

## CHAPTER VI

CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE INTERACTIVE  
MODEL IN THE N.S.W. CONTEXT

We must first see the world as  
it is and not as we would like  
it to be.

(Alinsky, 1972, p. 12)

## Introduction

The general conditions required for implementing the interactive model were described in Chapter V. They were derived from an analysis of studies of public alternative schools which had attempted to include students in curriculum decision making. Positive and negative frames at three levels - the socio-cultural and system level, the school and community, and the classroom levels - were discussed and an attempt was made to characterize the nature of the generally favourable and unfavourable conditions for implementation. A similar organizational framework will be used in this chapter to analyse available information on the N.S.W. context in order to determine to what extent it is congruent with the favourable conditions indicated in Chapter V and to identify the enabling and obstructing frames unique to this context.

In Chapter I the Australian context was discussed in terms of some of its negative and positive aspects which suggested that implementation of the interactive model would be worthwhile and a possibility. This chapter will examine this context in more detail with a particular emphasis on the N.S.W. educational system, with the objective of identifying the enabling and obstructing frames at each of the three levels and

of drawing conclusions about the likelihood of implementation in the state secondary schools. The rationale for focusing on the state system rather than on the private or independent one has already been discussed in Chapter I.

Research on the implementation of innovations indicates that prior to implementation there is a decision made to accept to use something new and this is referred to as "adoption" (Fullan and Pomfret, 1977). Therefore, a new idea must get past the acceptance/adoption stage before it can be put into practice. Research on the implementation of educational innovations has also identified some of the factors associated with adoption and implementation. Reference will be made to these factors as well as the lessons alternative schools provide, in an attempt to determine whether or not the interactive model could be adopted by and implemented in the N.S.W. educational system.

#### Enabling Frames at the Macro Level

Chapter I outlined some of the changes in educational policy in Australia over the last fifteen years which may be regarded as contributing factors in making conditions favourable for the implementation of the interactive model. The changes outlined included administrative decentralization in various states through the creation of locally administered regions; the removal of external examinations at the end of primary and lower secondary school and, in some states, in senior secondary school; the growth in the professional training of teachers; the change in the role of inspectors towards that of consultants; the establishment of the Curriculum Development Centre and the Schools Commission which provided encouragement for decentralization and wider participation through conferences, publications and the funding of projects.

This chapter focuses on the N.S.W. context, however, it also deals with some additional factors at the national level which are significant because they have shaped the socio-cultural context which in turn has influenced developments in the state and needs to be, therefore, appreciated.

#### Socio-political climate

Some parallels may be drawn between the activities of the Australian Schools Commission during the 1970's and those of the U.S. Office of Education. Both agencies supported school-based decision making and funded experimentation on a large scale. As indicated in Chapter I, the policy of the Schools Commission since its establishment in 1973 has been to advocate decentralization of control over the operation of schools, and the extension of decision making to schools and their communities. The conditions which led to the establishment of the Schools Commission and the declaration of this policy were similar to those found favourable for the establishment of alternative schools.

The period prior to the 1972 elections, which brought the Australian Labor Party (A.L.P.) into power and led to the establishment of the Schools Commission, was "an intense period of dissent and cultural criticism" (Johnston, 1983, p. 19) as it was in the U.S. and other developed countries. In Australia, opposition to the Vietnam war, criticism of bureaucratic institutions and of political indifference to social issues, united academic and activist reformers in criticism and protest. The "key terms" in the debates of the time were "alienation, bureaucratization, manipulation, participation and control" (Johnston, 1983, p. 20). Education emerged as a dominating social and political issue. Attention was focused on the poverty of schools in terms of buildings, resources, inadequate numbers of staff and large class sizes. Pettit (1980) observes that an increase in the retention of girls and of non-English speaking pupils

... placed excessive demands upon accommodation, but also occurred at a time of full employment when the expansion of secondary education had to compete for teachers with the more august tertiary institutions. Professional morale was low, absenteeism and resignation rates were high, classes were large and teachers in short supply. The outcome was industrial conflict over qualifications, teaching loads and conditions in the form of rallies, electoral campaigns, strikes, stoppages and working to rule.

( p. 10)

In 1968, eighty per cent of the teachers in N.S.W. went on strike over the issues of working conditions, staffing, class sizes, and relief staff (Schofield, 1982). In 1972,

Students took to the streets of Sydney, marching for freedom of dress and expression, for the abolition of corporal punishment and for equality of educational opportunity.

(Schofield, 1982, p. 15)

The Australian Council of State School Organizations (A.C.S.S.O.) - an umbrella organization representing Parent and Citizen's Associations, mothers' clubs, and school council organizations - was strongly allied with the Australian Teachers' Federation over the issue of educational funding. The issue was only defused by the adoption by the A.L.P. of the principle of funding on the basis of need.

The middle-class activists and professionals such as teachers "created the political climate favourable for the birth of the Australian Schools Commission and the far-reaching reforms proposed by its interim committee" (Pettit, 1980, p. 178). The Labor party needed the support of this group for as Schofield (1982) observes,

They represented a huge block vote for Labor and could ease the passage of government policy through state bureaucracies where they would meet stiffest resistance.

(p. 20)

Upon election, the A.L.P. fulfilled an election pledge and established an interim committee to examine the needs of schools and to make recommendations to the government on desirable changes.

A.C.S.S.O. made a submission to the interim committee, as did many groups, and the content of its submission indicates the current thinking of many Parents and Citizens groups. The submission emphasised the growing movement for community involvement and shared decision making in schools, and the need for parents and other organizations to be engaged in consultation at the policy-making level, in participation in the control of local educational authorities and in sharing in the government of schools.

The Labor government attempted to respond to the pressures for change by an unprecedented and massive increase in educational spending which was planned and directed by the Schools Commission. Funds were provided to improve resources, broaden the decision-making base in schools and their communities, and encourage curriculum development projects which included fundamental reconsideration of the purpose and content of schooling. These programs were conducted under the auspices of the Disadvantaged Schools Program, the Innovations Program and the Teacher Development Program. Successive Reports of the Schools Commission during the 1970's endorsed a social democratic philosophy of providing people with the resources to help themselves and to control their own circumstances, and of promoting participation in the educational process to produce change. In the more recent triennial reports of the Commission, the concepts of participation, diversity and choice have been

emphasized and linked together in an attempt to marry the values of individual choice, equality of opportunity and respect for ethnic and cultural differences (Johnston, 1983).

There was therefore prior to 1972 parental support for the decentralization of control of education, and after 1973 additional Federal or Commonwealth support. With the onset of economic recession in 1974 and the change in government in 1975 to the Liberal/Country Party, a more conservative educational spending policy ensued and cutbacks were made in successive education budgets. Nevertheless, support for Schools Commission funded projects continued, albeit at a reduced rate. A new program for Transition Education was introduced in 1979 allocating one hundred and fifty million dollars over five years to educational programs to alleviate high youth unemployment. Under this program schools were able to obtain funds provided their development activities focused on compensatory courses for students who were considered "at risk" as early school leavers, making the transition from school to work.

Although tangible Federal Government support for school-based curriculum development has been declining over the last decade, and although the political, economic and social situation has changed from that of the early 1970's, the values, attitudes and beliefs about education, social institutions and social structures current at that time are still a part of educational, social and cultural discourse though perhaps not as strongly expressed. Also, the educational activities in the period 1974-81, supported by the Schools Commission, have led to changes in attitudes and outlook among members of both the community and the teaching profession which should persist for some time even though financial support for education may decline. These changes include the following:

- \* The accelerated involvement of the community in the schools; the opportunities created for lay people to associate in projects with professionals and the opportunity created for them to take the initiative in many cases.

- \* The opening up of a range of options previously little known to educators including: alternative structures, components of curriculum, learning processes and evaluation of programs.
- \* The piloting of new programs in schools which provided the pathfinders with experience in these areas.
- \* The introduction of programs which were catalysts and served as models for others.
- \* The generally accelerated movement towards progressive education by helping in freeing up a comparatively static situation.
- \* The provision of a non-bureaucratic model for the administration of an educational program which particularly stresses participatory decision making.

(Baker, 1982a, pp. 3-4)

With the re-election of the Labor government in 1983, the Transition Education program was subsumed by a new government initiative, the Participation and Equity Program designed

... to improve and adapt existing content and methods for a much broader range of students.

(Schools Commission, 1984, p. 21)

It also intended to support "shared decision-making between the direct partners in schools" (p. 21), that is, the parents, students and teachers and innovations in school organization and curriculum. However, "participation" is interpreted to mean retention of students for longer periods in schools, that is, participation in the process of schooling rather than having a say in decision making about the nature of the process.

#### Criticism and questioning of school's function

The late 1970's and early 1980's brought questioning and reappraisal of the functions and relevance of schooling as a

result of dissatisfaction with the lack of total success of previous programs to achieve equality of educational outcomes and as a result of changing enrolments, economic conditions and social expectations. Dissatisfaction with existing schooling may be regarded as an enabling frame if it acts as an incentive for the establishment of alternative forms of schooling, as it did in the early 1970's, or if at least it predisposes people to be more receptive to the idea of alternatives.

A survey of public opinion by Campbell and Robinson (1979) indicated that a wide range of community groups throughout Australia believe that more emphasis should be placed not on academic learning but on the following:

- \* preparing children to cope with life and contribute to society and work co-operatively with others;
- \* developing a sense of personal worth and esteem;
- \* ensuring that students learn how to discover new knowledge, how to assemble facts, pose questions and arrive at tentative answers;
- \* learning to solve significant problems with teachers who display warmth, supportiveness and respect.

(p. 57)

Other studies of public opinion and expectation of schools have already been discussed in Chapter I and indicate similar findings. The Schools Commission Report (1980) on the education of fifteen and sixteen year olds subsumes many of the recommendations of these studies. It claims that schools are failing to meet the needs of the majority of students. It attributes this failure largely to the continuing concentration in schools on the study of academic subjects to meet the needs of only fifteen per cent of the student population proceeding on to tertiary studies. The Report advocates "a fundamental re-appraisal of the approach to the compulsory years of



schooling" (p. 5) and provision for preparation for adult life, not just for tertiary study. The concept of the "adaptive school" is explored and delineated as one in which there are warm and friendly relations between students and staff based on mutual respect, a wide range of course offerings, and close connections between the school and community being served. These measures, and those already cited in Chapter I in reference to the Report, are quite compatible with the interactive model.

