Teacher Dissatisfaction

Generally, the question on the interview schedule which asked the respondents to comment upon their major sources of dissatisfaction in teaching elicited more lengthy and diverse responses than did the question preceding it which asked the respondents to identify their sources of satisfaction.

However once again, strong commonalities emerged which tended to support the findings of the literature, although some of the sources of dissatisfaction identified by those interviewed related more to the particular context of the study and in particular, to the reforms to education made by the then Greiner state Government. For example, the changes in educational policy and procedure which resulted from the tenure of the then Minister for Education, Dr Metherell in the late 1980s and early 1990s were considered a major source of dissatisfaction for many of those interviewed, as will be seen below.

Apart from context specific factors such as changes to staffing ratios, promotions procedures, and so on, the sources of dissatisfaction identified by the respondents tended to be school and system centred and related more to administration and more extraneous factors, whereas the sources of satisfaction identified above tended to be classroom centred and more related to the actual task of teaching. Relationships with superiors and the Department of School Education, along with the standing of teachers in society, were found to be common sources of dissatisfaction for those interviewed. Thus, broadly speaking, the sources of dissatisfaction for those interviewed could be said to be structural or administrative, while the sources of satisfaction examined above were more of a human, affective nature.

A selection of responses to the issue of sources of dissatisfaction follows, with less experienced teachers examined first, followed by more experienced teachers, those in school promotions positions, and finally those formerly with out of school roles such as Head Office personnel.

A secondary English History teacher, Mandy resigned from her position at a Departmental high school after only two terms. Mandy said that her greatest source of dissatisfaction was "just the amount of kids in the classroom [average class size was 28] ... I couldn't get to all the kids I wanted to ... class sizes really annoyed me ... it underlies behavioural problems, boredom ... extra duties e.g., lunch, roll call", were also sources of dissatisfaction for Mandy.

Francis, originally a specialist infants teacher, taught with the Department of School Education for seven years before resigning. Later, she received a permanent appointment as a primary teacher, but resigned again after only five weeks. For Francis, dissatisfaction arose from "some of the staff politics, not knowing if you were saying the wrong thing, I said an innocent
thing in the staffroom once and a teacher didn't talk to me for months. I didn't know where I stood, and I wasn't the only one". Not "having support for difficult children and when the Principal didn't discipline children sent to her" by Francis was also a source of dissatisfaction. She had become "much more wary of senior staff, anyone in a promotion position ... I was really careful about what I said ... it was very stressful, I don't know what they are going to do or think".

With 15 years experience teaching Science and Agriculture in Egypt, Joseph resigned from the Department after less than a year in a permanent position. In Australia, Joseph said he received "no help ... [people] make judge, not help ... I liked to teach the kids, but there was bad discipline".

Jane, originally primary trained, taught for three and a half years as a casual teacher, mainly in secondary schools, prior to obtaining a permanent position as a primary teacher. She resigned from this position after less than one term. Jane found the "lack of professionalism on the part of some teachers" a cause of dissatisfaction and was surprised that this was "worse than the typing pool" where she had previously worked, Jane having had the expectation that teachers would be "more professional".

Paula resigned after just over one year as a secondary Science teacher. In contrast to her own education at "a good public school" and her favourable experiences during practicum, Paula now "saw what a stressful job it was, so unhealthy". She felt "not free to teach the way I wanted, I felt stunted, restricted ... I had to gear the whole lesson to how they would behave" and felt that she was "banging my head against a brick wall". The poor standard of discipline was a major source of dissatisfaction for Paula, as was the "morale of the other teachers ... they were always complaining ... there was a whole negative atmosphere", something which Paula thought problematic when "you are just starting your career". Some teachers openly questioned her choice of career and talked about resigning while others were concerned with salary and other industrial matters which Paula maintained did not interest her. Socially, Paula said that sometimes "I was embarrassed to say I was a teacher", and this concerned her.

Linda taught secondary Science for four years before taking up a position as an education officer at a fauna park. Dissatisfaction for Linda came from the poor public perceptions of teachers and from the leadership at her last school which she described as "not poor, but not great, not what it could have been". "Difficult Year 12 students who didn't want to work" and "parents sticking up for kids" while general "parental support was lacking" also caused dissatisfaction, Linda stating that "no one comes to parent teacher nights ... no value is put on education at home ... parents shirk their responsibility". Linda also described her "frustration with changes being made all the time [in education] ... more documents, more policies, it was frustrating. I didn't have the time to do it properly, you only had a 40 minute lesson to
incorporate all these policies ... I felt I didn't have control, there were all the perspectives [to be included], I didn't have the time physically ... I didn't do it as well as I would have liked, I always had work to do".

Dennis was a mature aged student when he began his pre-service training. With a degree in History and Economics, he became a secondary English History teacher, a source of dissatisfaction as he could not teach the subjects for which he had been trained and because he didn't feel confident about teaching English, although he was compelled to do so. Dennis had been designated "of concern" and had submitted his resignation, but later withdrew it and took leave without pay instead. He later returned to the Department and took a position at another school while he awaited the outcome of his "of concern" assessment. Dennis maintained that he would resign as soon as he found alternative employment. He also stated that he gained "no satisfaction from teaching. It is just like an office job in the public service ... teachers are expected to give out positive reinforcement all the time but get none themselves ... there is no pat on the back or financial incentive, no feedback from the Principal ... They are quick to jump on you when you make a mistake". Because he had "been transferred around so much ... I was always at the bottom of the list and got shifted", Dennis had "never seen a group go through from Year 7 to Year 12", something that he did feel would give him satisfaction when he began teaching. Although active in the Teachers Federation, Dennis said he "disagrees with the Federation and agreed with the [then] Greiner Government on [ending] centralised appointments ... [with local hiring] you get to work with someone you click with". He disliked the "way I was treated by Regional Office bureaucrats ... they stonewalled me, they are acrimonious towards teachers, there is no personal flavour, they need to decentralise more".

Julie taught for five and a half years as a secondary Science teacher with the Department before resigning. Julie found "falling professional standards and attacks from the media, uninformed criticisms about long holidays and teachers being treated like grubby little unionists" sources of dissatisfaction. People felt that they could criticise education because "they've all been to school, that makes them experts", according to Julie. The "import of inferior teachers" was also a major source of dissatisfaction, Julie believing that the state education system "should be first rate, not crumbling". She felt as if she was "hitting my head against a brick wall" in her attempt to maintain standards and decided "not to be a martyr, enough was enough".

A former secondary French and History teacher who taught with the Department for just over three years, Michelle gained dissatisfaction from "the lack of resources, there was never enough money for adequate textbooks and equipment, I had to do fund raising ... there was also a lack of support in the hierarchy because there was no Head Teacher, there was not enough support for discipline". Michelle also found the "power struggle for elective classes with other faculties" a source of dissatisfaction.
A primary teacher, Lee taught for six years with the Department before resigning to have children. Later, she returned and taught for ten years in a variety of capacities with the Department before leaving once more at the end of 1991. For Lee, dissatisfaction came from the decline in "respect from children and society ... teaching is not as respected as it once was". Lee was "not a disciplinarian, but discipline is needed ... if there is not discipline at home, it has to come from somewhere".

With five and a half years experience as a secondary Physical Education and T.A.F.E. teacher in Queensland, