowerment plans then allowed staff members to decide what they were going to do to address the situation in their own classrooms to achieve what they had witnessed at

Cherbourg or what they believed they could achieve. This in turn gave teachers and teacher aides ownership of the issues and made them think about the solutions. The staff members then became accountable for the success or otherwise of their actions. External expert input was required throughout the process and peer sharing, time and support were required to assist staff to achieve their goals. Havelock's (1973) theory supports this finding with staff being orientated towards the achievement of common goals. A common clarity, consensus and commitment are highlighted by Beare (1989) and Elias et al. (2003).

Staff Empowerment plans allowed the staff to decide the professional development they required and therefore made them more receptive to the external experts called upon to deliver it, rather than having a professional development agenda forced upon them. The professional development was sourced from appropriate external experts based on the Staff Empowerment plan.

5.4.6 INTERACTION OF CHANGE FACTORS

Figure 5.5 illustrates a process model of Change factors. In it, *leadership* is seen as integral for change and is reliant on the Principal Leadership factors (see Section 5.3.10). To improve student performance in an Indigenous Community school, *external expert input* needs to demonstrate what is possible; staff then need to write their own *Staff Empowerment plans*. This will then follow the action research model of act, observe, reflect and then replan. *External expert input* will offer the new knowledge and professional development required for achievement of desired outcomes outlined in the *Staff Empowerment plan*. Teachers and teacher aides will need *support* from the leaders of the school during the action cycle to encourage the implementation of the learned skills and the provision of appropriate resources. Staff will also need to experience *success* in order to ensure that they will continue to implement their new skills and improve their classroom practice. The documentation of success needs to occur during the observation cycle. School staff will require *time* for *peer sharing* to reflect on their progress towards their goals and share ideas and strategies in order to replan for the next cycle. This confirms Baturo and Cooper (2006) observations on professional development and is diagrammatically depicted feeding directly into the reflection stage of the cycle.

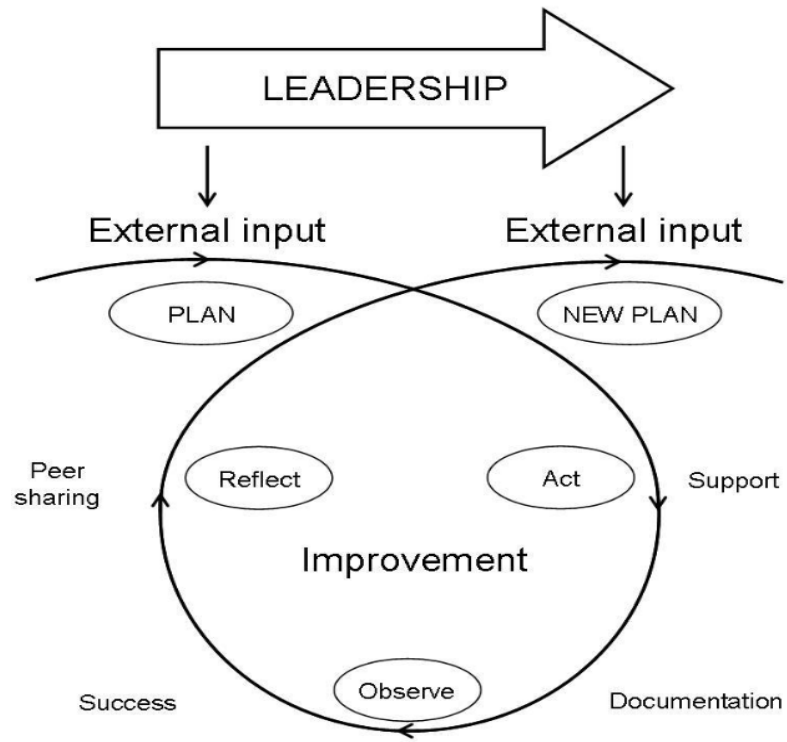


Figure 5.5. Process model of Change factors for improved student outcomes in Indigenous schools.

Figure 5.6 illustrates a component model of Change factors. Improvement will be achieved if *time, success, external experts, documentation, support, leadership and peer sharing* are evident.



Figure 5.6. Component model of Change factors for improved student outcomes in Indigenous schools.

5.5 NON-INDIGENOUS, FEMALE PRINCIPAL FACTORS

Angela03 was a non-Indigenous female principal. As can be seen in Chapter 4, her actions represented this background. It is important to analyse them in terms of their effect on the school.

As Moreton–Robinson (2004) pointed out, the power and privilege of “whiteness” was a factor that makes it more difficult for empowerment of Indigenous people. This was highlighted through section 4.3.2. Firstly Angela03 was a “white” person in a position of authority and the “white” teachers in the classrooms were also in positions of authority. To equalise the power base the Indigenous people needed to feel good about the position they held at the school and the skills they had that were unique to being Indigenous. Dyer (1988) supports this approach since the inequitable power base was identified in instances reported where Indigenous staff members did not see themselves as holding a “place at the table” during staff meetings, a plan and process were put into place to bring about change. The power and privilege of “whiteness” was interrogated and acted upon. This shows that the style of leadership with is empowering and challenges the assumptions typically held by non-Indigenous people will create a path for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to compliment each other in the classroom.

Schein’s (1976) evocative article title “*Think Manager-Think Male*” is a still a fair representation in many contexts. Thus the male norm referred to by Schein is the expected leadership style and there is still pressure on women in management positions to exhibit male leadership styles to gain equality. Male leadership styles are typically more dominant and autocratic than females as well as more career oriented (Rakow, 1986). However, a more recent trend suggests that women leaders favour more interactive management styles than males. Tannen’s (1990) theories about men’s and women’s styles of communication suggests that men are more likely to be preoccupied with issues of hierarchy and status while women are more likely to be preoccupied with issues of equal participation and relationship. This can be seen in the methods adopted by Angela03 in Chapter 4 where she adopts a collaborative and supportive style of leadership, particularly in relation to the *Staff Empowerment plans*. This was effective in changing teachers and building cooperation between school, community and students.

Harris et al.’s (2004) effective female leadership themes of *joy, excellence for all* and *spirituality* were also reflected in aspects of Angela03’s leadership style. First, the

documentation of the successes in the *Staff Empowerment plans*, for example, enabled teachers to enjoy coming to work each day even though situations were difficult. By appealing to the teachers' beliefs about teaching and what drew them to the profession, Angela's actions supported teachers find joy in the small steps along the way to improving outcomes for the students. Second, through home visits, tighter discipline and insistence upon improved classroom pedagogy, Angela's actions ensured that excellence for all was seen as a purpose of Doongal by all the school community. For examples, the *proud and deadly* program enabled students to know that excellence was the goal of the school and that this goal was achievable. Third, through implementing the *Education in Human Values* program, Angela supported a growth in spirituality in the students (Dhall & Dhall, 2003).

One interesting observation is that, in her collaboration and support, Angela can be seen to reflect the vital role of women in guiding societies and relationships and carrying the values of their culture that Indigenous people have understood for thousands of years (Medicine & Albers, 1983). When Indigenous leaders evaluate important issues, they listen to everyone's voice before offering advice or recommending action. The female ability to effectively negotiate complex social issues has been proven in Indigenous communities over thousands of years (Jacobs & Witt, 2006). There is a possibility that female principal leadership can be successful because it may resonate with female Indigenous leadership.

The actions of Angela also meant that, except for a few instances, she followed the deeply embedded agendas of the culture of Doongal. Bowers (1994) stated that there are hidden assumptions and values regarding women and other outsiders to the dominant male culture. These assumptions would have existed during the two-year study at Doongal State School. My background meant that I was foreign to the culture in which I found myself a leader. Since I was aware of my lack of knowledge about Indigenous education, I made sure that through building relationships with key stakeholders I was able to ask questions to clarify my own understanding and test out ideas.

Finally, it is interesting to surmise that Angela's female leadership actions were accepted by the majority of teachers who teach Indigenous students because the majority of these teachers are non-Indigenous females. It would only be making more excuses for

the failing of Indigenous education to imply that being a non-Indigenous female Principal is a disadvantage in terms of success in Indigenous Community schools.

It appears from the literature that success in Community schools relies on good leadership (e.g., Sarra, 2003). There was success in Doongal, so the question is to what can it be attributed? Obviously, success can be attributed to the support of school staff, community members and students. However, this sub-section is looking at Angela03 and trying to deconstruct the activity in Doongal so that implications for non-Indigenous female leadership can be drawn.

Some actions appear to be positive for any type of principal, male or female, Indigenous and non-Indigenous; building a vision, developing collaborative relationships, and culturally appropriate and empowering actions. In particular, good relationships are at the heart of good leadership, not only with the school community but also with the wider community. It was also true for Angela03 that although there may have been some initial prejudices, race and gender did not appear to be factors once trust and relationship were established. Trust and relationships appear on the surface to be a strength of female principals; thus, it is interesting to surmise that typical female leadership characteristics and actions may be an enabler for success. Although, we cannot answer this, the evidence from Chapter 4 is that Angela03's successes as a female non-Indigenous principal were because of these characteristics.

Indirect: the implementation of documentation in the form of staff empowerment plans allowed the leadership style to be indirect. Teachers and teacher aides were working towards their own goals which ultimately resulted in improvement of whole school data.

Community and external support: This Indirect leadership also led to external and community support. A strong component of Angela03's actions were in bringing in opportunities for staff to gain experience from other sites, and building bridges with the community.

Nurturing: The provision of just in time support and appropriate professional development, as well as ad hoc meetings, professional supervision and peer sharing opportunities contributed to a nurturing environment for inexperienced teachers.

Collaborative: By facilitating meetings involving school staff and key stakeholders, a climate of collaboration was established.

Empowering: School staff were empowered to find their own solutions to the problems they were experiencing in their classrooms through the implementation of the Staff empowerment plans.

Synergy driven: this occurred when staff began to work as a team to ensure that the overall result was greater than the sum of their individual efforts and capabilities.

Nurturing leads to collaboration and then to empowerment, all of this is integrated into an effective program through the synergy of the team, and the change is supported through the indirect form of non-Indigenous female principal involvement. This is diagrammatically illustrated in Figure 5.7.

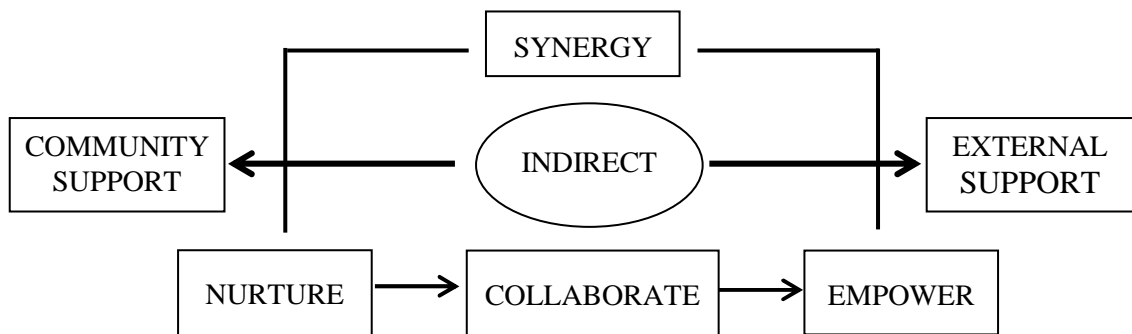


Figure 5.7. Characteristics of effective non-Indigenous female principals.

In summary, Chapter 4 highlights that good leadership is crucial for success in Indigenous schools. The entire school community needs to have confidence that the Principal is a good leader. The school vision and values need to be continually reinforced and committed to by the whole school. The processes of decision making need to be professional and inclusive of all stakeholders.

A good leader needs to manage and support all staff and maintain high expectations. The leader of the school needs to be able to provide resources, broker professional development and support teachers as they learn to teach Indigenous students. Leadership is the key to all three models discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

The overall aim of this thesis was to critically reflect on what happened at Doongal State School from 2003 to 2004 in my time there as a non-Indigenous female principal. The particular objectives were:

- (1) to describe my experiences as Principal at Doongal in relation to literature on Indigenous education, leadership and school change;
- (2) to explore changes in myself and others (staff, students and Community members) associated with the school across 2003-4 in comparison to literature on principals of Indigenous Community schools;
- (3) to use the results of (2) to reassess impact (the effectiveness of my actions as Principal on staff, students and Community, particularly in terms of school attendance, engagement and learning), and reanalyse attribution (the actions and the actors that appear to be responsible for positive changes);
- (4) to construct a theory that explains the results from (2) and (3) in terms of my and others' actions and practices at Doongal; and
- (5) to draw implications for improved principal practices with respect to Indigenous students, particularly for schools in remote Indigenous Communities but also for any school with Indigenous students.

This chapter does this by looking at the five objectives (Sections 6.1 to 6.4), discussing limitations (Section 6.5) and drawing implications (Section 6.6).

This chapter represents the views of Angela09; it refers to Angela03 in some conclusions.

6.1 OBJECTIVE ONE – DESCRIPTION/DISCUSSION

My first objective was to describe my experiences as Principal at Doongal in relation to literature on Indigenous education, leadership and school change. The **School factors** were clearly shown in Figure 5.3 (see Section 5.2). The School factors outlined in Figure 5.3 have provided clear strategies for Principals in Indigenous schools to

implement in order to improve the academic outcomes of students. The School Factors are:

High expectations is threefold and refers to maintaining high expectations of students to achieve academic success. The Principal needs to also hold high expectations of all school staff (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) as well as have high expectations of themselves to continue to lead the school and improve academic outcomes.

Building pride and self worth involves changing the way that Indigenous students think about themselves in their everyday interactions with the world. By expecting students and staff to behave in a way that was reflective of having pride, and challenging them about the negative perceptions of being Indigenous, student and staff behaviour will begin to change.

Effective pedagogy is essential for improved student academic outcomes. Teachers and teacher aides need to understand Indigenous learners and their connection to land, language and culture (Ernie Grant's [1998] Holistic Framework, see Section 2.2.1). Indigenous learners from community schools are generally English as Second Language Learners and need to be considered as such. Teachers also need to develop good relationships with students so that they feel secure enough to attend school and take learning risks.

Connection to community is critical to success in Indigenous schools. The local community can provide knowledge, cultural programs and support for school staff. Culture is a critical component to engagement of students and can be championed by local community members. This will develop a partnership between the school personnel and the community enabling authentic stakeholder participation in decision making.

Indigenous leadership needs to be developed and valued within the school. Non-Indigenous teachers need to value what the Indigenous teacher aide can contribute culturally to the classroom. The Indigenous teacher aides will know students and families in a far more intimate way than the non-Indigenous teacher. It is through these relationships that many problems can be quickly solved. Indigenous teacher aides need to be empowered to find ways to improve educational outcomes for the students and act as appropriate role models.

The **Principal Leadership Factors** as illustrated in Figure 5.4 (see Section 5.3) have been found to be an enabler for the effective implementation of the key components for success.

Vision was created through the clear articulation and understanding of what *Proud and Deadly* meant in the Doongal school context. It was through this vision that change began to occur at Doongal State School. The vision united school staff because they all knew what they were working towards and they believed that it could be achieved.

Communication is an important leadership factor. The communication of vision, expectations, and organisational processes enabled students and staff to actively participate in the realisation of the vision.

Persistence is an important principal leadership factor. Without persistence the vision would not be implemented. Persistence is the ability to continue to plough ahead regardless of obstacles. A non-Indigenous female principal in an Indigenous community school, will have obstacles of culture and gender as well as the day to day issues to overcome, persistence is therefore important.

Empowerment emerged as a pivotal factor in this study. By empowering non-Indigenous and Indigenous staff to take control of their own classroom and the situation they were faced with, they were able to articulate their own solutions and clearly show this through their collection of data. This has emerged as the most important strategy in the improvement of academic outcomes at Doongal State School. This study has also shown that a lack of empowerment hinders school progress and the achievement of vision.

Organisational ability needs to be evident as a principal leadership factor. A principal needs to have the ability to manage the school processes and the day to day running of the school. The principal also needs to possess the emotional intelligence to monitor staff well being and provide support as it is required on an individual basis.

Empathy is a new factor which has emerged from this study. It has been demonstrated that a lack of empathy for the staff can have negative effects. Empathy with the community will ensure persistence to implement the vision. This empathy will need to be authentic.

Trust has been highlighted in this study as a major contributing factor to change. It has been highlighted that when trust of the staff by the principal is not evident, people are not empowered to act. Trust in staff to understand the human side of the principal is also helpful in creating a cohesive team environment. Staff members need to trust that the principal will support them to achieve their own goals also.

Credibility needs to be established by the principal. This can be established through the sharing of success. Staff and students will then begin to understand that the path the journey is taking is credible and in the best interests of both students and staff.

Opportunity in adversity An important ability is to remain optimistic when the situation is adverse will assist staff morale to remain high. When staff feel happy and valued in their work it will manifest in good student relationships and as a result absenteeism should reduce.

6.2 OBJECTIVES TWO & THREE – CHANGE, REASSESSMENT & REANALYSIS

The second and third objectives explored the changes in Doongal and to reassess impacts and reanalyse attribution.

Change

My second objective was to explore changes in myself and others associated with the school across 2003/4 in comparison to literature on principals of Indigenous community schools. The change process has been described in Section 5.4 (see Figures 5.5 and 5.6). The **change factor** models clearly show that the school community needed to observe a working model of what they desired to achieve and then have success implementing the observed strategies. Leadership throughout this process was the key to success.

External experts provided input through visiting a successful school and witnessing strategies which had a positive impact. Professional development was also provided in a timely manner to school staff. A climate of trust had been developed to ensure staff input into the decision making with regard to professional development undertaken, therefore there was ownership by the staff of the professional development.

Support was provided by the principal to implement new strategies in the form of access to resources and professional development. Support was also provided by the community when staff members sought their advice and intervention.

Peer sharing ensured that staff morale remained high. A culture was developed where teachers were trying to improve their own practice which ensured an enhanced quality of work and built leadership capacity within the staff.

Success breeds success, and by sharing success stories and clearly demonstrating that strategies had been successful through the sharing of data success continued to grow.

Documentation was integral to the success at Doongal State School. By insisting upon written plans and regular data collection, school staff were able to effectively monitor their own performance, this enabled the reflection and replanning process to be data driven. Staff were also expected to accept accountability for their ability to achieve their agreed goals.

Reassessment and reanalysis

The third objective was to determine to what extent Doongal State School's actions of 2003-4 had produced change that positively enhanced Indigenous students outcomes with respect to attendance, engagement and learning, and to determine to whom and to what this positive change could be attributed.

The answers to reassessment and reanalysis are given in Section 5.1. In summary, with regard to reassessment, reflection supports that Doongal's practices and, thus, Angela03's leadership as Principal, from 2003 to 2004:

- improved school-Community relationships and support;
- improved teachers' morale, behaviour control and teaching;
- improved teacher aides' motivation, decision-making involvement and teaching support; and
- enhanced students' outcomes in terms of attendance, engagement and learning.

With regard to reanalysis, reflection supports that the success of Doongal in 2003-4 was:

- due to interactions between Angela03 (as Principal), Doongal staff (teachers and teacher aides), Doongal students and Community members; and
- supported by the facilitative role of Angela03 as a non-Indigenous female principal.

However, the Doongal and Angela03 practices were not sufficient to sustain the improvements past the end of 2004 when the supporting role of Angela03 was removed. There is not enough evidence to determine whether this inability to sustain the Doongal change and the *Proud and Deadly* program is due to the presence of a principal that operates similar to Angela03 being necessary to achieve and maintain change or simply that two years was insufficient to build support at community, teacher aide and teacher level that would sustain the change.

6.3 OBJECTIVE FOUR

My fourth objective was to construct a theory that explains what I observed in others and felt in myself in terms of actions and practices at Doongal, with particular reference to non-Indigenous female leadership. This theory emerges from the descriptions in Sections 5.2 to 5.5 of Chapter 5 and integrates the theories that were developed for School factors, Principal Leadership factors, Change factors and non-Indigenous Female Principal factors (these are illustrated in Figures 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7 respectively).

Within these theories, the principal leadership of Angela03 was found to play an integrative and indirect supportive role that facilitated the other factors. The recurring theme was that effective Principal Leadership factors were integral to the success of the implementation of the School factors and Change factors.

The outcome is a theoretical position that sees:

- Principal Leadership factors providing an “umbrella” of support that facilitates other factors to interact to bring change; and
- non-Indigenous Female Principal factors of Angela03 being as effective in this role as the more direct role of Sarra (2003, 2005).

This theory is illustrated in Figure 6.1.

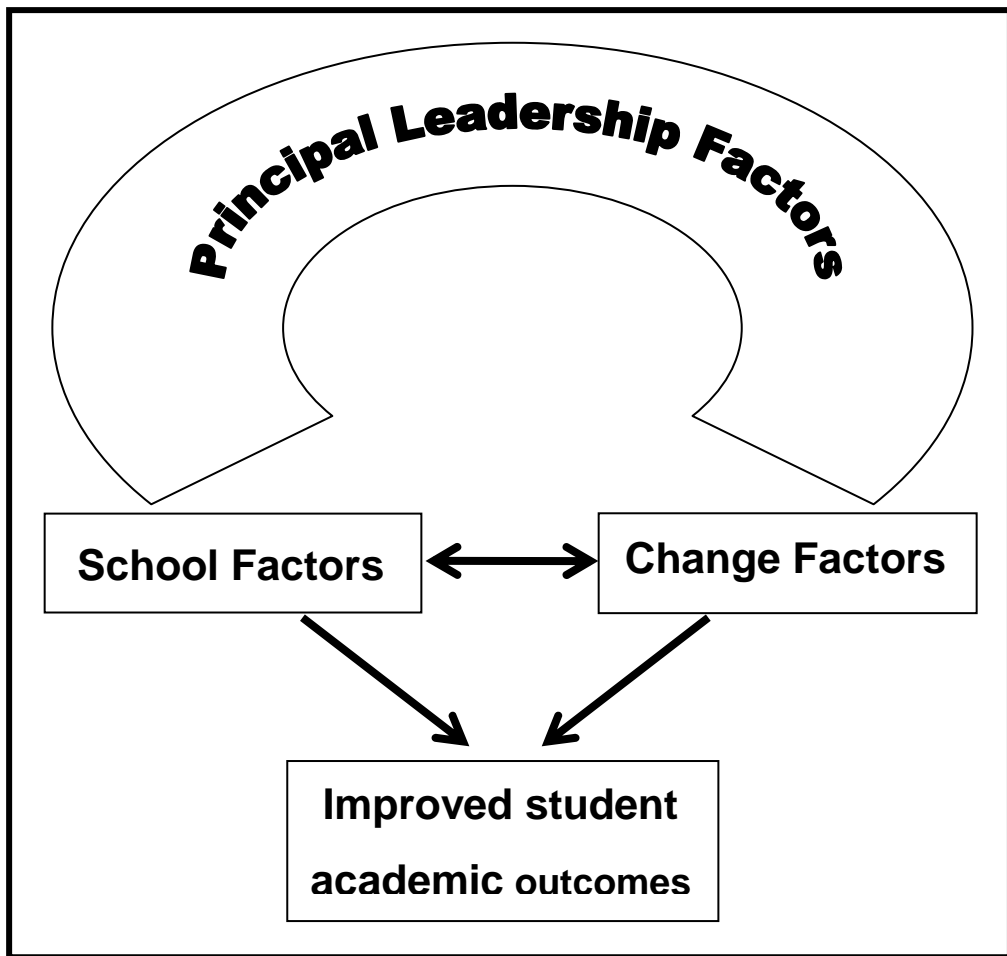


Figure 6.1. Overall theory.

6.4 OBJECTIVE FIVE

My fifth objective was to draw implications for improved leadership and practices for Indigenous schools. This thesis has provided clear strategies which can be used by other non-Indigenous Principals in Indigenous community schools to bring about improved academic outcomes and improve life chances of students. Principals can begin by implementing the School factors. The implementation of the School factors will rely heavily on the Change factors, however with a clear vision, persistence and the other Principal Leadership Factors, Principals can build meaningful relationships with school staff and the local community to bring about sustained change.

Advice to other non-Indigenous female Principals in Indigenous community schools would be to implement each of the School factors and Change Factors discussed in Sections 5.2 and 5.4. The Principal Leadership factors discussed in Section 5.3 and the

effective female leadership traits listed in Section 5.5 are attributes which ensure the effective implementation of the School factors and Change factors. It was through trust and empowering staff that the results at Doongal State School improved. The results of this study align with Davis' (1996) assertion that effective female Principals model effective teamwork behaviour.

The most important people influencing the outcomes for Indigenous students are the teachers who teach them every day. Effective pedagogy needs to be evident in every classroom. This means that teachers need to integrate cultural studies into the curriculum and learn about the students they are teaching in order to ensure that they are engaging them. Principals need to be effective leaders to ensure that the expectations they have of the teachers are high in order for effective teaching and learning to occur.

Just as important as curriculum delivery is the power of the relationships developed between the teachers and students and the community and school staff. By insisting that teachers made links with the community and in particular the parents of the students they had in their classrooms, it became clear that parents felt more comfortable to approach the school regarding any issues or concerns that they had. Teachers were also more confident about including parents in their child's education. The perception that parents did not really care about education was found by most teachers to be not true.

Teachers who were able to develop good relationships with students and the community displayed more satisfaction with their teaching and a more positive outlook on the achievement of outcomes and goals for the class. These teachers recorded higher rates of attendance and lower incidents of inappropriate behaviour than those who did not develop good relationships with students. These teachers also tended to have better relationships with the Indigenous teacher aides in their classes.

6.5 LIMITATIONS

This study has only provided data from one example. The study could have been strengthened by studying another Indigenous school with a non-Indigenous female Principal as a comparison. This study is also a reflection of my time as Principal of Doongal State School, therefore I did not think about collecting data for the study while I was at the school until the end of 2004. The thesis would have been strengthened by the

systematic collection of student, teacher and community data at key junctures throughout the two years.

By writing this thesis three years after my Principalship at Doongal State School my own educational knowledge has increased and will have influenced my reflections throughout the paper. It was very difficult to write the reflections based on the knowledge I had in 2003 and 2004 without allowing the influence of additional professional development and the professional growth I undertook in my subsequent Principal positions.

6.6 IMPLICATIONS

Research that focuses on non-Indigenous leadership is significant because schools, in general, offer a form of education that engages students in an examination of the social, political and psychological dimensions of membership in a white racial group. Non-Indigenous leadership is common in Indigenous schools, therefore the information provided in this thesis will be helpful in many situations. There is little research of the attributes of an effective white, female leader in an Indigenous school. This thesis has demonstrated that improved outcomes for Indigenous students can be achieved through good leadership and through the implementation of the key components for success regardless of the gender or cultural background of the leader of the school. This thesis has provided additional literature on this subject and also provided insight for future leaders in Indigenous schools.

If I was to take on the role of Principal at Doongal State School again, I would ensure that my vision for the school was clear to all staff. This would be carried out through meetings and retreats in order to get clarity and consensus regarding the direction we would all be working towards. The *Proud and Deadly* style program would be implemented ensuring that the community developed the mantra and it was reflective of what the community wanted to achieve.

Individual Empowerment plans would be more detailed with the early collection of data paramount to documenting the improvement in staff goals. I would also ensure the closer supervision of staff and give them each adequate time to discuss blockers to the achievement of their goals. The Indigenous staff would have access to more professional development to enable them to take on more responsibility within the school and

empower them to be the long term leaders. I would trust staff to find a way to achieve their goals and listen to their ideas.

The connection with the community would be a priority for me. I would again employ the strategy of visiting each family and talking to parents about the expectations they have for the school, I would however take this further and talk about the school expectations of parents. Showcasing academic achievements to the community would happen more frequently.

Relationships with staff, Indigenous and non-Indigenous would be important. I would continue to seek to learn about the Indigenous culture and ensure that cultural studies were embedded in the curriculum and taught by the Indigenous staff. The relationships between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff would be of equal status in the classroom and across the school. I would provide opportunities for further studies by Indigenous staff. I would encourage the staff to support each other and share ideas, and success would be shared across the school and community.

The writing of this thesis and my experience as Principal of Doongal State School and subsequent schools has given me the opportunity to undertake extraordinary personal growth. Firstly, the task of writing a thesis has enabled me to think clearly and articulate the strategies that I believe can make a difference to the academic outcomes and life chances for Indigenous students. It has also made me aware of my own unintended racism and the assumptions I can make about people and situations as a direct result of my own culture and upbringing.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A: INSTRUMENTS

A1: EDUCATION QUEENSLAND-GENERATED INSTRUMENTS

EQ Parent Opinion Survey: Parent Satisfaction, 2002-4

Items in this survey: Student outcomes, Curriculum, Pedagogy, Learning climate, School climate, School community relations, and Resources.

EQ Staff Opinion Survey: Staff Satisfaction, 2002-4

Items in this survey: Physical work environment, Relationships, School operations, Staff morale, Support, resources and training, Work roles, and Work value and recognition.

EQ Student Satisfaction Overview, 2002-4

Items in this survey: Student outcomes, Curriculum, Pedagogy, Learning climate, School climate, and Resources.

EQ Student Achievement 2002-4:

Year 2 Diagnostic Net.

Years 3, 5 and 7 Aspects of Literacy and Aspects of Numeracy Tests

A2: RESEARCH-GENERATED INSTRUMENTS

Doongal Parent Survey: School Change, November 2004.

Items in this survey: Observations of change, Interaction with Community.

Teacher and Teacher Aide Evaluation of Change Survey

Items in this survey: Observations of change, Interaction with Community, Evaluation of leadership.

Doongal Student survey

Items in this survey: Perception of change.

Doongal Classroom Trials 2003

YEAR 1 TRIAL – BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT (PE)

Collected data with respect to the frequency of negative behaviours during PE lessons (e.g., throwing, swearing, fighting, non-compliance, teasing, defiance, misusing equipment).

YEAR 2 TRIAL – BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT (TEASING)

Collected data with respect to the frequency of negative classroom behaviours (teasing).

YEAR 4 TRIAL – BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT (DISRUPTIONS)

Collected data with respect to the frequency of negative classroom behaviours (disruptions).

YEAR 6/7 TRIAL – BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT (KICKING, TEASING, HITTING)

Collected data with respect to the frequency of violent and negative classroom behaviours (kicking, teasing, hitting).

YEAR 6/7 TRIAL- BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT (SWEARING)

Collected data with respect to the frequency of negative classroom behaviour (swearing).

YEAR 3 TRIAL – ACADEMIC OUTCOMES (NUMBER OF BOOKS READ)

Collected data with respect to the number of books read by students per term.

YEAR 5 TRIAL – ACADEMIC OUTCOMES (SIGHT WORDS)

Collected data with respect to the number of sight words known by students.

APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Table B-1

Doongal State School Teachers and Teacher Aides by Position and Grade 2003

Position	Staff member (Years experience)	Teacher Aide
Principal	Angela Douglas (7)	Louise (office/clerical)
Preschool teacher	Kobi (1)	Daphney
Year 1 teacher	Brittany (2)	Denise
Year 2 teacher	Holly (1)/ Courtenay (2)	John
Year 3/4 teacher	Betty (2)	Bill
Year 4/5 teacher	Joan (1)	Jade
Year 5 teacher	Andrew (0)	Matthew
Year 6/7 teacher	Paul (2)	Tony
Year 7 teacher	Jasmine (1)	Marie
Behaviour Management 4/5/6/7	Craig (2)	Ryan
PE and Music specialist	Rachel (0)	
Learning Support teacher	Sally (0)	
Guidance Officer	Lyn (1)	

Note. Pseudonyms are used to denote the teachers, specialists and teacher aides. All teacher aides were Indigenous.

Table B-2

Doongal State School Student Numbers by Grade 2003

Pre-school	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Behaviour Management
15	14	14	18	15	19	20	20	10

Note. The Behaviour Management class was established to meet the needs of students whose behaviour did not allow them to function in the regular classroom.

Table B-3

Doongal State School Teachers and Teacher Aides by Position and Grade 2004

Position	Staff member (Years experience)	Teacher Aide
Principal	*Angela Douglas (8)	*Louise (office/clerical)
Preschool teacher	*Jasmine(2)	*Daphney
Year 1 teacher	*Betty/ *Kobi (3)	*Denise
Year 2 teacher	Casey (30)	*John
Year 3 teacher	Kim (4)	Bob
Year 4/5 teacher	Rhonda (3)	*Jade
Year 5 teacher	*Andrew (1)	*Matthew
Year 6 teacher	*Paul (3)	*Tony
Year 7 teacher	Amy (4)	*Natalie
Behaviour Management 4/5/6/7	Janeen (20)	*Ryan
PE and Music specialist	*Rachel (1)	
Learning Support teacher	Kandi (4)	
Guidance Officer	Rita (20)	

Note. * indicates staff retained from 2003.

Table B-4

Doongal State School Student Numbers by Grade 2004

Pre-school	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Behaviour Management
24	18	20	23	20	18	25	29	6

APPENDIX C: CLASSROOM TRIALS 2003

C1: YEAR 1 TRIAL – BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT (PE)

During Physical Education lessons the teacher found that she was stopping the lesson for many disruptions causing her to feel frustrated and dissatisfied with her lesson outcomes. The teacher took data on the inappropriate behaviours she wished to decrease. The teacher aide took data once a week during each term to gauge the success of her strategies. This data collection was part of this teacher's *Proud and Deadly* plan.

Teacher Proud and Deadly Plan

What are the main issues in your classroom affecting learning?

Students off task, fighting and non-compliance during PE lessons.

- **Goal:** To reduce the number of incidents involving off task behaviour.
- **Strategies:** Offer class rewards for appropriate behaviour. Use *Proud and Deadly* program. Talk to students about expected behaviour. Make my lessons fun. Access professional development in behaviour management and English as a Second Language to assist me with communication.
- **Strategy to work with teacher aide:** Build confidence of teacher aide and model group facilitation. Plan group lessons with teacher aide.

Indicators: Baseline data – inappropriate behaviour – 20 incidents per lesson.

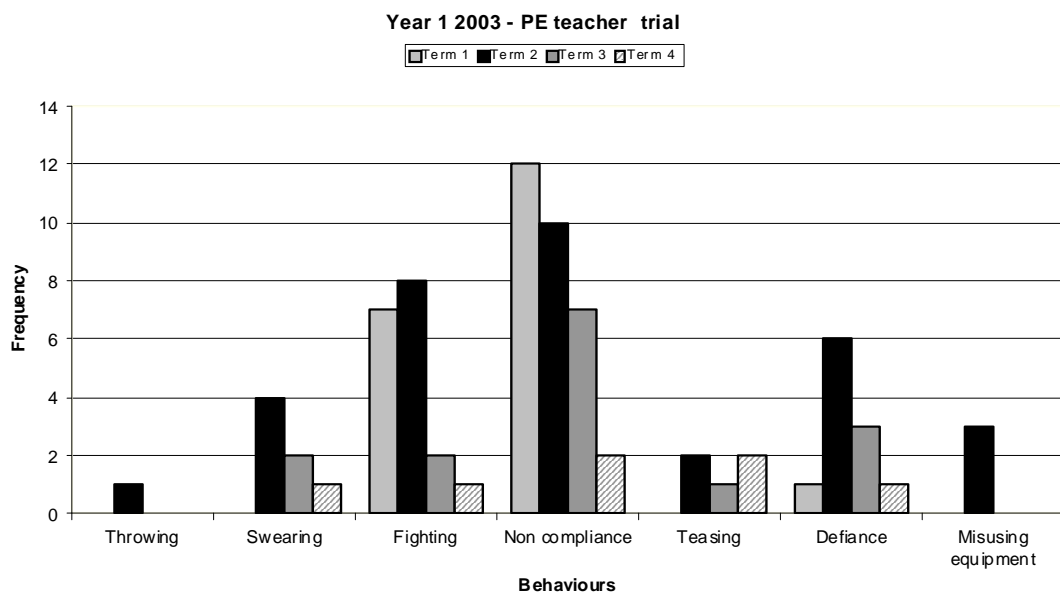


Figure C-1. Year 1, 2003 trial – behaviour management (PE).

C2: YEAR 2 TRIAL – BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT (TEASING)

The Year 2 teacher decided that excessive teasing was an issue in her classroom. She began collecting data from Week 5, Term 1, 2003. She then continued to collect data every week during terms 2, 3 and 4 in 2003. The data was collected during a morning session lasting two hours. The initial data indicates that during this session in Week 5, Term 1, there were in excess of 13 teasing incidents in the classroom. During Term 4, 2003 for the same sessions, only seven incidents were recorded. The teacher celebrated this with her class. This data collection was part of this teacher's *Proud and Deadly* plan.

Teacher Proud and Deadly Plan

What are the main issues in your classroom affecting learning?

Students teasing.

- **Goal:** To reduce the teasing in the classroom.
- **Strategies:** Focus on values education and teach children about tolerance and being nice to each other. Provide rewards for groups of students who do not tease others. Nominate students for awards on parade. Take part in the teacher mentoring program at Yarrabah SS and learn from more experienced teachers.
- **Strategy to work with teacher aide:** Reinforce how much I value the teacher aide and involve her in class planning. Get her to teach languages to the students.

Indicators: Baseline data – 13 teasing incidents in a 2-hour period.

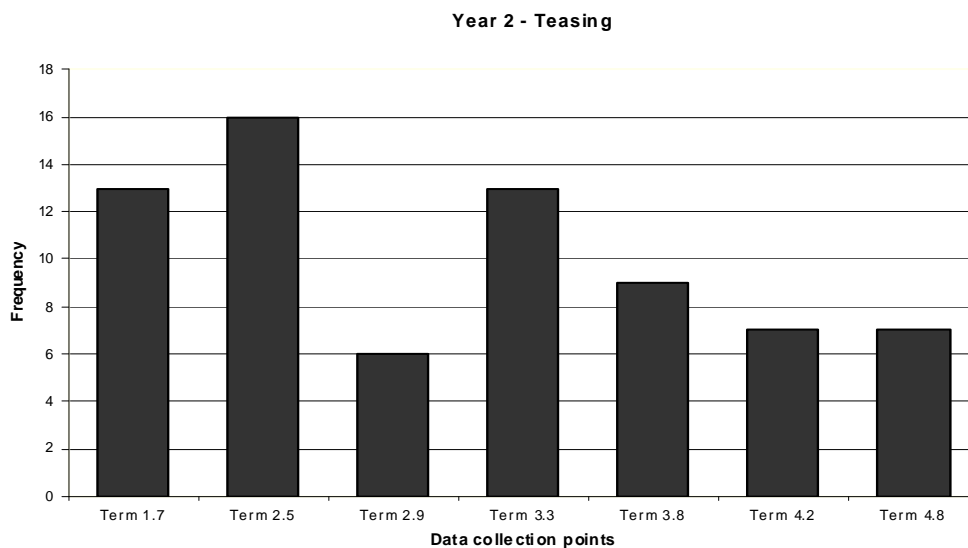


Figure C-2. Year 2, 2003 trial – Behaviour management (teasing).

C3: YEAR 4 TRIAL – BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT (DISRUPTIONS)

The Year 4 teacher was becoming increasingly frustrated with the constant disruptions to teaching time due to poor behaviour. The class teacher aide took a tally on one day in term 1, week 7 and week 8; term 2, week 3 and week 7; term 3, week 6 and week 8; and term 4, week 8. Overall disruptions were minimized over the year. This data collection was part of this teacher's *Proud and Deadly* plan.

Teacher Proud and Deadly Plan

What are the main issues in your classroom affecting learning?

Constant disruptions in the classroom.

- **Goal:** To increase teaching time and decrease student off-task time.
- **Strategies:** Negotiate the curriculum with the students and use the teacher aide to assist me to make my lessons appropriate and meaningful to students. Access professional development in Walking, Talking, texts and other culturally appropriate teaching strategies. Implement Brain Gym activities at the start of the lesson. Visit Cherbourg State School.
- **Strategy to work with teacher aide:** Inform students about our focus. Review the class reward system. Utilise appropriate resources.

Indicators: Baseline data – 22 major disruptions in a day.

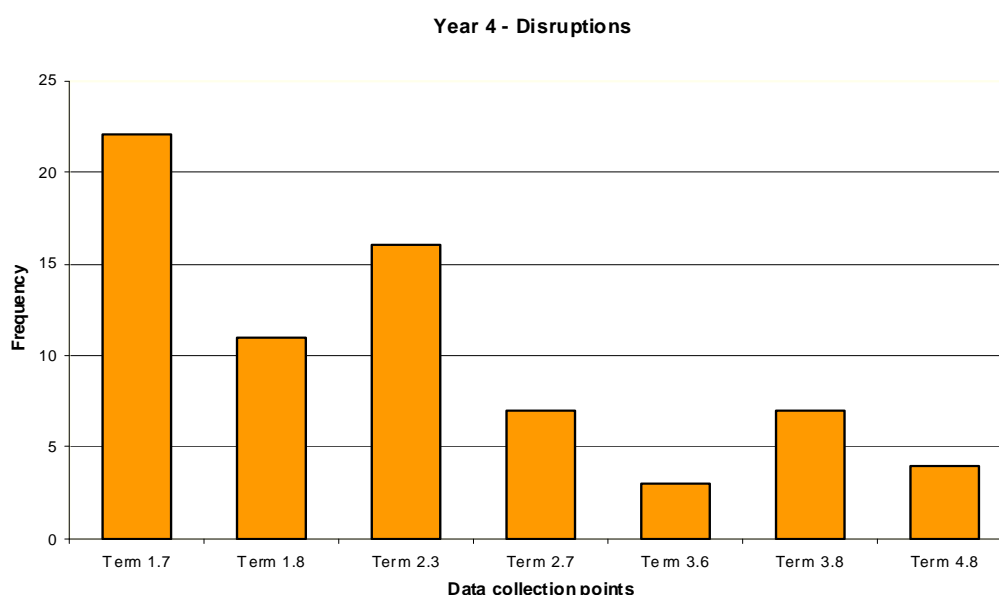


Figure C-3. Year 4, 2003 trial – Behaviour management (disruptions).

C4: YEAR 6/7 TRIAL – BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT (SWEARING)

The Year 6/7 teacher found he had constant use of inappropriate language in the classroom. Clearly the amount of incidents decreased over the school year. This teacher implemented strategies to engage students based on the use of music daily within the classroom and built excellent relationships with the students and parents. Data on the frequency of swearing in the classroom was collected during 2003 in term 1, week 7; term 2, weeks 2 and 8; term 3, week 8; and in term 4, weeks 2 and 7. This data collection was part of this teacher's *Proud and Deadly* plan.