Criticism of the academic emphasis also comes from academics themselves. Research indicates that as students progress through secondary school it becomes more selective, presenting students with a competitive academic curriculum which is based on hierarchically organized knowledge derived from the academic disciplines as they are propounded in universities. This curriculum has the greatest prestige and receives the most resources so that it becomes the definition of what is worth learning and has the effect of marginalizing other kinds of knowledge (Connell et al., 1982). Connell (1983) also maintains there is "a widespread feeling" among educationists, "that there is something significantly wrong with our mainstream curriculum at present" (p. 59). He reports that at a conference of school principals the issue on which there was most agreement was "that the competitive academic curriculum should be got rid of and replaced by a more democratic one (p. 59).

In reconsidering her research studies of 1978 and 1980, on expectations of secondary schools, Collins (1982) notes the key areas of discontent are the "dominance of traditional academic subjects" and the "impersonal, inappropriate nature of the institutional environment" (p. 7). The interactive model addresses both these issues.

#### Multicultural and multiethnic society

Another indicator of favourable aspects of the socio-cultural climate during the 1970's was a growing social

awareness of the ethnic, cultural and social diversity of the total population. It is a fact that there are people from over a hundred different ethnic and racial backgrounds living as permanent residents in Australia (Harris, 1980).

The spread of favourable attitudes towards ethnic and cultural minorities and the willingness to accommodate them through school-based curriculum development, notably in primary schools in Victoria, may be considered enabling frames as far as the interactive model is concerned.

In the 1950's and 1960's assimilation was the official government policy for migrants and for aborigines. Smolicz and Wiseman (1971) note that the role of the school was that of an assimilation agency, and equality of opportunity was interpreted as meaning that all children should be treated "in exactly the same way, as if they were all little Anglo-Saxons" (p. 4). Martin (1976) notes that educational policy aimed at enforced "acculturation ... into the Australian way of life" (p. 1). Parsons (1977) claims that teaching proceeded as if the pupil's ethnic identity did not exist at all, and in N.S.W. the policy of non-recognition was upheld by Wyndham, the Director-General of Education (Martin, 1976).

The fact that contemporary official statements on educational policy reflect an emphasis on the need for multicultural education is due to the greater understanding attained of the debilitating psychological, social, cultural and educational effects of a policy of acculturation and assimilation. Harris (1980), for example, cites studies from Australia, United States and Canada, which support the view that children experience difficulties in socialization in societies where no accommodation is made for their diverse cultural backgrounds.

The assimilationist policy was abandoned in 1969 probably because as Bostock (1981) observes "forcible attempts to

suppress language and culture have in all probability, never worked" (p. 35). It is now sufficiently realised that cultural heritage and primary socialization play a vital role in personal development (Rado, 1975) and policies which favour assimilation can lead to alienation from former experience (Mackie, 1974) and can produce alienation from all types of society and culture (Kovacs and Cropley, 1975).

Nevertheless, the assimilation view, while not as widespread, is still a part of the contemporary Australian outlook as identified by the 1974 Inquiry into Schools of High Migrant Density. The Inquiry found that

... few if any concessions have been made to the essential differences of migrant pupils, in terms of curriculum, organisational goals and structures or teacher/learning strategies. Most schools are still trying to make migrant children fit a pattern which was determined before migrant pupils were enrolled in schools.

(Australian Department of Education, 1975,  
p. 19)

More recently, Harris (1980) found from interviews with teachers and from essays written by students that the view that "persons of non-Anglo-Saxon background will only become 'good Australians' when they have submerged their ethnic identities" (p. 17) is still prevalent among teachers and students. Martin and Meade's (1979) longitudinal study of Sydney school children also indicates that:

In the school context students of non-English speaking origin often face the kind of hostile environment that might be expected to make them leave school rather than stay on.

(p. 16)

As evidence they quote suprisingly vehement responses of some Australian born Year 10 students to the issue of migrants in Australia. For example, in response to whether students should be able to learn their non-English parents' language, a student wrote

Yes, if and only if they do not speak it in Australia. Put it this way, they can jabber and blab to their heart's content as long as they don't annoy me or any other Aussies. IT JUST AINT NATURAL.

(p. 17)

What all this means is that there are probably still many people who support the assimilation view and look upon Australians of non-English origin with contempt and who would oppose arguments in support of implementing the interactive model in order to accommodate the needs of ethnic groups.

It is, however, acknowledged at least by the government that Australia is a multicultural, multiethnic society. In 1978, the Federal Government accepted the recommendations of the Galbally Report (1978) that a multicultural Australia would be achieved by a policy of multicultural education. The Report advocated the learning of languages by all Australians, the teaching of histories and cultures of other ethnic groups, the development of bilingual teaching, the expansion of teacher education in the field of multicultural education, the development of relevant curricula and resources and the greater involvement of parents and community in the schools.

In N.S.W., community language programs have been introduced in primary schools with forty-six schools and fifty teachers offering a total of eleven languages (Parent and Citizen, 1983, pp. 17-18). However, the tertiary sector has been very slow in responding to the legitimate demands of ethnic Australians and in diversifying its outlook and attitudes and offering courses in the languages, cultures and points of view of the major ethnic groups (Smolicz, 1981; Kerr and Morrison, 1981).

In order to meet the needs of various groups their ethnic and cultural identity must be respected (a question of values

and attitudes on the part of the majority) and reflected in the curriculum (a question of educational policy). To achieve the latter their participation in curriculum development has to be ensured (a question of structural arrangement). That is, the educational system has to be sufficiently decentralized to allow teachers to have first-hand contact with ethnic groups in order to become familiar with their problems and educational needs, and to tap ethnic and cultural resources in the local community.

#### Enabling initiatives in N.S.W.

Currently in N.S.W. secondary schools teachers have the freedom and responsibility to develop programs for Years 7 to 10 and to assess the students' performance and achievement for the award of the School Certificate at the end of Year 10. The curriculum content for Years 11 and 12 is prescribed by the Board of Senior School Studies and its emphasis is on the study of academic subjects to prepare students for university studies. Assessment is by means of externally prepared examinations for matriculation and the award of the Higher School Certificate (H.S.C.) at the completion of Year 12. Nevertheless, there is some scope for school-based curriculum development even in the senior years. Students may obtain credit for studying courses developed by the school under the classification of Other Approved Studies (O.A.S.) of which they may take three units out of a total of eleven units for each year of study.

These provisions in N.S.W. are the result of a movement towards administrative decentralization and the encouragement of participation in decision making. This movement can be discerned from a number of initiatives taken by the Department of Education and the State government over the last decade and discussed in detail below. These have had the effect of opening up the system to make it more responsive to students and

community and less rigid and bureaucratic in administrative structure, all favourable developments as far as the interactive model is concerned.

a) The "Willis Report". The first significant initiative was in 1973 when a consultative paper was issued by the Department of Education on regionalization and community involvement in schools. It was popularly known as the "Willis Report" (N.S.W. Minister of Education, 1973) named after E.A. Willis then Minister of Education who wrote the foreword. The paper delineates three levels of decision making - the State office, the Regional offices and the school - and proposes that a community body or board be established at each of these levels which would allow fuller community participation in schools. Regionalization would make communication easier between teachers and officers of the Department.

The form of the paper is itself noteworthy because, as Wescombe (1980) observes, "it implies that the community is worth consulting and can be trusted to respond responsibly" (p. 11). The form of the paper also suggests that the central administration of the Department was becoming aware of the desirability of testing public opinion before embarking on changes in the structure and content of education.

The following year a more detailed report was published, the work of a Review Panel appointed by the Minister, which provided more detailed arguments for regionalization and community involvement (N.S.W. Department of Education, 1974b). The Report argued that with regionalization the staff would perceive a more direct responsibility for the results of their work, which would create a feeling of belonging and good morale; and shorter lines of communication would be established leading to efficiency. There would be broader participation in decision making and greater opportunity for local innovation, better knowledge of local conditions leading to better service,

and better identification of local needs and co-ordination with other services. The arguments for increased community involvement included improved teacher contact with the community and parent contact with the school; increased parental participation in the education of the child; and extended use of community services. Accountability for education would be brought closer to the community, and there would be increased administrative awareness of special needs among students and in the community.

Although the proposals in the Willis Report were not implemented the notion of consultation was given wide public airing over several years. Wescombe's (1980) study of the controversy surrounding the Report suggests that the "timing" of the initiative was wrong; it was not seen as a natural development of existing discussions. There was also a limit imposed on the time available for public comment. The teachers' federation did not, at that time, perceive the proposed school boards as influential allies in their struggle for better teaching conditions. School principals opposed the idea of compulsory consultation. Parents and Citizens' Associations wanted more direct involvement rather than indirect representation through biennial elections. In spite of this, it seems that all the parties involved in the discussion accepted the argument that the Department of Education was currently inefficient and insensitive to local needs, and according to Wescombe's analysis of the debate, all the parties accepted the arguments for greater community involvement. Where they differed was in conceptions of the form that community involvement should take. Wescombe's view is that "a very large number of teachers would welcome parent involvement in a consultative role" (p. 28). Many parents believed that schools were accountable to them as taxpayers and thus they were indirect "owners" of the school and the most concerned of all the parties involved in the education of children and young people.

b) The "Aims" document. The second initiative indicative of a favourable frame at the system level was the publication of the "Aims" document in 1974. This document defines the rationale for education in N.S.W. and provides a set of broad guidelines for teachers within which to operate. It clearly states the view that it is concerned with personal development (N.S.W. Department of Education, 1974a, p. 11), which is seen to be the result of a multidimensional process of individual development guided by the home, community and school.

The goal of guided personal development is the "mature educated person" who possesses the following attributes: "perceptive understanding, mature judgement, responsible self-direction and moral autonomy" (p. 11). The document emphasizes that students are individually different, that they each have their "own unique characteristics, social experiences, self-image and aspirations" (p. 17), interests and abilities (p. 18) which the school must respect. The school must strive to accommodate the "complex process" of individual development in its various facets, intellectual, physical, emotional, social, aesthetic, moral and spiritual (p. 11), while at the same time pay attention to cognitive development and the development of ability to formulate values and make decisions. Work in these last two areas is perceived as the focus of secondary school activities (p. 18) because they are seen to play a central role in individual development. With respect to cognitive development, the school should provide situations which require high level thinking processes, i.e. in solving problems, in applying facts, skills, principles and theories to new situations (p. 18). With respect to values and decision making, the school should provide experiences which involve examination, clarification and formulation of values, and which promote understanding the ideas, values and feelings of others; seeing clearly the relevance of values to decision making; determining a course of action; and being aware of the possible alternatives and the consequences of each alternative (p. 19).



The emphasis on individual development is a departure from the academic bias of previous curriculum statements which was noted by Connell (1970) who argued that prior to 1970 the curriculum was essentially academic in nature "leading to literacy, numeracy and a general liberal education" (p. 254). The Wyndham scheme had sought to develop a wider range of abilities in students than the academic; however, it did not assert this as strongly as the Aims document. The broader emphasis in the Aims document is justified on the grounds that the "secondary school population has changed markedly" (p. 5) in terms of more students staying on for the senior years instead of leaving at Year 10 although not intending to continue with tertiary studies. A more recent discussion paper issued by the Board of Senior School Studies (1982) notes that between 1967 and 1978, the proportion of student continuing into Years 11 and 12 grew from 19.3% to 32.4%. Also in 1977/78, only 45% of those undertaking the H.S.C. examinations actually proceeded to tertiary institutions. With respect to the composition of the student population the document also states that it is no longer apt to describe this population generally as adolescent but rather as including children, adolescents and young adults (p. 5).

Justification for the broader emphasis is also based on recognition of changes in Australian society in terms of greater diversity of life styles, values and rate of social change although the multicultural, multiethnic nature of the population is not acknowledged outright or its implications discussed. However, the diversity in life styles is perceived as a challenge to curriculum planners to provide equal educational opportunity to all without excluding those who do not conform to the dominant value system.

The document advocates school-based curriculum development and variety in the specific programs developed to meet the needs of students and community within the framework of

the broad guidelines provided. Teachers were not to be just implementers but developers of the curriculum and would not be stifled by practices prescribed by central office. School-based curriculum development is supported by the emphasis on the uniqueness of individuals and communities, differences in the student population across, between and within schools, differences in life-styles, values and culture, differences which a centrally prescribed curriculum could not accommodate. A curriculum developed by a school staff with the involvement of students and parents is considered "more likely to have greater vitality, flexibility and relevance" (p. 8) than one developed by a central agency.

The document is "progressive" in its concern with the social aspects of development, with guiding individual development in "the context of society", with reconciling the rights of the individual and the claims of society. The mature educated person is seen to be one who is responsible for decisions, tolerant and accepting of others, able to relate, communicate, work and live with other people, one who understands how societies function, particularly democratic ones, and is able to cope with controversial social issues and resolve social conflict.

Laird (1982), in his study of the administration of the curriculum in N.S.W., notes that the conceptual basis of policy statements since 1974 has continued to be the Aims document (p. 258). This proves to be the case with the "Base Paper on the Total Curriculum", a document for discussion prepared by the Aims Implementation Committee and published by the Secondary Schools Board in 1975.

c) The "Base Paper". This document urges the examination and restructuring of the total curriculum with a view to implementing the Aims document. The paper states unequivocally that:

The Board's syllabuses increasingly will be statements of aims rather than statements of content. The school then has the task of selecting content, having regard for available resources to meet its own objectives and to cater for students of different levels of maturation.

(Secondary Schools Board, 1975, p. 2)

It also comments on the need for "greater cooperation and coordination involving all subject areas within the school" (p. 3) and suggests that for Years 7 to 10, interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary studies, developed around six areas of study, might replace the traditional subjects on the curriculum, and be more appropriate for attaining goals set out in the Aims document. It also suggests flexible use of time distributed among the six basic areas, extension work, remedial work and other approved studies. Individual needs are to be catered for by setting aside twenty to forty per cent of school time for the purpose of pursuing studies in the areas of interest and/or importance to individuals.

The Aims and Base Paper documents indicate that the central office was willing to loosen its control over curriculum decision making and subsequent initiatives support this conclusion. In the same year, 1975, the external School Certificate examinations held at the end of Year 10 were replaced by a combination of school assessments and state-wide moderating tests. By 1977, moderation was abolished in all subjects except English and mathematics. Henceforth, schools were to be responsible not only for the selection of the curriculum content for Years 7 to 10 but also for assessment in all areas of study. Also in 1975, schools were invited to develop new courses for the senior years under the classification of Other Approved Studies of which students could take a total of six units for the H.S.C. Laird (1982) notes that this development "marked the high point of the Board of Senior School Studies' efforts at coping with a clientele of increasing wide academic ability" (p. 267).

d) The "Three-Tier" document. A further document endorsing the importance of the school's role in decision making was issued by the Department and commonly referred to as the "Three-Tier" document (N.S.W. Department of Education, 1976). It outlines the roles of the Centre, the Region and the school in curriculum development. The Department depicts its own role in terms of supporting the policies determined by the Statutory Boards and providing state-wide related services and resources for their implementation. The role of the regional office (there are ten in N.S.W.) is to link the centre and individual schools; liaise with the centre on policy matters; initiate and support local school projects; develop materials and support school initiations; and evaluate curriculum development in schools. The school is to adopt the approved aims and formulate school policy in accordance with them; assess the needs of individual students and meet them by developing suitable programs and curriculum materials; promote staff competence in curriculum development; and engage in the continuing evaluation of the curriculum.

Since 1976 the Department of Education has also tried to create an "involvement model" (Colvin, 1982) for the development of curriculum policy beginning with the development of a policy for teaching reading from kindergarten to Year 12. The involvement model attempts to involve primary, secondary and tertiary educators, parents, other members of the community and staff members from the Department of Education in the formation of central policy to replace the central "expert" committee as the principal policy decision makers. Colvin claims that the use of the involvement model originated from a need to develop curriculum guidelines which took students' needs and community wishes into account. The advantages for teachers claimed on its behalf have some common elements with those claimed for students in the arguments supporting the interactive model, namely, that "teachers will have a sense of ownership of the policy", that they will be more concerned with implementing it and that "development activities will contribute significantly to the professional development of the involved teachers" (p. 27).

e) "Managing the School". In 1979 the school's role in curriculum development was reinforced by another Departmental publication, Managing the School (N.S.W. Department of Education, 1979), which also stresses input from students, parents and community members in planning the curriculum.

One obvious benefit of this policy is the implied recognition of the special interests and varying needs of communities in N.S.W., a state diverse geographically and in the make-up of its population. Simmons (1978) notes that:

The contrast is apparent in the large ethnic populations that dominate the inner suburbs of Sydney and the suburbs of high socio-economic status adjacent to the harbour. On a rural perspective, the insularity of certain communities in the more isolated parts of the state, coupled with large aboriginal populations may pose a cultural conflict. Curriculum planning at an individual school level must take cognizance of such circumstances.

(p. 16)

Laird (1982) remarks that "Compared with the narrowly prescribed role of the teacher in the 1960's as implementer of a detailed subject syllabus" (p. 262), the role prescribed in this document and the shift in curriculum emphasis in the Aims document and Base Paper implied a major change in role.

f) The Education Commission. The N.S.W. government's decision to create an Education Commission in 1979 can also be interpreted as an attempt to make the education system more responsive to community needs and to allow parents and community members to have a formal input into the formulation of educational policy at the highest level. The Education Commission is a statutory body whose role is to advise the Minister of Education on the development and implementation of policies for public education services in N.S.W. Other statutory bodies, such as the Board of Senior School Studies,

are required by legislation to consult with the Education Commission before making recommendations to the Minister which may have implications for overall planning or the allocation of resources. The Commission consists of a full-time chairman appointed by the Minister and twelve part-time commissioners consisting of the Director-General of Education, the Director of Technical and Further Education, two members elected by state school parent organizations, three members elected by primary, secondary and technical and further education teachers, a representative of the higher education teachers, a representative of the higher education board, and four community representatives nominated by the Minister, one of whom has a special interest in Technical and Further Education. The commission is the employer of all professional staff working in the public education system below the rank of Director-General.

g) The Innovations Program. The Schools Commission has supported innovations in the N.S.W. system through the Innovations Program, which funded twelve hundred projects over a seven year period, and through the Choice and Diversity Project. The Innovations Program encouraged change initiatives at the school level which has not been the conventional source of innovation in N.S.W. As the earlier discussion shows, innovation has been from the top-down, as a result of decisions made by the central administration. Thus for the estimated fifteen hundred successful recipients of Schools Commission grants the event was a "significant happening in their lives" (Baker, 1982b, p. 64). In assessing the outcomes of the Innovations Program after the end of funding in 1981, Bee (1982) concludes that overall the program (i) challenged and changed the views of many teachers, parents and people in the community who were asked to contribute their ideas; (ii) encouraged schools to more closely examine their role in society; (iii) opened up schools to the surrounding community; (iv) helped "to widen the power basis in schools, including power over the allocation of funds" (p. 40); and (v) developed

communication strands "between those who were working to change the climate of schooling and to extend the concept of education" (p. 40). The teachers who participated in these projects would be more likely to have a favourable disposition towards the interactive model than those who did not.

Schools which were participants in the Choice and Diversity Project were concerned with exploring the possibility of extending choices within government schools and to examine the emergence of choice and diversity for students, teachers and administrators, for policy development and the social implication of choice. To date there is no published report on the outcomes for the participating schools, but, John Ward the Project Officer, has expressed the view that:

Only local level choices can enable schools to order their priorities if they are to best develop the educational potential of the students they set out to serve.

(1982, p. 1)

h) The McGowan Report. A recent publication supporting diversity and flexibility in the N.S.W. education system is the report of an all-party parliamentary committee of the N.S.W. Government popularly known as the "McGowan Report" (Parliament of N.S.W., 1981), after the member of parliament Brian McGowan who headed the committee. The committee was formed in 1979 to investigate options for the award of the School Certificate. Since the 1975 decision to discontinue external examinations at the end of Year 10, there had been discussion in the Secondary Schools Board on the basis for awarding the certificate and concern over the lack of comparability across schools (Laird, 1982). It was hoped that the select committee's findings would help resolve the disagreement over the issue.

The Report, however, does more than this. It attempts to outline principles and procedures by which schools might be

more responsive to students and parents. Its forty recommendations include the development of courses which take into account the special needs and interests of students; the establishment of curriculum committees on which students, parents and local community people may be represented; and the provision of opportunity to study a greater range of subjects than currently possible. It also advocates that the selection of courses by students should not be restricted by age or year level and that students should have greater choice in courses.

The Report also recommends that courses be divided into semester or half-year units (rather than year-long units) which would allow the school to adjust its curriculum more frequently and thus accommodate changes in students' needs and interests. This arrangement would require shorter time commitments from students than at present.

Assessment would be the responsibility of the school and criterion-based assessment is recommended instead of norm-referenced which is a departure from current competitive assessment. Students would receive a comprehensive "record of achievement" of the courses taken, whenever they decided to leave school, be that in Year 8, 9 or 10. The advantage to students of this scheme would be that if they left before the end of Year 10, as many now do and thus receive no credential, under the recommended system, they would receive a credential which would clearly show the range of subjects which had been completed. Thus the system would be more flexible and more to the students' advantage.