Teacher Proud and Deadly Plan

What are the main issues in your classroom affecting learning?

Swearing.

- **Goal:** To be able to teach my class in an environment that resembles a classroom.
- **Strategies:** Visit parents. Write class songs about what is expected. Get help with planning. Utilise appropriate resources. Implement Values Education into the classroom. Get professional development in classroom management and Walking, Talking Texts.
- **Strategy to work with teacher aide:** Provide opportunities for teacher aide to take small class groups.

Indicators: Baseline data – 200 swearing incidents in a week.

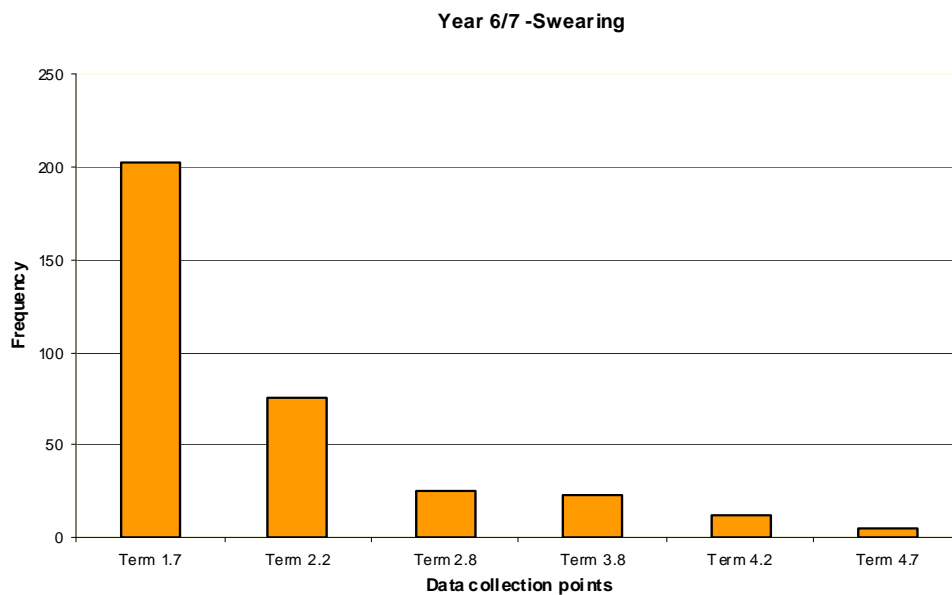


Figure C-5. Year 6/7, 2003 trial – Behaviour management (swearing in classroom).

C5: YEAR 7 TRIAL – BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT (KICKING, TEASING, HITTING)

The Year 7 teacher was becoming quite intimidated by the level of violence in her classroom. As the students were maturing it was quite frightening when physical violence erupted in the classroom. The class teacher celebrated at the end of each term when she noticed that these physical outbursts were decreasing in frequency. This data collection was part of this teacher's *Proud and Deadly* plan.

Teacher Proud and Deadly Plan

What are the main issues in your classroom affecting learning?

Violence.

- **Goal:** To decrease violent incidents.
- **Strategies:** Provide rewards for students exhibiting peaceful behaviours. Paint classroom in peaceful colours. Talk to students about expectations. Attend professional development on Education in Human Values, implement Brain Gym activities.
- **Strategy to work with teacher aide:** Get teacher aide to come with me to visit parents of students who are being violent.

Indicators: Baseline data – 45 incidents in a day.

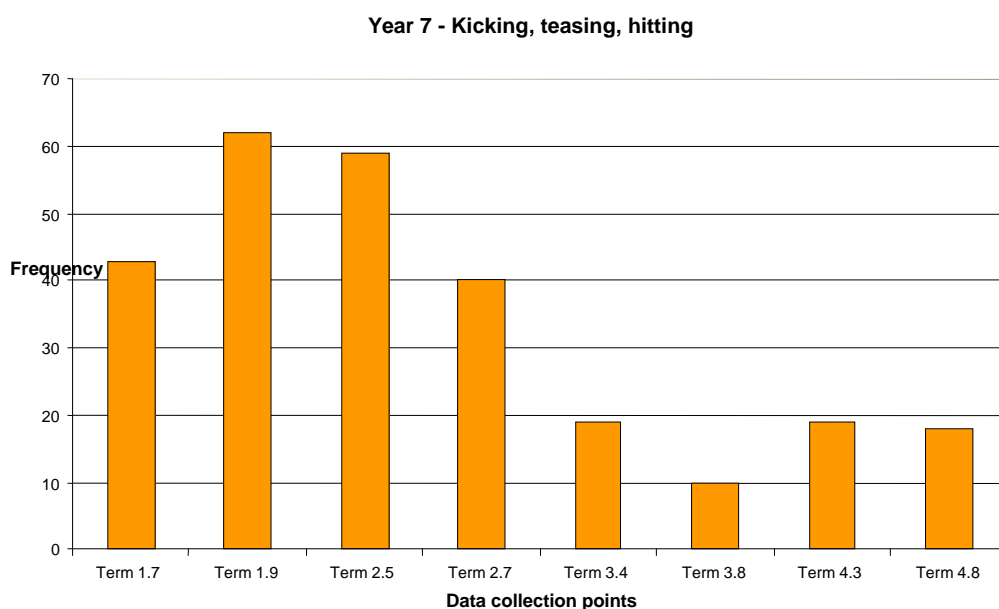


Figure C-4. Year 7 trial – Behaviour management (kicking, teasing, hitting).

C6: YEAR 3 TRIAL – ACADEMIC OUTCOMES (NUMBER OF BOOKS READ)

The Year 3 teacher took a random sample of students and tracked the books they read in class over each term. Books included in the statistics were class readers and library books. Students were rewarded for reading each week. This data collection was part of this teacher's *Proud and Deadly* plan.

Teacher Proud and Deadly Plan

What are the main issues in your classroom affecting learning?

Students coming to school and concentrating. Low academic levels.

- **Goal:** To improve the reading levels of the students.
- **Strategies:** Focus on the teaching of reading. Try to understand and implement Ernie Grant's Holistic Framework. Attend Yarrabah State School and learn from other teachers in Indigenous community schools. Attend professional development at Emerald Literacy Centre. Ask district educational advisors to come and assist in the classroom.
- **Strategy to work with teacher aide:** Get teacher aide to help with book selection and train him to read with small groups.

Indicators: Baseline data – 5-7 books per term.

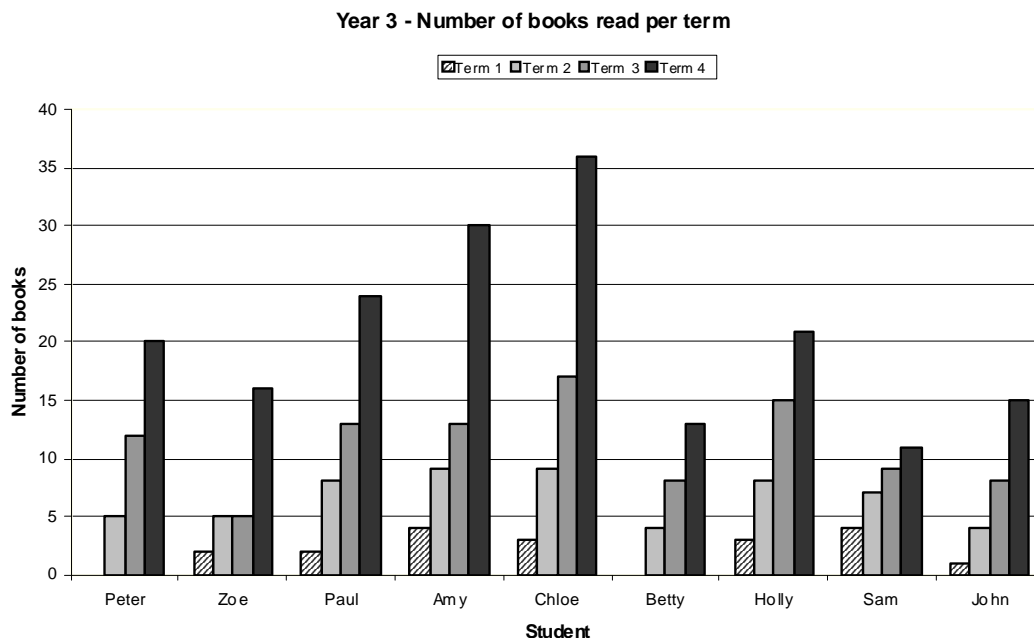


Figure C-6. Year 3, 2003 trial – Academic outcomes (number of books read by students in Year 3).

C7: YEAR 5 TRIAL – ACADEMIC OUTCOMES (SIGHT WORDS)

Students in this class had very few words they could recognise by sight in Year 5. The teacher focused specifically on building up sight word banks and was able to collect data to demonstrate overall improvement. This data collection was part of this teacher’s *Proud and Deadly* plan.

Teacher Proud and Deadly Plan

What are the main issues in your classroom affecting learning?

Students do not recognise many sight words.

- **Goal:** To increase sight words.
- **Strategies:** Implement sight word games and focussed literacy sessions. Implement strategies from Walking, Talking Texts. Implement a phonics program that starts with the basics. Visit a school that has an excellent program and relate activities. Visit a class at Cherbourg State School. Access professional development in literacy where possible.
- **Strategy to work with teacher aide:** Get him to come to work through trying to build a relationship.

Indicators: Baseline data – 10-20 sight words recognised.

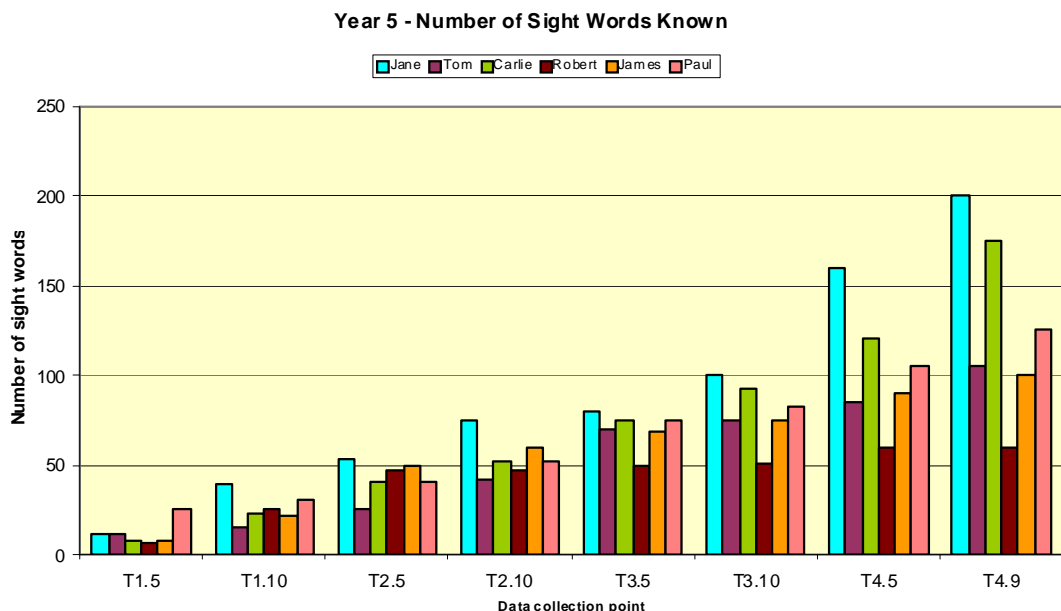


Figure C-7. Year 5, 2003 trial – Academic outcomes (sight words known by a sample of Year 5 students).

APPENDIX D: COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL DATA

D1: EQ PARENT OPINION SURVEY: PARENT SATISFACTION

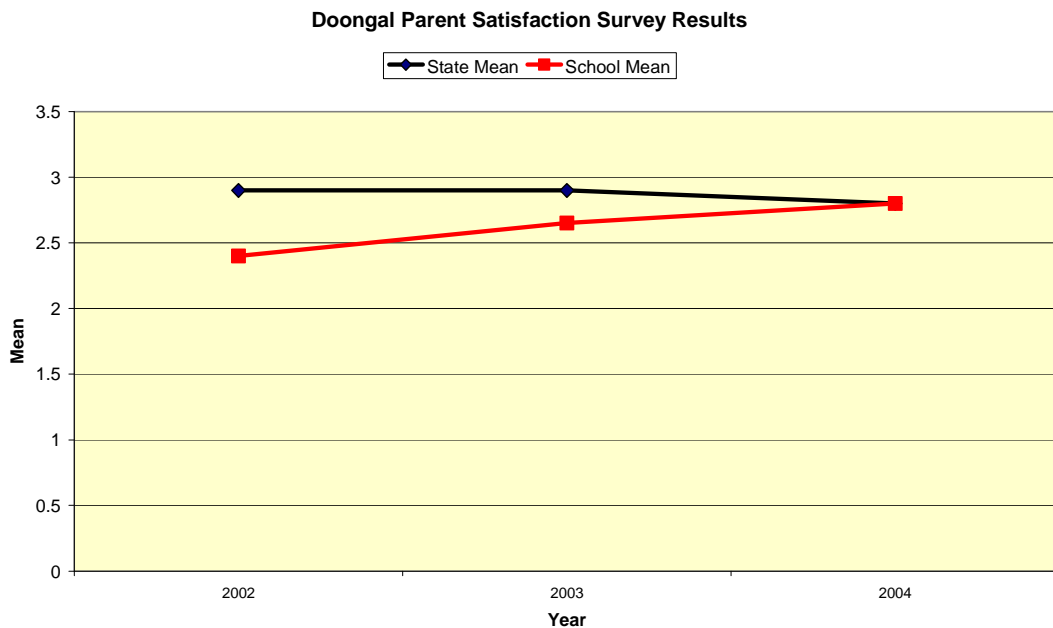


Figure D-1. Overall parent satisfaction (EQ) 2002-4.