The function of the "school curriculum committee", with representatives of parents, students and community members, would be to approve proposed courses of study before they are forwarded to a central authority. Thus central control of the curriculum is not eliminated.



i) Future directions. While to date no decisions have been made on the recommendations of the Report, two additional initiatives have recommended changes to make the system more flexible. The first is a discussion paper on Years 11 and 12 issued by the Board of Senior School Studies (1982). This paper sought public response on proposals to introduce into the H.S.C. a new hierarchy of courses of three types: Board devised and assessed; Board devised and school assessed; and school devised and assessed. The H.S.C. would be awarded on the completion of a combination of courses consisting of a total of twenty-four units (including four compulsory units of English).

Based on public reaction to this paper and the McGowan Report, a recent initiative has been the publication of another Report (Swan and McKinnon, 1984) suggesting the replacement of the existing two Statutory Boards by a single Board of Secondary Education for Years 7 to 12. All courses would be available on a semester basis providing a greater diversity of subjects. The community's role in decision making is again reinforced by the recommendation to establish school/community committees to monitor and to develop programs and to liaise with tertiary institutions to provide for improved methods of accreditation. The H.S.C. examinations are retained and no changes are suggested for the award of the School Certificate.

j) Support from teachers, parents and citizens. The policy of the N.S.W. Teachers' Federation has, since 1973, been to support, at least in policy, democratic structures and decision making in schools. In a leaflet circulated to schools after its annual conference in 1980 (N.S.W. Teachers' Federation, 1981), the Federation urged its members to press for the implementation of democratic meetings and committee structures in schools. It also urged the establishment of school government based on the involvement of all staff members and representatives of students and parents, for it appeared contradictory to the Federation to try to develop in students favourable attitudes towards active

participation in democratic processes if schools were characterized by hierarchical authority and passive conformity. It does not, however, support the establishment of school councils by legislation as is the case in Victoria. It is more concerned with providing teachers greater access to decision making.

The Federation of Parent and Citizen (P. and C.) Associations in N.S.W. has been a forceful advocate for greater parent and community participation in educational decision making. The policy of the Federation extends to and deals in detail with all aspects of education far beyond the fund raising and socializing functions popularly attributed to P. and C.'s. Of particular interest is the belief of the Federation, as stated in its official handbook (Federation of P. and C. Associations, 1979), that parents and students have the right "to choose the type of education they want and to attend the school of their choice" (p. 59). The Federation also believes that students should have the opportunity "to develop the capacity to participate in decision-making processes and to become increasingly active in their commitment to others" (p. 65). Education in schools is seen as "part of a life-long process" for which "interaction between all those involved ... at all levels is essential" (p. 72). The Federation would like to see schools become "self-functioning and self-administered ... with the State Department providing services and resources" (p. 72). It is opposed to competitive assessment and believes that assessment should be for the information of the teachers, students and parents and not used for screening students for entry into tertiary institutions. Tertiary institutions and employers should develop their own assessments for entrance rather than forcing these onto secondary schools.

The P. and C. Federation is conscious of students' rights in schools. At its 1981 conference, it recommended that the N.S.W. Government introduce legislation to provide students with

the right to individualized teaching programs, the right for schools to organize in ways which encourage adults to respect students as persons, the right to be involved in decision making and to take progressively more responsibility for those decisions (Parent and Citizen, 1981, p. 5).

At its 1982 conference the Federation called on the Minister of Education to draft legislation to enable the establishment of school councils to allow effective parent participation at the school level and for the development of policies to enable parental participation in the selection of school principals (Parent and Citizen, 1982).

A similar position is taken by the Federation of School Community Organizations (F.O.S.C.O.) which would like to see a school-based decision-sharing group established in each school and participating in the selection of teaching staff and principals.

To what extent the views of the P. and C. Federation and F.O.S.C.O. are more widely representative of parents in the state is difficult to determine. Those who attend the annual P. and C. conference and formulate policy represent P. and C. associations in the regions and they propose changes in policy in accord with the wishes of the branches they represent. However, the members of the P. and C. at the branch level may be representative of only an active minority of parents of children in local schools.

Additional sources of information on parental views are the public opinion surveys of education (Campbell and Robinson, 1979; Baumgart, 1979) and surveys of the expectations of parents, students, teachers and employers (Collins and Hughes, 1978; Collins et al., 1980; Walton and Hill, 1985). Baumgart (1979) surveyed the opinions of one thousand three hundred and forty-one individuals in both urban and rural districts of

N.S.W. The cluster of educational goals which were considered most important and received the most consensus was that of Basic Skills followed (in order) by Personal Development, Social Competence, Practical Skills and Cultural Interests.

Baumgart also surveyed public opinion on the degree to which schools were considered to be successful in achieving the goals held to be important. The results show that schools are perceived to be less than moderately successful in achieving all goals. The goals related to Basic Skills received the highest rating of success but "this rating was still well below the very high importance rating given to this scale" (Baumgart, 1979, p. 56). Also, there was a large proportion of the respondents (43.3%) who disagreed with the proposition that children today received a better education than they themselves did. Although the majority did agree with this statement, among those who disagreed, the sub-group most critical of the quality of present education was the one consisting of respondents with more than four years of secondary education.

Bearing in mind this proportion of negative attitudes to the success of schools it is also of interest to note that Baumgart's study identified a large number of respondents who know very little about schools: 35.5% of the population surveyed admitted to knowing very little and 6.4% to knowing nothing (p. 18). Even among those respondents who had children attending schools there were significant numbers who knew very little and even nothing. Among those who claimed to know a fair amount, or a lot, their source of information on schools (for more than half the respondents) was school children not the school itself or school staff.

The study by Collins and Hughes (1978) on the views of parents, teachers and students on the goals of secondary education indicates that the three groups agreed that academic goals such as "understanding in considerable depth one or more

traditional subjects" (p. 173) were less important than goals relating to personal autonomy and societal awareness and practical skills. Items characterized as personal autonomy and ranked by respondents for importance and achievement related to self-understanding, self-motivation and acquiring decision-making skills. Societal awareness items included understanding the nature of modern society. The basic skills of reading and maths were ranked as the most important followed by practical skills having to do with matters like acquiring a job and managing money.

Walton and Hill's (1985) findings, based on a survey of twenty-one N.S.W. high schools, confirm the conclusions of Collins and Hughes. Walton and Hill note that both studies indicate that

- \* "the basics are easily the most important and best achieved goals";
- \* the traditional academic learning receives a low rating;
- \* "cultural learning" is perceived as "being neither important nor achieved";
- \* personal autonomy is perceived to be "both important and underachieved"

(pp. 98-99)

#### Inhibiting Frames at the Macro Level

The noted positive initiatives and changes in the education system are counterbalanced by a number of negative factors. Although there has been movement towards decentralization and participation, the tradition of centralized organization and administration of education is deeply entrenched in Australia (Partridge, 1973). The initiation of change at the "grass roots" has not been a strong tradition and there has not been a large enough homogeneous minority group to

affect change although the population is multicultural. Foster (1981) maintains that inertia is due to a number of factors:

... strong centralization within the institution of education, low community interest or participation in politics at the local government level, general acceptance by society of an hierarchical division of labour with its accompanying specialization, and acceptance of a definition of equality which allocates resources uniformly rather than differentially according to need.

(pp. 353-54)

#### Academic and prudential traditions

Resistance to change in education is also reinforced by what Connell (1970) characterized as the academic and prudential traditions. The academic tradition assumes that students will progress from primary through to tertiary education and the central function of schools is to transmit an academic curriculum. Studies of the N.S.W. system indicate that a competitive and narrowly academic system is firmly entrenched in the senior secondary school curriculum and that its influence filters down to the intermediate and junior years. It is "narrow" in the sense that it is academic in an "instrumental" way (Walton and Hill, 1985), that is, in a restricted manner as a means of passing exams and obtaining credentials. The fact that Connell et al. (1975) drew similar conclusions about the N.S.W. system in 1975 says a lot about the strength of resistance to change in N.S.W. and is not an encouraging prognosis for future change. Connell et al. (1975) found that schools rewarded a "limited range of intellectual performances" characterized as "school exam-taking skills" (p. 223) or

... one that can mostly be displayed by pen on paper answers, that can be produced quickly in a restricted time, that can be graded into detailed percentages and compared with the

performance of others on the same task, that can efficiently reproduce already stored ideas, and that can be performed individually without reference to friends or advisers.

(p. 293)

The academic tradition is supported by the syllabus and examination committees and the planning and development committees of the statutory boards which are dominated by university academics. The tradition is further sustained by teachers in elite schools, by popular newspapers and magazines, by conservative associations such as the Australian Council of Educational Standards, by the labour market which makes the H.S.C. a pre-requisite for employment, and by universities, even though academics are critical of the tradition. Collins and Hughes (1982) note that school systems have been built around a central pillar of academic study to an extent which makes change difficult and uncomfortable. The very education of secondary school teachers emphasizes competence in one or two academic disciplines. Fensham (1980) characterizes this academic emphasis as the "subject maintenance" function of schools, by which they simplify the teaching tasks of the university and work to maintain the mystique and importance of their subjects. As evidence of the fulfilment of this function he cites the lack of alternative curricula for science in Victorian schools so that the "established modes of selecting and sorting" (p. 196) students for tertiary studies are not undermined.

The lack of alternatives is also characteristic of the prudential tradition which, as Connell (1970) notes, emphasizes uniformity rather than innovation and experimentation, value for money and efficiency. This tradition has been challenged by developments in schools supported by the Schools Commission's Innovations Program nevertheless,

The academic curriculum is still fundamentally in the control of the universities ... . Even if academic curricula were to emerge in progressive schools that were in opposition to contemporary versions of academic subjects the rational criticism of them by academics who opposed them would ... eventually bring these new curricula into derision, and force the teachers concerned back within the bounds of academic normality in the subjects concerned.

(Musgrave, 1979, p. 149)

#### Pressure for recentralization

The extent of the favourable climate of the early and mid 1970's and its persistence in the 1980's are questionable. Skilbeck (1981) notes that devolution of curriculum decision making precipitated "anxieties as well as hopes" (p. 24). Anxieties about standards declining as a result of unskilled teachers engaged in school-based curriculum development began to be expressed in the media in the mid 1970's even before there was sufficient evidence of devolution.

Arguments for the reformulation of the curriculum around a basic common core in the interests of the needs of the individual and society and of uniform standards, such as that proposed in 1980 by the Curriculum Development Centre (discussed in Chapter IV), may be interpreted as responses to the pressure on schools for greater accountability, but also as avoidance of cultural and ethnic pluralism and as a conservative political move to reassert central control. Cohen (1985) maintains that a push for recentralization is partly a result of the demands of politicians who are called to account for what is happening in the schools in their areas.



A narrowly conceived subject-based curriculum was proposed by the Victorian Government in two discussion papers issued in 1980 which assumed that teachers engaging in school-based curriculum development were taking up roles for which they were inadequately prepared. While not rejecting school-based curriculum development outright, the documents argue for control by the state education department of a core consisting of the traditional academic subjects and the relegation of school-based curriculum development to studies of regional, local or individual interests.

The publication of these documents was followed by a vigorous debate questioning the basic purposes, policies and structures of education in Australia which led to a reversal, in Victoria, of the narrow definition of core in a subsequent White Paper (Victorian Government, 1980). However, the debate did indicate a strong centralist tendency in education in Australia and advocacy of a subject-based core may be interpreted as a desire to hold schools and teachers in check and to consolidate control over the curriculum in the central authorities.

Pressure for recentralization also comes from parents and educationists lacking confidence in teachers and fearful that Departmental initiatives are eroding the quality of schooling. Cahill's (1984) view is an example of this fear:

... in reality teachers have not the time, nor the access to relevant research and in many cases neither the training nor the expertise, to come up with responses that will be educationally sound and meaningful.

(p. 11)

The McGowan Report seeks to obtain consensus on the approval of its proposals by advocating freedom to schools for curriculum planning, but the proposed administrative framework

within which changes are to be introduced is not along the lines of structural decentralization. The Report proposes the creation of a central authority which would have considerable power over curriculum development in schools.

Legislation enabling and protecting the meaningful participation of students and parents in decision making has not been introduced in N.S.W., as it has been in Victoria, although it has been recommended for 1986 by a Working Group appointed by the Minister of Education to examine the issue (N.S.W. Government, 1984).

Even the Schools Commission Reports, which have advocated decentralization and participation, contain ambiguities and disclaimers as Johnston (1983) indicates. In spite of their social democratic emphasis, the reports have also stressed the need for centralized administration and for recognizing teachers' claims of professional expertise.

In N.S.W., regardless of the noted movement towards decentralization and participation in the policy statements of the Department of Education, control over the curriculum and the operation of schools is still, in many respects, in the hands of the central administration. The Three-Tier document makes it quite clear that the curriculum policy statements approved by the Minister of Education are to be regarded as mandatory in all schools. This means that the three-tier structure

... has not involved a shift from total prescription of a centrally prescribed curriculum to total freedom for schools to plan as they see fit.

(Simmons, 1978, p. 23)

The Department exercises control in a number of ways. To receive the School Certificate at the end of Year 12 students must have studied a minimum of five subjects for at least two

years. Among these, English, mathematics, science and one of history, geography or social studies are compulsory. Therefore, in relation to the School Certificate, there are limits on the school's flexibility and the innovations it can introduce.

Flexibility is even further constrained in Years 11 and 12 where the syllabus committees of the Board of Senior School Studies prescribe the content of courses. Prescription is reinforced by externally set examinations for the Higher School Certificate. These examinations provide tertiary institutions with the selection procedures for screening applicants. They do not have to develop their own selection procedures. Teachers are restricted to implementing the syllabus except in school developed O.A.S. courses. Their attractiveness is, however, diminished by the fact that students' results in these courses are not counted towards the total points received in the H.S.C. examinations. Therefore students wishing to pursue further studies have to exclude themselves from O.A.S. courses if they wish to obtain the highest possible total score on their examinations. O.A.S. courses are thus perceived to be of lower status by students and parents alike. The H.S.C. examinations and prescriptive curriculum guidelines do not, therefore, just inhibit curriculum development in schools. They govern what can be initiated in the senior school and constrain what can be done in the junior years.

The system of educational funding prohibits long-term planning and the allocation of resources to support a planned, developmental process of curriculum change. As Foster (1981) notes

... State budgets are 'refurbished' only on an annual basis following the Premiers' Conference which allocates the income tax reimbursement.

(pp. 354-55)

The existing funding arrangements also reinforce the dependence of the states on the commonwealth and enable it to influence curriculum policy through its funding of the development of special programs such as the technical education and the transition education programs and through supporting agencies such as the Schools Commission and the Curriculum Development Centre. Because the Schools Commission directs financial input to schools in all states it thus gains indirect control of both state and non-state systems of education on behalf of the Federal Government. These funding arrangements also encourage a piecemeal approach to curriculum development to "add on" courses in personal development or transition education in the form of "discrete packages" which "can be readily dismantled" (Baker, 1982, p. 8) as schools attempt to face issues such as high youth unemployment. Such "add on" courses are the alternatives to more fundamental appraisals of the school's curriculum or the planning of programs which would extend over more than a year. Termination of funding with a change in government or in government policy can discourage, frustrate and alienate teachers in schools involved in curriculum development.

#### Persistence of centralized, bureaucratic control

The organisation of the N.S.W. Department of Education appears to be based on a hierarchical bureaucratic model (Jones, 1974; Foster, 1981; Laird, 1982; Cohen, 1985). Bureaucracies are not neutral with respect to values. As Katz (1971) observes, "they represent the crystallization of particular social values" (p. 61) such as order, administrative and economic efficiency and uniformity. They are also characterized by a division of labour as evidenced by the many specialized personnel employed, by principles of hierarchy and levels of graded authority, by administration by trained officials, and by written documents reinforced by legislation controlling aspects of education.

The human relations model of organization implicit in the interactive model would not fit easily with the bureaucratic organization of the Department. The human relations model emphasizes the psycho-social needs of the organization's members and the efficiency of the organization rests on the degree of congruence between the psycho-social claims of individuals and the formal structure and functioning of the organization.

The satisfaction of psycho-social needs is not the priority of a bureaucracy. In the N.S.W. system, the number of teachers allocated to a school depends on a centrally determined staffing formula, based on student numbers. Schools and their communities have no say about the executive and teaching staff assigned to the school and teachers do not have much say about which schools they will be sent to. Promotion is based on seniority rather than a combination of experience and qualifications. The possibility of obtaining promotion within a school is limited so that teachers who have developed skills to work in a certain environment may be promoted out of the school. Consequently teachers are more likely to develop strong commitments to the Department or the Teachers' Federation rather than the community for the prospect of transfer inhibits the development of a community-centred attitude.

While some administrative decentralization has occurred there has been little structural decentralization. The distinction between the two is made by Hanson (1972). Administrative decentralization involves the delegation of decision-making responsibility from the upper to the lower levels of the hierarchy. School-based curriculum development is an instance of this. Responsibility may be delegated to the school for developing a curriculum but the principal/school is still responsible to the central office which remains responsible for what happens in the schools, so that administrative decentralization may not impair the chain of

responsibility. It may, however, have the effect of increasing the status and authority of the principal and the teachers, making them less responsive to the students.

Structural decentralization which involves the division of the system into two or more independent systems each with its own authority for taking decisions, has not occurred in spite of the creation of regions. The complexity of the existing decision-making system makes such decentralization difficult to effect.

Cohen (1985) describes the complicated and unwieldy Departmental structure for curriculum decision making (Figure 6.1) which includes two separate statutory boards each with its own planning and development committees to which are responsible at least sixty-five syllabus committees. The Board of Senior School Studies also has examining committees corresponding to each syllabus committee. Recently a curriculum co-ordinating committee of the two Boards and of the Department was established consisting of representatives from each to attempt to achieve articulation between the junior and senior components. Figure 6.1. indicates the key persons and agencies currently involved in determining curriculum policy.

The number of components has contributed to "unco-ordinated decisions, power plays and poor communication" (Cohen, 1985, p. 809). Colvin (1982) notes that one of the major challenges of the Department is to maintain adequate communication within and amongst various sections of the Department concerned with curriculum development. Poor communication and the unwieldy structure make policy changes slow and cumbersome and the translation of strategic plans into procedures and action difficult.

The lack of co-ordination is also noted by Laird (1982) who argues that the structure and mode of operation of the two statutory boards has changed little over the last seventy years.

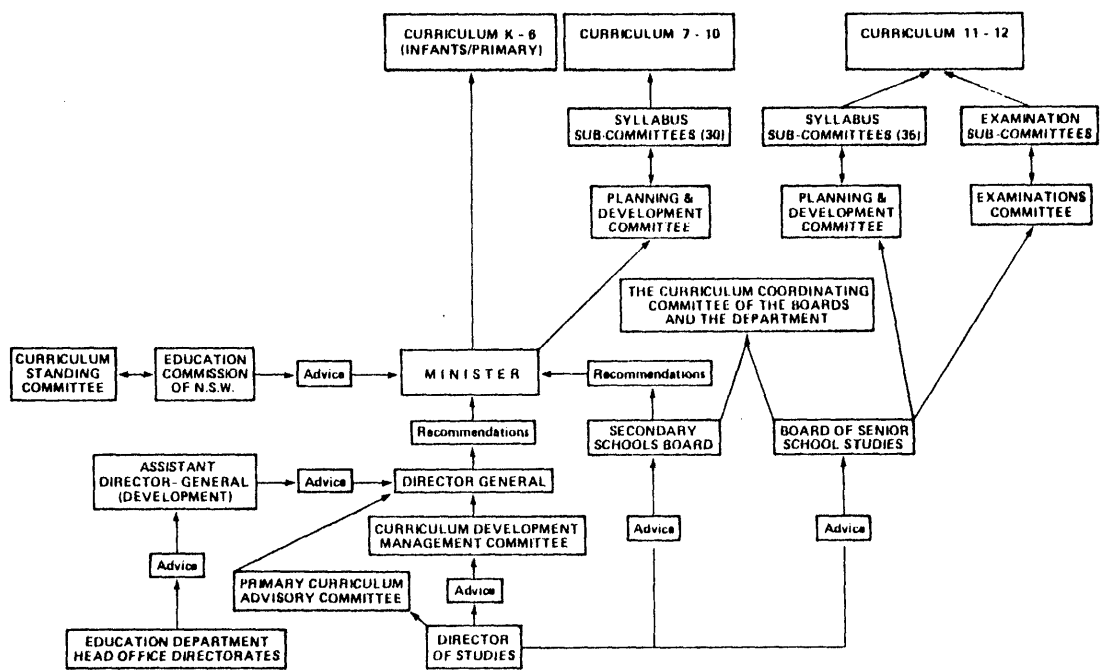


Figure 6.1 Key persons/agencies currently involved in determining curriculum policies (Cohen, 1985, p. 80)

Successive governments have been unwilling to open up the operation of the boards to wide public participation. The boards and the syllabus committees represent predominantly educational interest groups, and there are only two non-educationists among the members of the Secondary Schools Board. This board at least has a higher ratio of school to university representatives than the Board of Secondary School Studies.

Cohen (1985) maintains that curriculum decision-making authority still does not reside with the regions which "continue to be subordinates within the hierarchy of authority" (p. 75).

The regions have no real power to administer the budget and to hire staff; they are merely the long arms of the central administration and control is retained by limiting the authority of regional offices.