D2: DOONGAL PARENT SURVEY: SCHOOL CHANGE

In November 2004, a survey devised by me was given to parents to elicit whether parents had perceived that there was a change at the school from 2002 to 2004. It was taken to homes by teacher aides to 25 randomly-chosen families with children attending the Doongal State School. Assistance with reading and recording was offered to each participant by the teacher aides. Only 10 surveys were returned. All surveys were anonymous. The areas covered in the survey were: *school change, community partnerships, school initiatives, and Principal leadership.*

Dear Parents,
The following survey is voluntary. I would like to gather some data for the purposes of my own research and to assist me to evaluate the change which has occurred at Doongal State School over the past two years.
The survey is confidential and anonymous. It will assist me in my leadership journey as well as assist us all in the bigger picture of achieving improved outcomes for Indigenous students.
Thank you
Angela Douglas.

School Change

The following specific questions were presented to those surveyed regarding the changes observed at Doongal State School from 2002-2004.

- Question 1: What was Doongal State School like before 2003? (Consider students, staff and community)**
- Question 2: What was Doongal State School like in the first three months of 2003?**
- Question 3: What was Doongal State School like for the rest of 2003?**
- Question 4: What is Doongal State School like this year, 2004?**
- Question 5: What changes have you seen?**

Participants were asked to make comments on these questions. Figures D-2 to D-6 indicate positive, negative and neutral responses for each question.

Figure D-2 shows that when asked generally about the school before 2003, 3 people (30%) provided a positive response compared to 7 people (70%), who provided a positive response when asked about the school in 2004 (Figure D-5).

Seven participants indicated that the main reasons for the differences between pre-2003 and 2004 was that there was better discipline and students wanted to attend school. They felt that the teachers were teaching the way that school should be taught and that there were higher expectations. They also indicated that improvements were due to more Indigenous staff and better relations between the teachers and parents. Individual responses included:

- There are people working together.
- More parents are visiting the school.
- The children's behaviour has settled.
- Children are developing confidence and are thinking about their future.
- There are fewer fights.

When asked about the changes (Question 5), Figure D-6 shows that there were 8 positive responses and no negative responses, with 2 neutral responses. Thus, there is a clear indication that the parents were able to identify a positive change in the school from 2002-2004.

Item 1: What was Doongal State School like before 2003?

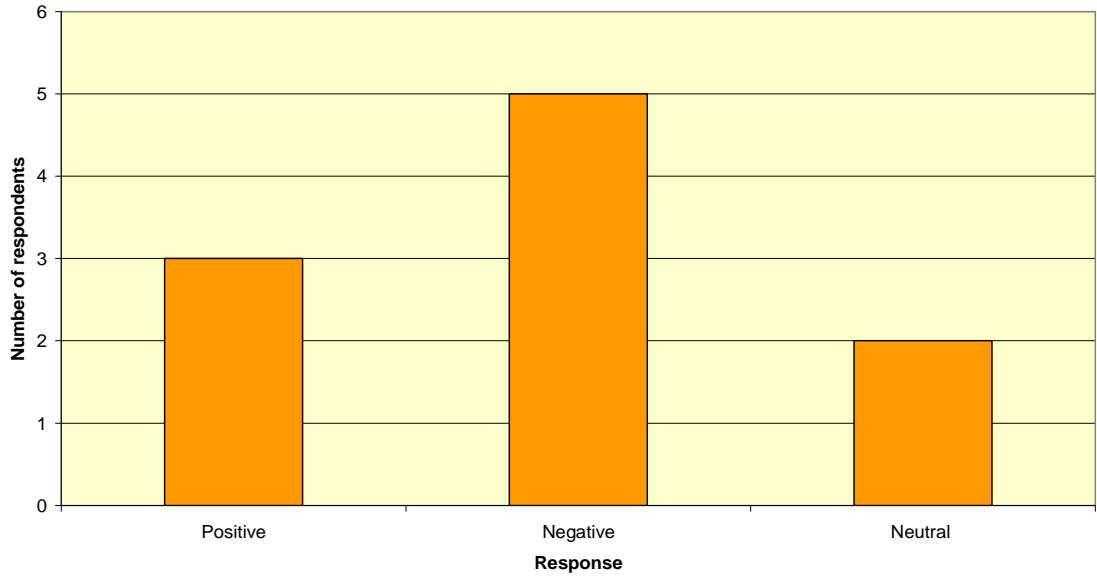


Figure D-2. Doongal parent survey: Item 1 responses (school change).

Item 2: What was the school like in the first three months of 2003?

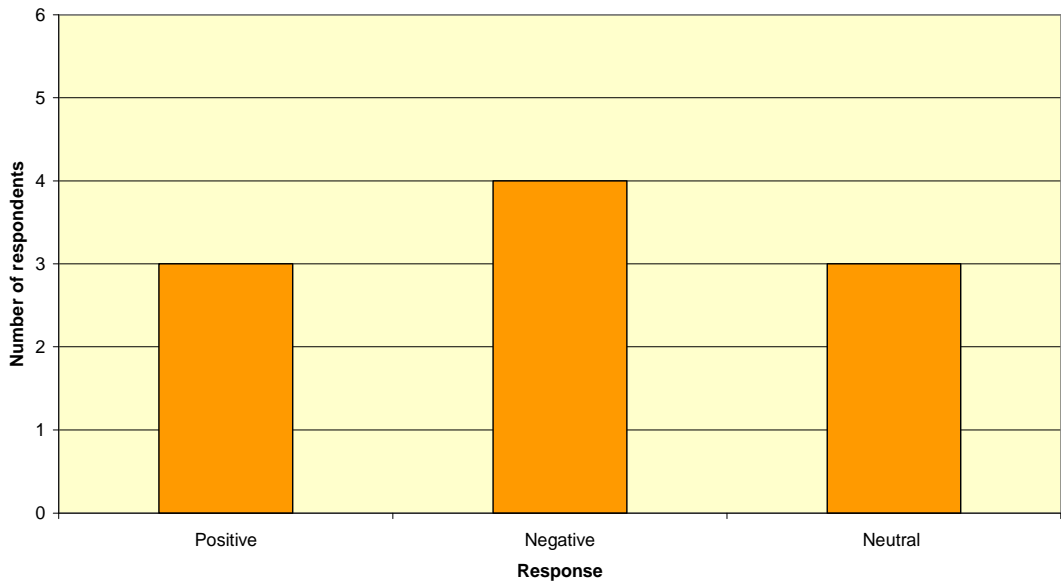


Figure D-3. Doongal parent survey: Item 2 responses (school change).

Item 3: What was the school like for the rest of 2003?

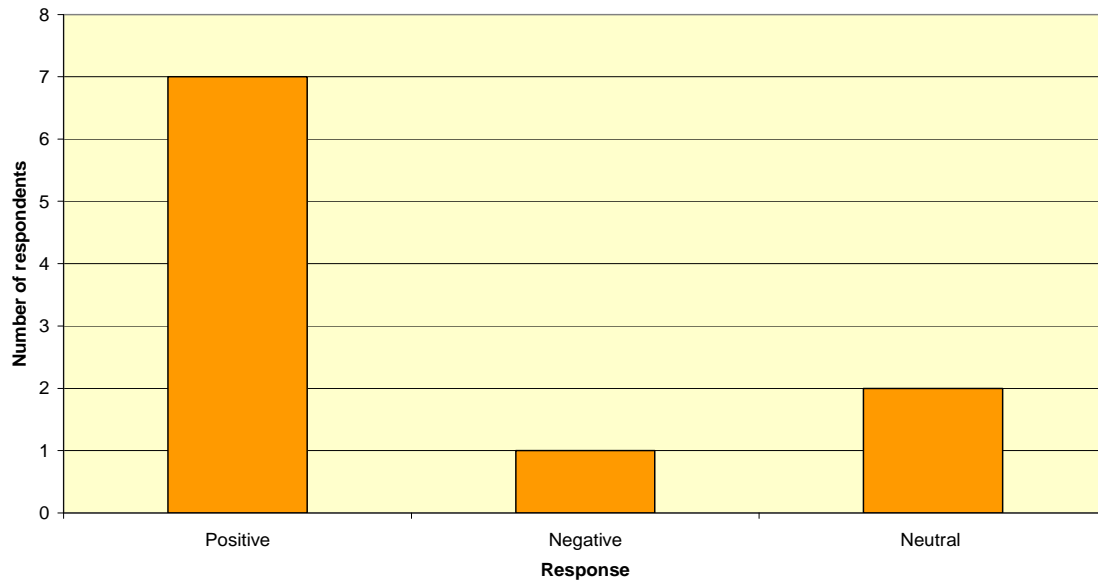


Figure D-4. Doongal parent survey: Item 3 responses (school change).

Item 4: What is the school like in 2004?

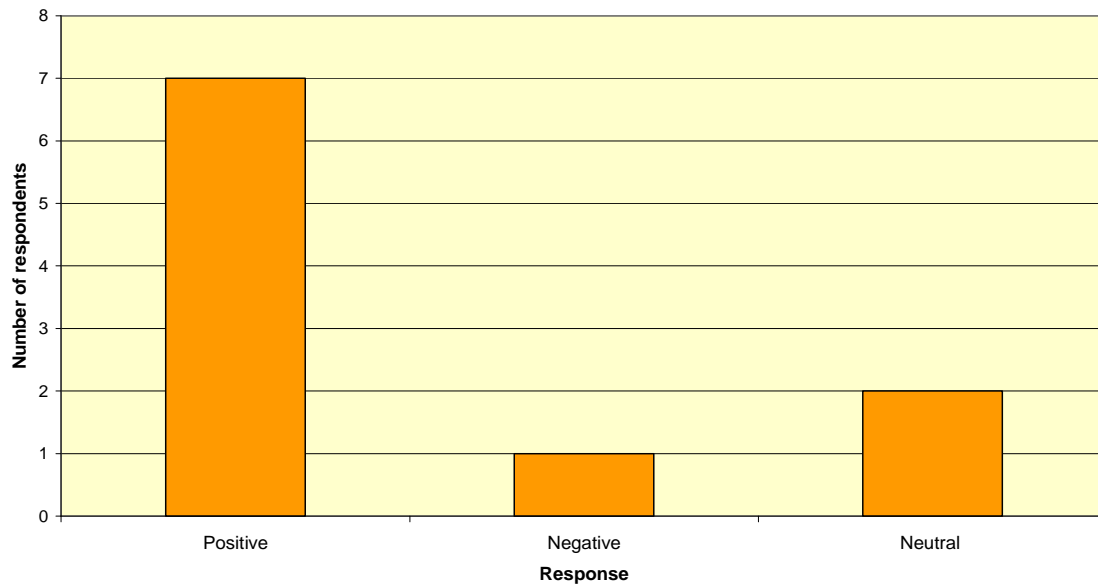


Figure D-5. Doongal parent survey: Item 4 responses (school change).

Item 5: What changes have you seen?

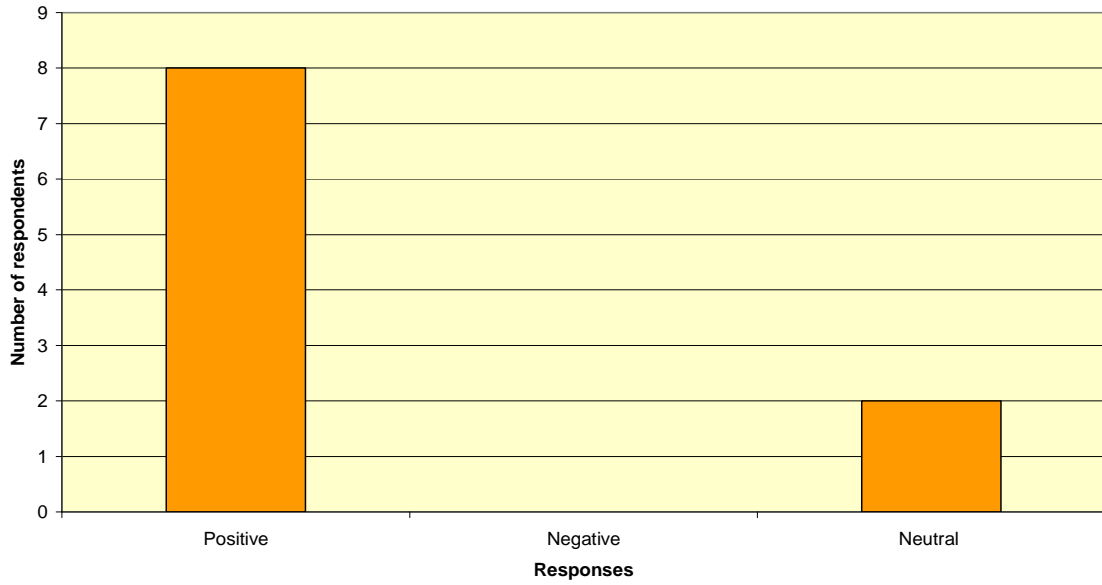


Figure D-6. Doongal parent survey: Item 5 responses (school change).

Community Partnerships

The following question was asked in relation to Community partnerships during 2003-04:

Question 6: What have you noticed about partnerships with the Community?

Figure D-7 notes that 8 people (80%) provided a positive response.

Item 6: What have you noticed about partnerships with the Community?

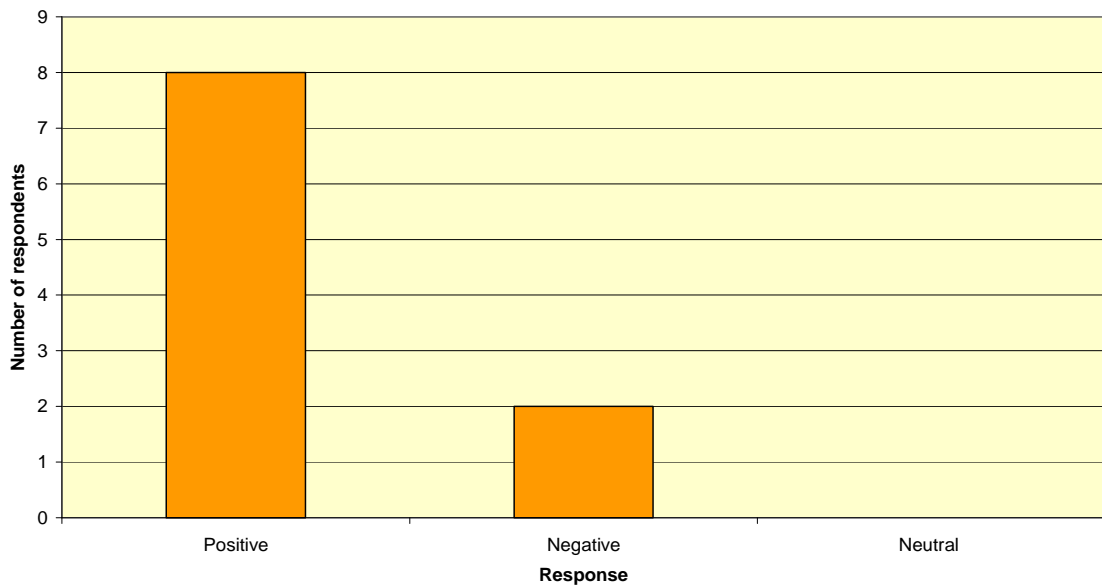


Figure D-7. Doongal parent survey: Item 6 responses (Community partnerships).