#### Innovation discouraged

An innovative school in N.S.W. may experience difficulty in conducting its programs if it deviates from existing formulas for staffing and prescribed hours of teaching as demonstrated by the case of The Entrance High School (Maxwell, 1985; Heuston and Hennesy, 1985). The school attempted to implement vertical grouping of students to break the automatic advancement of students by age cohort, and constructed the timetable so that all subjects were allocated equal amounts of time and thus parity of status. These innovations had the support of teachers, students and parents, but they required a variation of the teachers' working conditions from those in other schools and extra staff in order to meet the requirements of the innovations. The Department insisted that the school return to an organization which satisfied existing industrial arrangements and would not provide extra staff. Inflexibility on the part of the central administration obstructed the innovation to the extent that it was abandoned. The timetable and the number of minutes taught dominated the curriculum. Industrial issues took precedence over curriculum issues. Departmental directives, staffing formulas, union directives, rules of the various Boards combined

... not just to limit the school's freedom of decision for its students, but to impose upon the school a rigidity which stifles innovation and forces many teachers to find job satisfaction in extra-curricular studies outside the timetable.

(McGowan, 1985, p. 112)



The response of the Department may be associated with another feature which Connell (1970) saw as characteristic of the system, namely, the "prudential" tradition which suggests caution in the face of experiment.

#### Top-down change

There has not been in N.S.W. a sufficiently wide base of support for the changes in policy initiated over the last decade to claim that these changes were in response to expectations and demands in the community and in the teaching profession. This is partly due to the historically low level of formal participation in decision making about education already mentioned, and to a lack of consensus in the community and in the teaching profession on educational philosophy. As the study by Connell et al. (1982) shows

... schooling goes on in the context of an unresolved debate about its purpose and methods

(p. 59)

A similar observation is made by O'Neill (1983) in relation to community expectations of The Entrance High School:

There was an increasing demand from some parents to maintain a strong element of the past basic curriculum and yet an equally strong demand from sectional interests for the inclusion of new and progressive educational experiences.

(p. 37)

With respects to the teaching profession, Hunt's (1981a) and Laird's (1982) studies indicate that the rate of policy change emanating from the central administration has not matched the readiness and ability of the teaching body to implement

change. Hunt (1981a) in her study of school-based curriculum development in N.S.W. schools notes that

... the decision to move towards SBCD, which was to affect the role of every teacher in the state and which embraced the idea of wide participation in decision making was ironically made at the top.

(p. 114)

The central administration did not anticipate the skills, knowledge and incentives required to accomplish the curriculum development tasks the changes in policy required. These tasks required a new professional role which not all teachers were capable of fulfilling. Laird (1982) argues that one of the problems has been the practice by policy makers of

... adopting new policies and implementing them by administrative fiat, scant regard, if any, being paid to preparing teachers for the change. Implicit in that change strategy is the assumption that teachers will be able to do whatever is asked of them.

(p. 338)

There was, therefore, paradoxically, a technological and power coercive orientation implicit in the policy which was to allow teachers greater autonomy to exercise professional judgement.

Disagreement about the purpose and content of education, combined with the view that at least the academic aims of schools are adequately met (Collins and Hughes, 1978), may be interpreted as favourable frame factors for the interactive model. They imply that the proponents of the academic curriculum do not hold ideological hegemony in schools. The academic curriculum may be dominant but not hegemonic in the sense of disallowing opposing views. Differences of opinion may therefore be considered as a base or foothold for further advancement.

That the community is not unified in its response to central initiatives is also evidenced by the mixed response to the abolishment of external assessment for the award of the School Certificate at the end of Year 10 (Laird, 1982) and by studies of public opinion. Sections of the community do not fully trust schools (Duncan, 1982) and, because they attach a great deal of importance to credentials, they wish to maintain comparability among schools to reduce the possibility of children having to attend "bad" schools.

Community support for central control over the curriculum is quite strong in N.S.W. In 1978, the Secondary Schools Board canvassed community views on external examinations. The following reasons were identified for retaining external examinations (i.e. at the end of Year 12):

- \* a lack of confidence in results not derived from external examinations;
- \* a fear that teacher based assessment will be biased towards favoured students;
- \* a fear that employers would be biased towards students from schools with good reputations;
- \* a belief that since life was competitive schools should prepare students for competition;
- \* a belief that academic standards would decline without examinations;
- \* a belief that if the Department did not maintain responsibility for examinations other organisations would step in to fill the void and subsequently exert tighter and narrower control on the curriculum.

Baumgart's (1979) study supports these views to the extent that his findings show that the majority (82.5%) of the population surveyed is strongly in favour of external examinations at the end of Year 12 and even at the end of Year 10, at least as a part of the students' total assessment.

The response in relation to Year 10 is surprising since assessment at the end of Year 10 has been school based in N.S.W. since 1975 (Secondary Schools Board, 1978). What is also of interest is that respondents with more than four years of education were more strongly in favour (87.5%). These responses are similar to those obtained by the Secondary Schools Board in 1978 based on submissions invited from the public on the Year 10 School Certificate. The dominant view expressed in the submissions was that assessment at the end of Year 12 should be examination based and this examination should consist of both an externally developed and an internally developed component. Only a minority of the submissions argued for abolishment of external examinations and in favour of entirely school-based assessment.

The strength of these attitudes would indeed be an obstacle to the implementation of school-based interactive assessment. A school staff committed to implementing the interactive approach would have to seriously consider strategies for overcoming community resistance. The existence, however, of a minority who favour a non-examination based system suggests that there would be interest in and possibly "takers" of an available alternative.

While Campbell and Robinson's (1979) study indicated a preference for more humane and caring schools, during the same period there was a transfer of large numbers of students from the public to the private schools and to their narrower academic programs. The shift to the private sector, largely by the students of middle-class parents who could afford the fees, indicates that these parents shunned the innovative efforts of the Department in Years 7 to 10.

The attitudes of working-class parents may also be unfavourable to the interactive model since they do not hold recognizably student-centred views of education (Connell et al., 1982). While they have "a fund of goodwill towards schools in

general" most of them clearly support "firm discipline, teacher-centred pedagogy, and job-oriented curricula" (Connell et al., 1982, pp. 60-61). The reasons these views are held include the lack of information about alternatives, which indicates the importance of communication between parents and schools particularly if the existing system is to be changed. Connell et al. maintain that history is also responsible for working-class attitudes, for the parents' own experience of schooling was authoritarian and teacher-centred accounting for perceptions of education as including

... learning to do what you're told, hold yourself in check, accept the necessity to do things you don't want to ... respecting legitimate authority, deferring to those who are older and wiser than you are, keeping in your proper place.

(p. 60)

Parents holding such attitudes and beliefs could not provide the support their children would require to cope with the interactive model.

#### Enabling and Inhibiting Frames at the Meso and Micro Levels

Studies of the responses of N.S.W. schools to the changes in policy indicate both positive and negative developments. While the philosophical basis of the curriculum as enunciated in the Aims document seems firmly established, its implementation is not, as Laird (1985) observes, on equally firm ground. Also research on the responses of teachers and students to these changes suggests that their reactions cannot be judged as unequivocally favourable or unfavourable for the implementation of the interactive model.

### Mixed responses to changes

The enabling factors include evidence of curriculum development being conducted in schools and favourable responses of teachers to the opportunity of engaging in development. For example, Hunt (1981a) found that in the six rural N.S.W. schools she studied teachers have a great deal of freedom to determine what, when and how they will teach in Years 7 to 10. Elective courses and some form of "interest activities", such as end of the year mini courses, were introduced in all the schools. These included courses in personal and moral education, career education, orientation to work experience, or remedial courses. Such courses were introduced from a genuine desire on the part of teachers to accommodate students' interests as much as possible and to provide them with a broad education.

Moffatt (1982) reports satisfaction expressed by teachers about being involved in curriculum decision making. O'Neill (1983) also reports improved attitudes and commitment to schools among teachers and students with the implementation of school-based curriculum development.

It cannot be assumed, however, that all teachers are equally motivated to participate in curriculum decision making. "Participation puts a premium on effort" (Lucas, 1976, p. 242) and while some teachers may feel deprived in relation to decision making others may be in equilibrium and desire no change, and still others may feel saturated by the amount of decisions they are required to make (Alutto and Belasco, 1972). McBurney's (1978) study of the reactions of N.S.W. teachers to the new Junior Secondary Science Syllabus issued to schools in 1975 does not reveal clearly positive or negative conditions.

Prior to 1975 the syllabus had included a statement of aims and about ninety pages of content description. After 1975 the description of content was reduced to one page outlining

broad areas to be covered. The new syllabus therefore required that teachers devise a junior science curriculum (Years 7 to 10), compatible with the statement of aims and the brief outline of content.

In relation to the aims of the science syllabus it is of interest to note that more teachers perceived skills and processes - such as communication skills, methods of scientific inquiry and laboratory skills - as more important purposes than that of acquiring knowledge of scientific facts and theories and equipping students with information for future academic needs. The fact that the latter were not rated as equally essential suggests a devaluing of the academic orientation.

On the negative side, however, a majority of the teachers (64%) wished to see an expanded statement of content in the syllabus in the belief that there should be greater uniformity of content taught across the state to allow comparability of student achievement among schools. Concern was also expressed for some students missing out on the basics and thus being ill prepared for Years 11 and 12. Some teachers also felt that the outline of content should be the responsibility of the Departmental Syllabus Committee, not theirs, and that they lacked sufficient knowledge to select suitable content or that it was difficult to reach consensus about what to select because of widely differing ideas and beliefs about what and how to teach.

Hunt (1981a) also reports that many of the teachers she interviewed "were cautious about change", unsure of goals as a result of policy changes and "unsure about whether they were exercising their new freedom to the best advantage of their students" (p. 397).

McBurney found that the teachers who were satisfied with the existing level of content specification wished to protect the opportunity provided to schools to select content

appropriate to the local community and to the interests of students. They also felt that the existing syllabus encouraged development, diversity and initiative. Thus the freedom the new syllabus offers teachers is considered its major strength by some and, paradoxically, a major weakness by others.

Smith (1983) found that teachers' perceptions of their own freedom to make curriculum decisions were shaped by their perceptions of the strength or weakness of the frames at the macro and meso levels, external and internal to the school. However, there was considerable variation between teachers' perceptions of the same frames and the variation in the degree of restriction perceived seemed to be related to how they perceived the subjects they taught as either possessing a well defined conceptual and syntactic structure or a loose one. Thus some teachers may regard the Department's syllabuses as being either strong restricting factors inhibiting their own curriculum decision making or as weak ones. Freedom to make decisions may also be inhibited by the actual organizational and structural features of schools and teachers' perceptions of them as more or less limiting frames. These features may, for example, include the school's policy with respect to the number of compulsory and elective subjects and the number of periods to be spent on each at various year levels, or whether classes are streamed or unstreamed, or whether or not common testing procedures are to be used across classes in the same subject at the same year level.