School Initiatives

The following question was asked in relation to school initiatives during 2003-04:

Question 7: What initiatives do you think have worked?

Individual responses to Question 7 included:

- The “Proud and Deadly” motto.
- The new assessment portfolios – we know what our kids are up to with their school work.
- The awards night and Idol competition.
- Some staff have made an effort to mix with the community.
- The Principal is friendly and approachable.
- She tells us if our kids are misbehaving.
- The teachers really like the kids and this has helped with their behaviour.
- There are more Murri staff that help our kids in the classroom and with culture.

Participants provided a broad range of responses. Significantly though, many felt that the main factors in achieving positive change were: (a) the *Proud and Deadly* motto, (b) the improved working relationships with teachers and teacher aides, and (c) celebration of successes and the showcasing of student work.

Principal leadership

The following question was asked in relation to Principal leadership during 2003-04:

Question 8 Please comment on the effectiveness of the way the Principal has implemented changes.

Individual responses to Question 8 included:

- Angela had high expectations of the school and staff.
- The school had some problems and Angela worked hard to include the community and have everyone work together to make the school a better place.
- Angela was always fair to the students and made sure that they had a good chance at an education.
- I liked the way the local council was included in the decisions of the school.
- We always knew what was going on.
- Angela was motivated for the good of the students.

The responses to Question 8 indicated that the parents surveyed attributed high expectations and the ability to form relationships with students, staff and community members as important for success.

D3: EQ STUDENT OPINION SURVEY

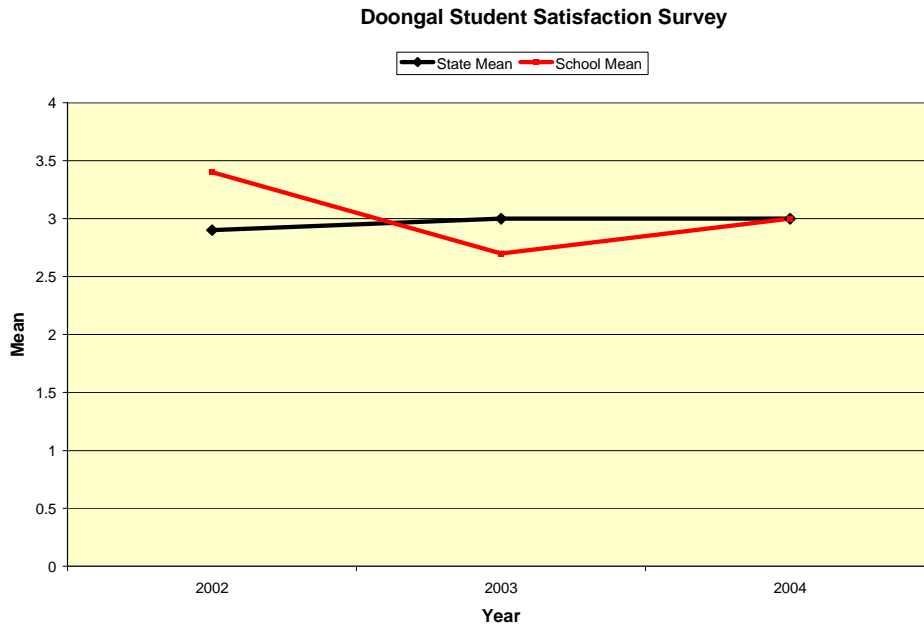


Figure D-8. Overall student satisfaction (EQ) 2002-4.

D4: DOONGAL STUDENT SURVEY

Student opinion presented here is articulated via two data collection processes. These include the EQ Student Opinion Survey (see Figure D-8, above), and the in-class oral survey (see Figure D-9) devised by me and administered by the class teacher, about student perceptions of Doongal State School.

Overall student satisfaction as shown in Figure D-8, decreased from 3.42 in 2002 to 2.97 in 2004 to be comparable to the State Mean. The decrease in student satisfaction could be a result of higher expectations of students in terms of behaviour standards and academic effort.

Further analysis of student opinion is provided by an internal survey. Forty students were asked two questions (devised by me) by their class teacher within the class setting who recorded the results for me:

**Question 1: Do you think things have got better at Doongal State School in 2004?
(Answer with Yes or No.)**

Question 2: What has changed? (Open question)

Figure D-9 summarises the responses to Question 1.

Item 1: Do you think things have got better at Doongal State School in 2004?

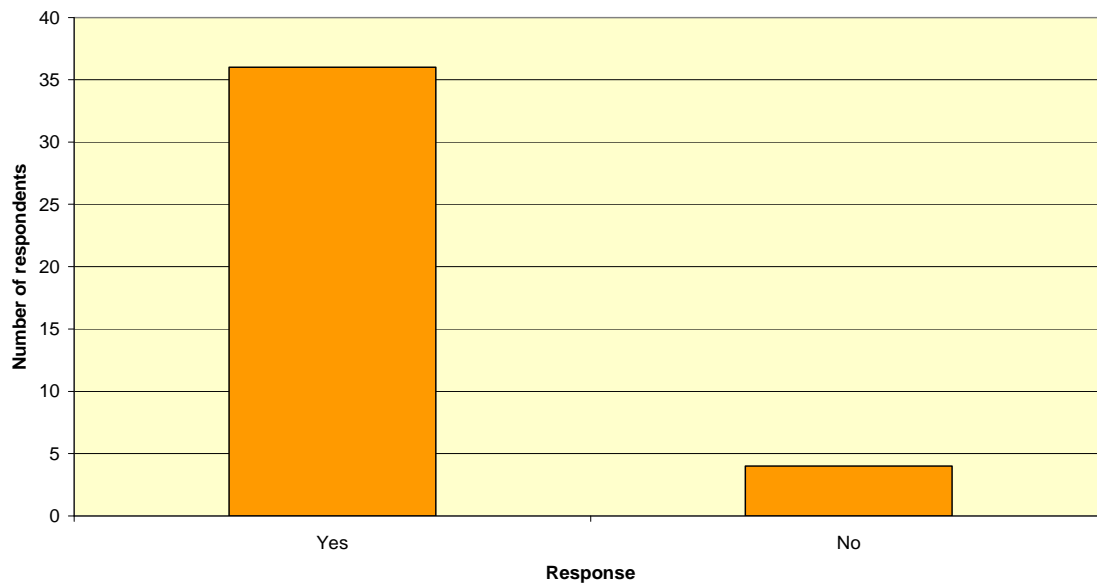


Figure D-9. Doongal student survey (Item 1).

It is clear that student responses indicated the school had changed for the better over the years 2003-2004.

The responses to Question 2 were many and varied. However, overwhelmingly, students commented that, “We are *Proud and Deadly*”. Other common responses included:

- I have to pick up the rubbish.
- We have a school song.
- There are less fights.
- Kids don't swear as much.
- School is fun.
- Teachers help us learn.
- I have to read now.
- We can't be bad or we get into trouble.
- We do dancing.
- I learn about black people things.

D5: EQ STAFF OPINION SURVEY

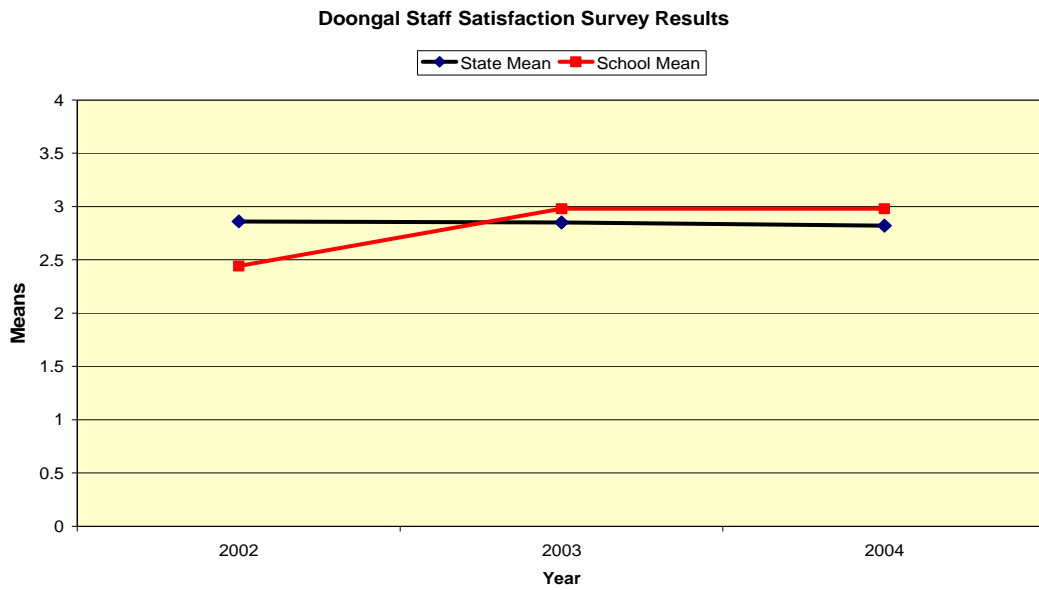


Figure D-10. Overall staff satisfaction (EQ) 2002-4.

D6: TEACHER AND TEACHER AIDE EVALUATION OF CHANGE SURVEY

At the end of 2004, a survey devised by me was given to teachers and teacher aides to elicit whether they had perceived that there was a change at the school from 2002 to 2004.

To all Staff,

The following survey is voluntary. I would like to gather some data for the purposes of my own research and to assist me to evaluate the change which has occurred at Doongal State School over the past two years.

The survey is confidential and anonymous. It will assist me in my leadership journey as well as assist us all in the bigger picture of achieving improved outcomes for Indigenous students.

Thank you

Angela Douglas.

Question 1: What was Doongal State School like before 2003? (Consider students, staff and community).

- The students were uncontrollable and not much learning was happening in the classrooms. Absenteeism was high and violence was high amongst the students. The staff was trying their best with little help from the Admin/Principal. Community members rarely visited the school or class events.

- Students: Uninterested in learning, saw school as not worthwhile, did not look at future possibilities. Large proportion of class cohorts with major behaviour issues – lack of respect for rules and not allowing themselves and other children to learn.
- Community: No community presence at the school.
- Prior to 2003 there were no alcohol limits, this has had a substantial impact on the behaviour and ‘feel’ of the community, glass everywhere, drunks walking through the school grounds. There were severe short comings in staff/parent/community relations – near non-existent.
- Struggling.
- Staff not cooperating with each other. Student behaviour was a big problem. No community input.
- Community not involved. Good teaching staff. Students more disruptive.
- Student learning outcomes were at best, minimal. This was the result of a number of factors: lack of effective behaviour management policy, the streaming of behaviour management problems into already uncontrollable classrooms, continually changing leadership and inexperienced staff.
- Staff did not have any direction as far as planning went. Very few planning documents were produced by the school.

Question 2: What was Doongal State School like in the first three moths of 2003?

- Similar to question 1.
- Was much the same as question 1, but the new Principal was trying to push learning in the classrooms. It was going to change. There was resistance from the children to the changes being implemented.
- It was like something of a horror story, the children had no respect for other people’s property or for their teachers.
- Very unsettled and disruptive. Very little teaching and learning occurred in this time. The majority of teacher time was spent breaking up fights in the room. Children engaged in physical violence as a way of sorting out minor incidents.
- Children walking out of class, violent behaviour towards peers and staff, unruly, disrespectful, out of control. No recognition or rules or authority, few disciplinary measures available. Little or no learning occurred.

Question 3: What was Doongal State School like for the rest of 2003?

- Some changes were starting to happen with students starting to take more interest in learning and the new teachers were starting to build better relationships and have more understanding about the community and the students.
- From the second term, it gradually improved every week, something positive is always happening. There are a lot of positives at this school. Angela is strong in reinforcing this.
- After the resistance the children have taken most of the changes and now they love to learn new things, to the point that if someone misbehaves the children are the first to tell them to stop and that they wish to learn.
- The rest of the year was a process of elimination of the problems facing the staff. As the problems were eliminated, learning increased.
- It settled down.

Question 4: What is Doongal State School like this year, 2004?

- Due to the minimisation of behaviour management problems, real teaching/learning has started to occur.
- Full of fun and excitement.
- People working together. More parents visiting. Children's behaviour settled.
- There has been little violent behaviour displayed towards teachers. There are better behaviour management strategies in place.
- Teachers are great to work with, children's behaviour has improved and the school grounds are looking good.

Question 5: What changes have you seen?

- Implementation of behaviour management, curriculum, attendance strategies. Positive classroom environment. Use of multi-age classes.
- Attendance and academic levels have increased.
- Positive student attitudes.
- Children have become more independent and engaged in their learning. Behaviour is more settled. Social skills are slowly improving.

- Students want to come to school because it is a safe place without fights. Kids feel as though they are achieving and are proud of that.
- There is pride in the school and children are actually enjoying coming here to learn.
- Children are dealing with conflict in more appropriate ways.
- 100% improvement. No chairs being thrown, attendance has increased, no children walking around school during class time. Children are achieving in their learning.

Question 6: What do you think worked?

- Streamed classes and full-time preschool.
- Police following up on truancy.
- Angela has given incentives for students to work harder and they have improved attendance.
- Implementation of literacy and numeracy plans. Multi-age classes.
- Proud and Deadly motto. Partnerships with like schools. Community valuing education. Parents helping in the classroom.
- The Principal has put a lot of effort into the school and the students respect that. Teachers are wonderful to work with.

Question 7: What have you noticed about partnerships with teacher aides?