#### Need for support in curriculum development

McBurney found that there was wide variation in schools in the types of programs offered and in the way they were developed. However in some schools a textbook was used in preference to courses developed in the school. Some teachers did not see themselves as capable of both teaching and



developing courses or of developing materials superior to those already available. In other schools programs were written in the form of outlines of subject matter or outlines of topics, or as lists of objectives. Teachers, and not just the heads of departments, were increasingly involved in producing either entire programs or programs for a selected year level, a subject area or a topic. McBurney reports no instance of teachers developing programs collaboratively with students. Also, there were only "scattered attempts ... made to integrate the disciplines within science" (p. 92) and just random attempts to integrate studies in science with other subject areas. In most schools the programs developed were intended for use with students of all ranges of ability and the onus was on the teachers to adjust their teaching to the ability levels of their classes.

It is not surprising then that teachers felt that they needed advice on how to make science relevant to students of low ability and on how to deal with mixed ability groups. Other types of support deemed essential or highly desirable included advice on and access to resource materials and their uses, advice on the assessment of attitudes and information on the needs of students progressing to Years 11 and 12.

Harrison (1981) found in her work with teachers attempting curriculum development that, as a process consultant, she was required to perform a variety of functions from assisting in organizational development to helping to make the social system work. She believes that schools do need support but from "generalists" rather than experts in particular subject areas.

Hunt (1981a), however, found that a limited number of resource people were available to assist teachers with curriculum development. In the region of her study, a curriculum consultant had been appointed but the physical size

of the region prohibited him from providing sufficient support. Hunt observes that the consultant could only hope to discover and help teachers overcome the most serious problems.

The termination of approximately eighty regional curriculum consultant positions in 1982 means the removal of "substantial regional level support from being available to support any school-based initiatives" (Cohen, 1985, p. 88). On the one hand, the Department is promoting school-based curriculum development as curriculum policy; on the other, it is undermining its implementation by not budgeting for the provision of support staff to allow teachers to engage in it effectively.

Large school size, which is common in N.S.W., also constrains participation in curriculum development. Abrahamsson (1977) cites Swedish data which clearly indicate that participation rates steeply decline with increasing organizational size of a thousand or more students. Large school size also limits the flexibility and responsiveness of schools to the changing needs of students as Campbell's (1979) study of eleven schools indicates. Flexibility and responsiveness were judged in relation to curriculum content, use of space and time, social organization and forms of control. Campbell found a close relationship between the flexibility and responsiveness of learning situations, school size and the positive reactions of students in attitudes, cohesion, motivation, attachment and awareness.

Lack of time for planning has discouraged teachers from engaging in either school-based or subject-based curriculum development. Simmons (1978) found that teachers had to be either strongly convinced of the importance of curriculum planning or additional staff would have to be appointed to schools to allow planning to occur during the normal teaching day.

A related problem is the lack of continuity of teachers at given schools particularly in isolated areas and in disadvantaged schools where staff stability is a significant factor in curriculum planning (Simmons, 1978). Promotion usually means a transfer out of the school and community.

#### Problem of implementation

Watson's (1979) findings are similar to those of McBurney in relation to the changes in the English syllabus for Years 7 to 10. The syllabus was revised in 1971 and issued as a booklet of aims and objectives with eight short booklets of Notes on specific areas such as language, literature, reading and speaking. In order to encourage experimentation no attempt was made to prescribe content or teaching method and the suggested criterion for including an item in an English course was whether or not it will help "young people to realize their fullest potential as users of their language" (Secondary Schools Board, 1971a, p. 2).

Watson reports that its preparation involved "considerable consultation with English teachers throughout the state" (p. 44) which suggests that one could expect them to be favourably disposed to it. Indeed, Watson notes that this seemed to be the case in 1975 when a state-wide questionnaire revealed "that the vast majority of English teachers endorsed the principles of the Syllabus and believed that it was achieving its goals" (Watson, 1979, p. 44). This was two years after the syllabus became mandatory in 1973.

The syllabus offers teachers a great deal of freedom. Its central themes are flexibility and integration and a view of English as pupil-centred activity rather than as knowledge or information about language and literature. In 1975 a clear

majority of teachers felt that it had encouraged experimentation "and that it had led to greater involvement in English on the part of the pupils" (Watson, 1978, p. 76). Yet when Watson gauged the degree of implementation of the new syllabus by conducting case studies of English departments in eight N.S.W. schools - state, catholic, independent, city and country - what he found was that the new syllabus was, at best, only partially implemented:

A significant number of teachers - perhaps even a majority - are operating upon a model of English teaching that is at variance with that implicit in the Syllabus. The Syllabus offers an experience-centred or personal growth model of English, but most of the teachers who adhere to this model do so shakily and other teachers have grafted on to the Syllabus a skills model of English.

(Watson, 1979, p. 52)

This finding indicates that while teachers may accept and endorse changes in policy their attitudes do not guarantee implementation of changes. Thus Hunt (1981a) reported that few teachers "spoke of major reorientations within their subjects" (p. 388) and in developing new courses many of them "relied heavily on old syllabuses" (p. 388). There is resistance to change in the attitudes of teachers and in the community and there are social and structural factors operating to maintain the status quo. Recognition of this is implicit in the McGowan Report's proposal that its recommendations be implemented over a ten-year period.

Cohen and Harrison (1982) conducted a survey of secondary school teachers and principals to identify perceptions of the types of curriculum decisions made in schools for Years 7 to 10, the identity of the participants and the factors which influenced the decisions. The majority of teachers perceived

themselves as having a lot or some participation in at least curriculum decisions relating to their classrooms, that is, in the choice and sequence of content, in the selection of materials, methods of teaching and assessment. When it came to decisions extending beyond the classroom to matters such as timetabling, teacher allocations to classes, planning of physical facilities, formulating school rules, evaluating the school's aims and objectives and programs, a significant percentage of teachers perceived themselves as having very little or no say at all. This means that many of the decisions relevant to the implementation of curricula are perceived by teachers to be out of their control and under the influence of other frames within and outside the school. The frames cited outside the school and beyond the teachers' control included the availability of textbooks, the nature of departmental guidelines and syllabuses, and the moderation and examination systems. Within the school heads of departments are perceived to be the most powerful and influential group in curriculum decision making. These findings indicate a hierarchical structure of authority for curriculum decisions in schools, also a finding of Hunt's (1981a) study, and suggest that teachers will be reluctant to extend decision making to people outside the school as long as their own right to participate has not been secured. Case studies of school and community interaction (Pettit, 1980) support this view.

#### Influence of the Higher School Certificate

While the opportunity to base curriculum development on the needs and interests of students is available in schools, it seems that it is not acted upon to any great extent. A dominant inhibiting factor seems to be the influence of the H.S.C. examinations. McBurney (1978a) and Hunt (1981) found that the H.S.C. examinations had a strong influence not just on the curriculum in Years 11 and 12 but on the whole secondary school

curriculum. Teachers planning courses for Years 7 to 10 are very mindful of the standards students need to reach and the content to be covered to prepare them for their studies in the senior school. The nature of this influence is to orient the curriculum towards the study of academic subjects accepted for university entrance, namely, English, mathematics, science, a foreign language and social sciences. Hunt (1981a) found that English, mathematics and science "account for between 36-45% of curriculum time" (p. 363). The percentage of time spent on subjects having a personal or moral development orientation, career education or work experience, is very low and their introduction is more acceptable in Year 7 than further up in the school where they have low status in relation to the rest of the curriculum. They may receive only one period a week thus encouraging a piecemeal approach. They are often assigned to volunteer staff members to fill up vacant periods in their timetables. Thus the academic emphasis contributes to undervaluing and discouraging the development and study of options which may be directly related to students' interests. Hunt's conclusion is that "the rest of the curriculum remains unchanged and continues to act predominantly as a selection device for tertiary institutions" (p. 374).

#### Subject-based organization

Another inhibiting factor related to the academic emphasis in the curriculum is the effect of the school's organization on the basis of subject departments by which "the curriculum is disintegrated into discrete and non-communicating subject disciplines" (Cohen and Harrison, 1982, p. 265). This compartmentalization also gives rise to competition for staff, resources, space and time which discourages school-based in favour of subject-based curriculum development by individual teachers or by departmental teams.

Subject area divisions may, however, discourage teachers from collaborating with their colleagues. Seddon (1981) found in her study of two N.S.W. schools that the departmental divisions, reinforced by the physical layout of buildings, compelled teachers to work in isolation from each other with nearly half having only a vague idea of curriculum activities in other departments. The difficulty of obtaining such collaboration is compounded if the teachers are more oriented towards their subjects and classrooms than the school, as Australian (Harrison et al., 1977; Maxwell, 1980; Seddon, 1981) and overseas studies suggest (Young, 1979). While the departmental structure may protect the careers of some teachers it also acts as a barrier to changes particularly of changes in one department have negative effects on another department which is not involved in or accepting the change.

#### Students and parents excluded from decision making

The opportunity and freedom to engage in curriculum development have not implied fundamental changes in the content of the curriculum or the curriculum development process. Student, parent and community involvement in curriculum development is almost non-existent (Maxwell, 1980; Hunt, 1981a; Seddon, 1981). "Working class" students and their parents feel particularly powerless (Connell et al., 1982). Parents are consulted or informed only at the introduction of potentially controversial courses, such as sex or drug education. Even in the A.C.T. and in Victoria, where parent and student representation on school boards and school councils is established, the "boards and councils are faced with the professional monopoly of the curriculum and scant control over resources necessary to determine its nature" (Pettit, 1980, p. 191).

The consent and support of parents are very important for the implementation of the interactive model. If they participated in the life of the school their understanding of

the school's goals and their appreciation and support of its efforts could be more directly obtained. However, at the secondary school level in N.S.W. strong links between the school and community have not been forged and much work would need to be done by schools to establish good communication and closer relationships.

There are no published reports of the existence of student councils in N.S.W. and no evidence of any formal mechanisms enabling students to participate in any significant decision making in the school. There are very few accounts of programs which are organized around student-initiated projects or independent study programs designed in collaboration with a teacher in Years 7 to 12. The H.S.C. requirements would preclude such projects. The few reports of students' reactions to schooling, which were discussed in Chapter II, indicate that many students are dissatisfied with and alienated from many aspects of schooling. Collins and Hughes' (1982) study shows that:

Secondary schools are seen by their clients as doing rather poorly at teaching most of the goals which students and parents see as important. The major exception to this is the school's success with the traditional basics.

(pp. 12-13)

The Commission of Inquiry into Poverty (1978) also shows that students are not getting what they want from schools. Students perceived that what they actually got were largely basic knowledge and skills and academic qualifications. Highest on their list of priorities were personal and social development and understanding (p. 46). Students were critical of the lack of personal attention, the stress on conformity, and being excluded from decision making but the major source of criticism was "that they lack the status of young adults" (p. 50).



In the studies of Cohen and Harrison (1982) and Moffatt (1982), neither the teachers nor the principals perceived students as participating to any extent in curriculum decision making. These perceptions were supported by the students' views. Cohen and Harrison (1982) found that although the majority of teachers perceived the curriculum content and materials appropriate to less than half of the students and meeting the interest of only twenty-three per cent, teachers reported spending from zero to only one-third of their time on activities which may be considered as individualizing instruction. The teaching strategies used most frequently include the lesson to the whole class (79%) and the whole-class discussion (54%). Small group discussions, student presentations and group projects are reported as seldom or never used by more than seventy per cent of teachers.

Many students do desire to participate in decision making as O'Neill (1983) found at The Entrance High School. The longer the students stayed at the school, the more choice they felt "they should have in deciding their own educational destiny" (p. 39). However, there may also be large numbers of students who, as Connell et al. (1975) found, "accept education on the institution's terms" (p. 220). They accept the school's routines, the examination system, the school's definition of success for which they compete. If they do not accept it, at least they tolerate it. These students would likely expect the teacher to make the curriculum decisions and would have difficulty coping with the freedom and responsibility provided by the interactive model. Support for this assumption may be found in studies such as that of Perrott (1982) on the teaching practice of N.S.W. primary school teachers who contribute to shaping students' attitudes and expectations. Perrott found that the teachers she studied were, in general, highly directive in the procedures they used, that is, they exercised tight control of activities and decisions, used punishment for control, supervised and dominated the setting of rules and students' behaviour.

### Summary and Conclusions

Having discussed the positive and negative frames in the N.S.W. context, it is now possible to summarize them and to construct a "balance sheet" characterizing the N.S.W. context, and from this attempt to assess whether or not conditions are, in sum, favourable or unfavourable for the adoption and implementation of the interactive model.

The policy of previous governments of espousing a social democratic philosophy and of supporting decentralization of control over education and providing financial support for school-based curriculum development, for experimentation and teacher development, have provided many teachers, parents and members of the community with experiences which have shaped their attitudes and expectations in ways favourable to the interactive model. In effect, there has been increased community support for decentralization and for increased autonomy for schools, and for greater community participation in decision making through school councils. These have been advocated but not yet established in N.S.W. schools, although there are more opportunities available and instances of community involvement in schools which indicates a more open and flexible system. There is also community support for students' rights including the right to respectful treatment and participation in decision making. Recognition of ethnic and cultural diversity and of the need for multicultural education implies the possibility of further decentralization and a greater degree of participation by non-professionals in education.

The State Department of Education has extended more control to the ten regions for administration, reducing central control over the curriculum by abolishing external exams at Year 10 and prescription of the curriculum in Years 7 to 10. Curriculum policy is broadly based on the concept of personal

development, and school-based curriculum development and the participation of students and parents in decision making are encouraged. The teacher's role is defined more broadly to include curriculum development in all its components.

The number of students staying in school longer has increased, along with public questioning and reappraisal of the functions and relevance of schooling. Dissatisfaction has been expressed with the academic emphasis in the curriculum and with the school environment, and public opinion is in favour of building greater personal and social relevance into curricula in the belief that existing programs serve only a minority.

Many teachers have responded favourably to the Department's curriculum policy and are engaged in curriculum development in schools. There is much variation among schools in the programs being developed in the same subject areas and in the way they are being developed. Summarized in this way it seems as if these positive frames add up to a favourable condition, at least for adopting the interactive model. However, the picture is not complete without a summary of the negative frames.

Currently the level of external support for experimentation in schools is far below that of the days of the Innovations Program and therefore a stimulus for the adoption of new ideas (Fullan, 1982) is greatly weakened.

Centralized organization and administration of schools appears to be deeply entrenched in N.S.W., curriculum policy initiatives to the contrary. The Department still exercises control over the curriculum through mandatory policy statements and by prescribing the length of study of a minimum number of subjects for the School Certificate and the curriculum content and by examinations for the H.S.C. The Department has the power to accept or reject courses for the H.S.C. It discourages

innovation by its concern with timetabling, staffing formulas and industrial issues. It operates on a bureaucratic model which conflicts with the human relations model implicit in the interactive approach. It is large, complex and too unwieldy to quickly initiate policy change or respond to changes in the community. Complexity and size reinforce centralized decision making and resistance to change and also adversely affect communication and co-ordination.

Specific changes in curriculum policy have originated from the Department and not in response to teacher/community initiatives as was the case with the establishment of alternative schools. Because the changes were introduced by fiat in a power-coercive way rather than by means of normative-re-educative strategies (see Bennis, Benne and Chin, (1976) and Hoyle (1975) for distinctions), there has been resistance to their implementation. Also, the rate of change has been too quick for many teachers who do not feel able to implement the recommended changes.

The H.S.C. examinations govern the curriculum in the senior school and affect the total curriculum. The result is a narrowly instrumental academic curriculum oriented towards developing skills for passing examinations. It is supported by social and administrative structures, namely tertiary institutions, 'elite schools, employers and the statutory boards and syllabus committees which are dominated by educationists and academics.

The tradition of local political participation by the community is short and weak and it is counterbalanced by the acceptance of hierarchical structures in social institutions. The lack of a strong incentive to agitate for changes in education, as there was in the early 1970's, and the lack of consensus about what sort of change is the most desirable, imply a corresponding lack of a significant movement for change in a

specific direction. Indicative of diversity is the division in the community about external examinations. A minority favour their abolition but the majority favour their retention in Year 12 and their reintroduction at Year 10. This implies a need for a diversity of schools to cater for different needs and expectations, but the provision of diversity in schooling is not a significant component of the State's educational policy.

In general, parental expectations of the curriculum may be characterized as teacher, not student-centred, but there is also a lack of confidence in teachers' abilities to produce school-based curricula. There is also ignorance in the community about what is going on in schools, ignorance partly due to poor communication between schools and parents and negative attitudes of teachers. Therefore there is pressure for the introduction of a common core curriculum in schools to ensure comparability across schools, uniform standards and central control, and a shift away from the public to the private schools in which curricula are strongly academic.

The funding of schools is centralized and the regions have no real power over its allocation. Resources for development are short term which encourages a piecemeal approach to curriculum development rather than critical scrutiny and fundamental change.

Teachers are divided in their attitudes to participation in curriculum development. Some are strongly in favour but the majority appear to want less responsibility for curriculum development and more direction from the centre. Many lack confidence in their curriculum development skills. Circumstances in individual schools also restrict teachers' participation to decisions affecting their classrooms. These circumstances may include an autocratic head of department, large school size and lack of planning time during normal working hours.

The H.S.C. examination restricts the range of courses which may be offered, discourages development and undermines the value of courses which may be directly related to students' interests but not counted for the certificate. Also, the organization of schools into subject departments promotes competition for staff, resources and time and leads to subject-based rather than school-based curriculum development. Many teachers are oriented towards their subjects and classrooms rather than the total curriculum and school which also reinforces piecemeal change.

Students have a negligible role in curriculum development, and have mixed feelings about participation and their school experience. Some wish to have more say, many are dissatisfied with or alienated from the status quo; others tolerate or accept it. There are, therefore, contradictory tendencies in the system one towards decentralization, the other towards recentralization.

If this "profile" of the N.S.W. context is compared with the general conditions required for implementing the interactive model as identified in Chapter V, then the conclusion to be drawn is that conditions are definitely unfavourable for implementation. While there are aspects of the socio-cultural climate and of curriculum policy favourable for adopting the interactive model, there is no evidence to suggest that support from teachers or parents would be strong enough to pressure the Department and the Government to establish small schools implementing the interactive model. Nor is there evidence to suggest that the Department would initiate such a project without a strong lobby or that it is flexible enough to accommodate such schools. Also, there is no reason to believe that tertiary institutions would provide either training or assistance for teachers who would like to establish or to work in such schools.

The acceptance of external examinations by a majority in the community is a major impediment to even adopting the interactive model and it is not likely that the Department of Education will, in the near future, undertake a campaign of education to prepare the public to accept and support their abolition at the end of Year 12.

The conclusion that the context is unfavourable is also supportable by reference to the literature on the implementation of innovations. Reported research suggests that some of the most problematic aspects of implementing changes are those which involve people altering "their usual ways of thinking about themselves and one another and their characteristic ways of behaving towards one another within the organization" (Fullan and Pomfret, 1977, p. 337). Implementation of the interactive model would involve a radical change in roles and relationships, understanding, skills, and expectations for both teachers and students because they are accustomed to operating within the context of a subject-based curriculum where the content is determined by external agents. It would involve changes more fundamental than those involved in implementing school-based curriculum development. There is, however, no evidence to suggest that teachers in N.S.W. regard the schools and the system as deeply harmful which would be the incentive for implementing the radical changes required (Graubard, 1972). On the basis of available information one can conclude that such perceptions are not widespread and therefore the high degree of change required is not likely to be affected.

The implementation of the interactive model not only requires complex changes in roles which "lower its rate of implementation" (Giacquinta, 1973, p. 182), it also requires highly flexible educational environments which are not characteristic of the N.S.W. system. It would therefore be incompatible with the present organizational structure and thus unlikely to be implemented (Rogers, 1962).

This poor prognosis for implementation should, however, only be considered as applying for the short term. One of the lessons provided by alternative schools is that although changes cannot be introduced overnight it does not mean that they cannot be introduced at all. In summarizing the negative and positive aspects of the N.S.W. context it is evident that there are contradictory tendencies in the system: one toward increased democratization and increased local control, and the other towards increased centralization and control by professionals. These contradictory tendencies create a dynamic tension in the system which is not unfavourable for future change because it stimulates people to sharpen up their thinking and holds out the possibility of intervention to strengthen the enabling frames. Chapter VIII will consider what degree of change would be required to bring about more favourable conditions for implementation.

The likelihood of implementation is increased if the changes to be implemented are divisible (Rogers, 1962) and tried on a limited or on an incremental basis (Fullan, 1982). Chapter II proposed implementation of the interactive model in stages based on the development of appropriate skills, knowledge and experience by both teachers and students. Research on alternative schools discussed in Chapter V reinforces the advisability of gradual implementation. The following chapter attempts to identify the conditions required for and the implications of implementing the interactive model on a limited scale in N.S.W., in a particular subject area which lends itself to conceptualization in terms of greater student input, namely, the subject of English Literature.