- Teacher aides are turning up regularly and are involved in staff meetings. They are part of the decision making.
- Better communication with teachers.
- They get along really well with their teachers.
- Because of staff involvement with the community, teacher/teacher aide communication and relations have improved. This has improved in-class partnerships.
- They are developing in confidence and starting to think about students' futures.
- Some teacher aides take small groups and show initiative.
- My teacher aide has been a great worker; he has had the desire to learn, to give and to participate in learning and discipline.
- Relationships with teacher aides are extremely valuable.

- The teacher aides in the classroom are very much like a teacher. The ones who are given the opportunity to share their knowledge with teachers who value them, the teachers knowledge of the community grows.
- Much more effective teaching and learning occurs with a teacher aide if teachers have a good relationship with them. This year it seems that teacher aides are coming every day and have formed strong partnerships with teachers. This is very important for behaviour management and group work.
- They need to be treated like another teacher in the classroom.

Question 8: What have you noticed about Community partnerships?

- The community is beginning to visit the school and come to school events.
- They help support the “Proud and Deadly” motto by encouraging positive behaviour from the children.
- The school has initiated a high number of community events this has put the school in a positive light within the community and shows them what the kids are capable of.
- Community involvement has not really improved for me.
- People stop you in the street to ask you about their child at school.
- They get involved in classrooms and demonstrate a more active interest.
- Community has supported the school in times of need.

Question 9: What strategies have you found effective in your classroom?

- A daily schedule and routine.
- Consistency. High and clear expectations.
- Hands-on activities, rewards, discipline.
- Understanding the students.
- Holistic strategies that do not compartmentalise features of literacy and numeracy.
- Actively catering for all learning styles, in particular auditory.
- Developing relationships with students first.
- Values Education
- Using Aboriginal language and stories.

Question 10: Optional. Comment on the way Angela went about making the changes. What was effective?

- Openness, honesty and the way she handles situations. She listens to your opinion and then makes a decision.
- She has had a positive insight into these children and they trust her and have a very “Proud and Deadly” respect for her.
- Without Angela the changes would not have been possible. It is a wonderful atmosphere to be a part of.
- Angela visited the councillors and got involved with the community. They trusted her and respected her hard work.
She is open and approachable and motivated for the good of the students and the staff.
- Angela has high expectations for the staff and students.
- Proud and Deadly captures the ideas and hopes that Angela and the staff had for the school.
- Angela looked and tested different strategies to make things work and relationships in the community got better. If something didn’t work a new direction was always tried. The school is definitely calmer and happier.
- Angela has been a strong Principal and not afraid to make decisions. Being able to do this, there has been support from the community.

D7: ABSENTEEISM

Table D-1 provides analyses of student absenteeism for each term of 2003 and 2004. The table was developed by calculating the percentage absenteeism by comparing the number of recorded absences for that term against the number of students on the class roll.

Table D-1

Percentage Absenteeism 2003-2004

	2003				2004			
Term	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Absenteeism %	60	42	21	14	13	15	13	11
Average %	34.25%				13%			

Table D-1 clearly reflects an average 13% absenteeism rate in 2004. Terms 1 and 2, 2003 indicate high absenteeism which began to decline markedly in Terms 3 and 4, 2003.

D8: REFLECTION SURVEY 2007

- 1) What do you think were the major issues when you were first appointed to Doongal State School?

Absenteeism, poor academic levels, violence, consistency of behaviour management across the school, “dumbing” down of the curriculum, fitting into the team.

- 2) What strategies implemented in 2003-2004 were most effective?

The incentives for improved attendance, Students enjoyed going on a trip each term. Understanding the Holistic framework and the cultural studies program made it easier to teach.

The songs helped to instill pride.

The “Proud and Deadly” words meant that the students started to believe that they could achieve.

Positive reinforcement.

Acknowledging student achievement.

Community involvement to develop rapport with community members.

Role modelling appropriate behaviours.

- 3) What role did leadership have in improving student outcomes?

Staff morale was good.

We were all part of the decision making.

We knew what the Principal stood for and the direction the school was taking. We all felt like we were an important part of the journey.

Leadership style allowed me to feel valued.

I was encouraged to think outside the square and self reflect on teaching methodology and beliefs.

- 4) How did you grow as a teacher during your time at Doongal?

I was forced to look at my teaching style and look for alternatives.
I understand now the importance of good relationships.
I learnt more about people.
I not only grew as a teacher but also as a person. I began to challenge my own beliefs about Indigenous people and became more open minded and receptive to new ideas and strategies.
I understand the importance of effective pedagogy and cultural identity and that slow school improvement is necessary for sustained change.

5) What other strategies would you have liked to see implemented?

More interaction with the outside community such as visits to other schools, interaction with the wider world through technology, more outside field trips.
Better control on incoming staff.
Staff to stay longer than two years.
More inter-agency support i.e., Child services, police.
More relationships developed with other schools through internet.
Greater student involvement in local industry to develop vocational networks for the future.

APPENDIX E: STATELINE INTERVIEW, 06.12.04

The following is a transcript of an interview that was carried out in December 2004 by Alex Barker and Robert Jones and aired on ABC TV show, *Stateline*, on 6 December 2004. Interviewed were two Year 7 students (Charlie and George), a teacher (Kim??), former Council Chair (Allan Moffitt) and me. Pseudonyms have been used for the Doongal students, teachers, and Council Chair.

ROBERT JONES:

Now to another Aboriginal community. This time, Doongal, near Rockhampton. The local school Principal has been awarded for her work in improving the education of Indigenous kids. Alex Barker reports.

ALLAN MOFFITT, FORMER CHAIR OF DOONGAL COUNCIL:

These kids would be singing and I'd say: This is Doongal School, get out!. These kids never sing at the school you know. This whole atmosphere is different.

(In the background, kids on parade singing their song)

Proud and deadly I'm from Doongal

Proud and deadly that's me

Proud and deadly I'm from Doongal

I'm strong and smart and I AM FREE.

ANGELA DOUGLAS, PRINCIPAL:

Deadly is a word that this community uses for excellence. So the kids know to be *proud and deadly* means to be proud in your heart and deadly in your mind.

ALEX BARKER:

Over the past two years, the primary school in the remote Central Queensland Aboriginal community of Doongal has been transformed.

ALLAN MOFFITT:

My wife, who's passed away now, she was Principal here, she used to have to disarm kids with knives and sticks and all the rest.

ALEX BARKER:

But two years ago a determined woman moved to the school and took up the role of Principal.

ANGELA DOUGLAS:

I think that we had to make a choice at that point whether or not we were going to run away and hide from it or confront it head on and try to make a difference.

ALEX BARKER:

The first step for Angela Douglas and the teachers of Doongal was stamping out truancy and bad behaviour. With the help of Doongal's Aboriginal Council the school began enforcing a community by-law. Kids who weren't in class would be rounded up by local police and brought to school. And there were incentives for good behaviour and attendance.

ANGELA DOUGLAS:

So they'd go to McDonalds or the movies or Pizza Hut or somewhere like that or Fun Zone.

ALEX BARKER:

So just good old-fashioned bribery, really?

ANGELA DOUGLAS:

It certainly was. (laughs)

ALEX BARKER:

The changes were so sudden, everyone noticed.

CHARLIE, YEAR 7:

Everybody used to play up last year like be rude but that's changed.

GEORGE, YEAR 7:

There used to be at the start of the year swearing and fighting and all that but it's changed now, no swearing and all that no fighting with each other just helping each other out in classes and all that.

ALEX BARKER:

With kids now turning up for class and behaviour improving there's been an academic turnaround. Over the past three years, the grade two results have improved by 40 per cent in numeracy, 30 per cent in writing and 25 per cent in reading. And last year the whole school's results improved overall by 12 per cent.

ANGELA DOUGLAS:

There is an extremely committed and passionate staff who really believe that these kids can learn and they can learn just as well as any other kids.

KIM, INDIGENOUS CULTURAL STUDIES TEACHER (READING TOHER CLASS):

They found a snake yeah, and we call that snake “wongi” in my language.

ALEX BARKER:

The school places emphasis on cultural studies. Trying to enmesh standard curriculum with a cultural perspective can be tricky but teachers say the results are worth the effort.

KIM:

I always say knowing who you are and knowing where you come from is the basis from where your learning starts.

ALEX BARKER:

The school will be overlooked by a new Principal next year. But this new beginning has left the community confident that the future is now much brighter.

ALLAN MOFFITT:

I thought the vision was disappearing but there’s a glimmer of hope again. Yeah I was nearly ready to give up myself.

ANGELA DOUGLAS:

It’s good for them to be able to stand up and say yeah I’m an Aboriginal person and I’m proud of that and I’m from Doongal and that’s something to be proud of.

APPENDIX F: TEACHER AIDE PROUD AND DEADLY PLANS, STAFF INTERVIEWS, SCHOOL SONG

F1: TEACHER AIDE PROUD AND DEADLY PLAN EXAMPLES.

Example 1: culture

What are the main issues in your classroom affecting learning?

Kids find it hard to go from home to school environment because they are different and they play up.

- **Goal:** To try to do some culture studies to help kids feel OK about coming to school.
- **Strategies:** Teach the boys some traditional dance at lunch time so that they can dance on parade.
- **Strategy to work with teacher:** Try to talk to teacher about making lessons more about the kids life.

Indicators: The class will be coming to school more and understanding the lessons. Two or three lessons will have culture in them.

(Note: Teacher aide did not record data but verbally indicated that the class was more culturally centred.)

Example 2: behaviour

What are the main issues in your classroom affecting learning?

Behaviour of the kids.

- **Goal:** To help the kids behave.
- **Strategies:** Visit parents.
- **Strategy to work with teacher:** Come to school and help the teacher.

Indicators: Happier classroom.

F2: STAFF SUPERVISION INTERVIEWS

Supervision Interviews were held with every teacher each semester. In general, the following questions were asked:

1. What are you teaching?

Semester 1, 2003: Eleven teachers produced a curriculum program in response to this question. Four teachers showed a curriculum plan that was of a reasonable standard.

Seven teachers produced a curriculum program that was lacking in content. These teachers were able to articulate in broad terms what they were teaching.

Semester 2, 2003: Eleven teachers produced a curriculum program. The standard had improved with eight teachers producing a program of a reasonable standard. These eight teachers could more competently articulate what it was that they were teaching based on better theoretical knowledge. The specific focus was on reading programs. Six teachers clearly explained the four roles of the reader and how they would explicitly teach reading in their classrooms.

Semester 1, 2004: There were clearly written and articulated programs from the six teachers who stayed at the school. Four new teachers said that they had planned a program but had found it to be inappropriate for the students.

Semester 2, 2004: Interviews revealed nine curriculum plans being produced to meet the needs of students in classes. The structure of the programs had improved from previous interviews. Two teachers did not produce curriculum plans at this meeting.

2. How do you know your students are learning?

Semester 1, 2003: This question did not receive any confident responses. Two people said, “Because they can do the worksheets”. There were no measures in place for teachers to gauge student learning.

Semester 2, 2003: Assessment and reporting portfolios were implemented in this semester. All teachers produced a portfolio for a student who was achieving well to demonstrate that students in their class were learning.

Semester 1, 2004: Four teachers responded by indicating the guided reading levels the students had achieved. One teacher produced data to indicate an improvement in sight words for the whole class.

Semester 2, 2004: All teachers produced their student assessment portfolios to clearly demonstrate student achievement.

3. What support do you need?

Semester 1, 2003: Twelve teachers responded with “behaviour management”.

Semester 2, 2003: Five teachers indicated that they needed personal support to continue to come to work each day. Stress management was their priority. Most teachers indicated that behaviour management was still an issue.

Semester 1, 2004: New teachers indicated that behaviour management was their area of biggest need. Continuing teachers indicated that they needed assistance with planning and implementing effective pedagogy into the classroom.

Semester 2, 2004: Four teachers indicated that they needed support with moving to another location. Two teachers said that they needed additional resources in their classrooms.

F3: SCHOOL SONG

*Proud and Deadly I'm from Doongal
Proud and Deadly, That's me
Proud and Deadly, I'm from Doongal
I'm Strong and Smart and I am free, I'm strong and smart and I am free
I'm a CQ Murrie I come from Doongal
Out in the bush is where I reside
I work hard, play fair, go to school, don't break the rules
I'm Proud in my heart and Deadly in my mind.*

*Our people were moved from all over Queensland
From Hopevale to Taroom they were taken from their land
Many different cultures making our community
Many different people
BUT AS ONE WE STAND*

APPENDIX G: EXTRACTS FROM PRINCIPAL'S DIARY

(See next page)

08.04.03

anted to think about Friday 2-3PM and other arvo's
interschool sport 2-3PM

rotational activities (cooking - craft)

some teachers are covering KLA's in unit plans
that only for Friday 2-3PM for rotational activities
priority of staff

1 sport - Rebecca is still in negotiations with Baralaba
and Duaringa about interschool sport
- Rebecca will continue to talk to them
- Ashley wants to get an interschool soccer
match between Baralaba

is - Peter's ordering big books for WIT next term
- Catalogue to be put out on the table
- Stocktake of big books being conducted

list of people who want to go to Yarrabah

Wk 2 Jo and Nat

Wk 3 Kellie

Wk 4 Fiona

Wk 6 Rebecca

Kylie undecided which week because of year 2 net

room - Theresa employed 2.5hrs/week

- 9-11 AM behaviour room

- 11-11.30 AM a detention room suggested, limited

is - teachers organise a buddy class for chn. who misbehave. Upper goes to lower, lower goes to upper

- teachers will think about it till Angela gets back

- Saturday 12.04.03 at Myella

- Lunch provided

- 8.00 AM - 4.00 PM

- bring a towel as most exercises outside

'D posters - need notes back before posters go up around the community

- if need anything for Lenore to order, put in a request so she can organise it

- Bronnie needs folder back and orders in by next Monday 14.04.03

books - Pete's already ordered his, Oxford Primary Mathematics, for his class

- signpost, QMP, jigsaw suggested or oxford

- Theresa brought up lower and upper have different books because of different chn.'s ability levels.

- A sample of Signpost grades 1-6

A sample of Oxford grades 1-5

for teachers to browse through and then make a decision at another meeting.

~~business~~

business - meeting at daycare about U/8's this afternoon
Tuesday 08.04.03

- aides lunchtime to be verified with Angela

3:55 PM

Alie mentioned that only the teachers going to football every week could use it as a behaviour management tool. It is council funded and therefore if she can use it, those of us not going every week not.

Comets and launching of proud and deadly
next Wednesday 16.04.03

ing Recovery strategy got passed over.

Friday afternoon NCT. - Rebecca.

14 15/4/03

- Commets
- Disco
- Disco

stration) - Teachers given forms to look at.

al) - Adapted from Marrabah

ier) - Teacher to tick and send down to Marrabah

- All teachers supplied with copy

- Incidents - teacher to write

- Teachers need documentation when students suspended.

try) " students to fill out form when they come to class

ier) - behaviour tracking sheet

ipal) - record for teacher on chn's

- behaviour over week.

- Marrabah - Behavioural Room

ural) reviewed next term

ural) - ball signed by commets.

School

Time

- new school hours next term (2)
- 9.00 - 2.30 school hours - teacher
- 9.00 - 3.00 hours teacher ai
- 30min break period
- every teacher to put in transf (May) - UNION
- time discussed with Barr
- Improve outcomes for students
- Behaviour middle session
- 11.00 - 11.30 | 1.00 - 1.30
Lunch time | Lunch time

Teacher Aides

- Time for teacher aide training 1 hour each week?
- entitled for 1 hour per day 1/2 break

Brain

Gym

- water - pop tops
- tuck shop bottles in

Outdoor Camps

- getting the cultural back with the community
- taking the out and showing re for land and people
- ~~with~~ wishing to come in and help children
- tree planting children to become involved in.
- build in for a walk once a week
- community partnership.

Eights Week: Older students to put
song/performance on
: Education Week
- Community Links

2.

Leigh - 7th May

- 3.00 workshop
- Proud + Deadly Plans
written by Friday
week 1.

1 At Noon - Rotational Games
Sport (P-3) (4-7)

- Cooking
 - Craft
 - Sport
 - interschool sport
 - children choose 3 weeks
- Monday chn given a list
of activities for Friday

write - We need to write down
visual everything we copy.

- pay the company copywrite
- everytime you video fill in

forms to fill out

- unpublished - You make w
- rubbish
- published - books
- see published material photo

ti - Bullying strategies

- Need to look at programs to run into ~~programs~~ daily cur
- Lunch time activities
- library?
- computer room?

committees

- Meetings to be on a more regular basis
- Meetings first week back

decs in class

- Teachers to cut down on using in classroom
- Commercial videos - to be told to Angela first.

staff Meetings

- Teacher aides & teachers to attend staff meetings

shirts

- T-shirts to be ordered Bronny.

(29/4/03.)

INK OPENED 3.10

SECOND PERSON ON DUTY 2ND BREAK.

BEHAVIOUR CLASSES.

- MODIFICATION OF STUDENTS
- SOME STUDENTS TO RE-ENTER FOR AFTERNOON SESSION (NORMAN CL)
- CLASSROOM TEACHERS TO SUPPLY BEHAVIOUR CLASSES WITH WORK DONE IN NORMAL CLASS (CONTINUITY)

ASSISTANCE OFFERED FROM CAIRN'S 'VEST. ~ RESOURCES.

SOCCER TRIALS - BLACKWATER (CRAIG/BRE)
IREDRILL - REVAMP (FIONA).

SICK LEAVE - LET ANGELA KNOW NIGHT BEFORE IF POSSIBLE.

FRIDAY SPORT - WHOLE SCHOOL ASHLEY. - (2 WEEK ROTATION).

LEIGH SCHELKS HERE (WED 3.00).

BEHAVIOUR FOLDERS - INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN
& ANECDOTAL RECORDS

Jo - WILL HAVE WORK PREPARED FOR
HER KIDS (WK 2). 2/3 KIDS
PER CLAS

PETE - LITERACY STRATEGIES

URALLY WANT. {

- SEE FOLDERS
- PROMOTE ESL.
- SCOPE / SEQUENCE
- WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH.

CASSIE - PRESENTATION (YARRAE)

MEETING CLOSED 4.40.

1 6.05.03.

ill - be prepared.

interviews due to supervisor by Friday.
up on wall in staffroom. Show bec the PE section

Management - bins arrived. Stairs with no side. Not a
ill that is fixed.

Meetings - put dates on whiteboard.
who is on what committee

tickets for positive behaviour in classroom and
ground. Whole school idea. Do your own classroom thing.
s to have container. All tickets go into a big
and 6 or 7 drawn out. Stay in until end of term.

is to choose student of week. If don't have one,
behaved, don't pick anyone. Will get prize and
e.

for Behaviour Classes. Encourage students to
to main class.

elkes and A Team coming to talk about Proud & Deadly
BQ afterwards.

about Parade

iss - Pull kid out before get to breaking point and

Reflection room ~~is~~ working? ~~4~~ People on duty.

more put in resignation for end of year.

11. to start in place of Libby - probably ~~is~~ Wednesday

trial.

on 14th May Arts Council. Rock around the clock.

st Aid. - 1 Saturday to come in to do it - During
know dates up on board & tick.

Footy team to come or football or jersey. Discuss the
ire issue.

Friday afternoon sport. Same this week. Let Ashley know
any problems.

Behaviour Management chart. To checking out.

littee feedback.

Literacy - Pm's ordered ~~6~~ 6 of each title - Lower.

- Alpha kids ordered 6 of each title - Upper.

To Give students the chance to read different text if
don't progress.

another order to come. People put ideas down on butcher
er of things that may work.

cert Money - Resources for upper school. Not personal.

20/5/03

Staff Meeting

ion Week - Kangaroo Stadium
Dancers

Awards to be given

- student of week

- Sport

- Proud and Deadly behaviour

- Craig

- Photo's Bronnie, Theresa

- Woori song -

Program

Woori song

captains

Awards

Steve Kamp

- lag

Proud and Deadly Song

Dancers

30 finishers

Chn staying at school

teachers and staff teacher aides
working together

Brett - finishing Friday

Fred - Monday and Friday

↳ Craig's room

- teachers to
invite into
room

(it) - Staff can collect disc
from office

E Days - 1 week in advance (not

apons - contact office
- take from children

ly ground - take some equipment
outside with you.
→ teachers need to bring
back to staff room
- start with 2 objects
- trial balls in office for
week → sight out equip
each week

m meeting oct Tuesday instead of staff meeting	Upper school	Lower
	- Staff room	- C block

nary Rotations | 1.30 - 2.30 - Primary Rotat
- to start Wednesday (Week 6)

flection
oom } tell child
- When
- Where
- Why

meeting - we have lost \$30 000
due to decrease of
numbers.

Teachers need to fill
out reflection sheet.

Each staff member to
see Angela in NCT
next week.

- 18th - 25th June - Pete
- 12-kids
- 12-parents

shirts - to be ordered

Eights - Next Friday

Education - Friendship - respect } emphasis
Monday) - patience
- honesty

work to display around
Kangaroo Stadium

Staff Meeting: 2/6/03
Meeting opened 9.00 am

rain Gym : feedback/use in classroom
CD Available from Bec

homework : send home once a week
: reward chn who bring
back homework

values Ed : Start with 'Manners' as first
value to focus on for
2 weeks
: Awards given on parade
: Theresa to do up manners
awards

mas party : get nos to work out
ticket price

coming duties : make sure people
are attending the
correct duties

PE/NCT : for week 6 → Craig
do PE while Bec is
in Yarrahban

of T'Aides : Angela to discuss
handbook with TAs.
: Teachers to work
with TAs from 230 -
300 on programs
for following day
: TAs / Teachers are
role models; careful of
swearing etc. at school
: Call Ang if you aren't
going to be at work

tees : send chris names to
Lenore

ers have arrived - Kaye is to
age. All resources must be signed
Return resources as soon
you have finished

literacy resources that you
; give a list to Pete.

e outcomes up into curriculum
inisers

ology : Jo to show Kate
how to slot data into T

'03: Staff meeting.

Times for reports: go through supervisor first.

in Mon. week 9., must have task which was given & must support the times.

1 & Deadly Plans must be supported
use line data for each goal. Data
in on Thursday.

Be sure Teacher Aides are busy
between 2:30 - 3:00.

Setting up the staff room table,
to clean it up.

Rebecca report cards to do her bit.

Resa & Kate went to P.D in

Emergency for I.T. - Looking at machine

Off Meeting: 14 July 2003

Time: 9.05 am

1) : * still looking for person to fill pos
* Tess & Angela to meet to discuss behaviour review

2) folios: * Effective reporting method
* Monitors progression → need v samples for Term 3 in end of year folio; as well as Term 4.

3) nittees: * set up meetings
* work out goals
* committees need to report
* coordinators write meeting times on w'board.

4) Ed shop: * 1,2,3 Avg at Yeppoon
* work out com arranger & give to Ang
* Partners welcome to com but need to pay for own accom & meals

Literacy Conf.
Technology integration & Indigenous
Assessment tools focus

Pauline & Bernadine from Yawababal
SS to visit our school to
discuss WTT & ESL activities

* Discussed trying to develop
a rating system to assess
Chn from Woorie SS; in so as
well looking at standard levels.

* Assessment needs to be relevant
to our area

1
rs * Pete has developed unit
titles & outcomes to align with
Cherbourg framework and
Aboriginal Studies

Discussion:

* Computers to be taken from
lab & put into classrooms

* Ask George from Wadja
to help set up computers.

* In planning - show weekly words, strategies, assessment

led
ders

- * Flying frog series put together
- * Set for every teacher
- * Books are for guided reading only! Books must remain as a set
- * ATSI Education Unit: Librarian resources; can hire up to 20 items for 4 weeks.

idance:

- * Develop in class reward system to encourage attendance
- * Movie nights as rewards for good attendance
- * Approach sponsors for skateboard as rewards for end of year

set for
ne SS

- * Birth to Year 12 institution to improve outcomes for children in Woonona
- * Daycare / Prep year parents to attend daycare centre

Internet: unable to access
: Angela to follow up.

Discussion re: positives being
seen in our work

etc: Literacy - whole school Lit Over
To watch video next week on
teaching descriptions & recon

Speech Therapist to visit next Tue
10-2 pm. Develop agenda
of issues for Kylie to address.
Kate & Jo to fill out referral
forms before her arrival.

Kylie's itinerary with Pat.

blue: Patience

developed mindmap.

Staff Meeting

Chair: Peter

① RAIS Leave

- our ~~leave~~ rais leave has increased
- needs to go through Martina
- any problem go through Union
- if you get knocked back - go str to Martina.

② HOD starting 12th September

- Ken Brendan Forbes

③ Video - Context, Text, Grammar

- Teaching the genre of grammar - unit of work on Ants.

Discussion - Real life - community work

- Brainstorming - scaffolding
- Making the Jump

code switching
"is", "are"

- value home language
distinction between two la
Bernadine - Murrabah SC
- ESL teach

- Pete to ring Bernadine

MARCH 2004

29

MONDAY
089/277 Week 14

7:00

8:00

9 Kids trashed 'C' Block.

9:00

Called Paul Wood to send G.O.
& contact Q Build

10:00

11:00

William Sullivan Sr angry because his son sent home due to being involved in Break & Enter.

12:00

Police confirmed ~~that~~ he was involved and I was going to suspend him.

1:00

William angry that his child had been sent home & he was not contacted.

2:00

Kellie sent ~~to~~ him home but asked him to wait for ~~the~~ ~~FA~~. but he ran away and left the school grounds.

3:00

While Kellie was getting myself & the CLO, William took himself home.

4:00

2:40 went to see William Sullivan

5:00

David went to the door & was told they were too tired & that I was to come back tomorrow. Tried to discuss suspension of William Jr.

6:00

7:00

A.C. to Families to report neglect
Kelvin Rankin
Herbert Dooley



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P/c to Families to report neglect Di Lett
Kalin Banker
Herbert Dootley

10:00

DLB
Community Services
Affidavit for Richardson's

Visited William Sullivan - Much more supportive said he would keep his son in his room for 20 days. I explained appeal process and suspension.

1:15 John Braun came into office saying kids were "abusing him".
~~I~~ told him to stay in office then we went to see Pete who said out what had happened. Pete said there was an incident & he was arranging to get all the parents up to talk about bullying. Boys who were bullying were met in the classroom. Pete sent I.A. to find kids and parents unable to locate them.

Staff meeting - Read from "Why Watters lay down & die". Generated great discussion about the value of the T.W.'s in the classroom & how they can help for the kids. Excellent for new teachers who were able to talk about 'different' getting concepts across to them.

Monday 10 February

Tuesday 11 February

Wednesday 12 February

Regatta Day (Tas)		
8.00	8.00	8.00
10.00	10.00	10.00
12.00	12.00	12.00
2.00	2.00	2.00
4.00	4.00	4.00
6.00	6.00	6.00

Lesson Plans	Lesson Plans	Lesson Plans
<p><u>Bronwyn</u> Yr 1 Literacy - <u>Affective Learning Centres</u> - Practical strategies. - Email buddies. - Technical support - Transfer - Blackwater. - Quick referral for OTITIS - Yarrabah.</p>		
<p><u>Jess</u> Social Skills Group work</p> <p>Literacy - Walking Talking Texts. T+D - Ben. man. <u>Marcus</u>. Yarrabah. ICT - computer. Using videos + powerpoint.</p>		

33
34
35

8.00

10.00

12.00

2.00

4.00

6.00

therapy - Affective Learning Centres
 - Practical strategies.
 - Email buddies. - Technical support.
 - Transfer - Blackwater.
 - Quick referral for OT/ITS
 - Yarrabah.

Social skills
Group work

literacy - Working Talking Texts.

- Ben. man. Marcus.

abach.

- computer. Using videos + powerpoint.

8.00

10.00

12.00

2.00

4.00

6.00

Cassie.
 b kids on track to not
 be caught Maths
 R.R. at least 1 through program.
P.P
Assessment/reporting.
Yarrabah.

Matthew

Increase on task time.

Wondai Colonial.

41685633

do Integration
Newsletter

Transition to yr 7.

Outdoor Learning area
Go to other schools:-

FEBRUARY 2003							WEEK 7		
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	1	2	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9			
10	11	12	13	14	15	16			
17	18	19	20	21	22	23			
24	25	26	27	28					

Notes/Things to do this week

David Hini
Michael Byles
Cherlie Atkinson
Curtie Hime
Shireea
Sean Rankin

Saturday 15 February

Sunday 16 February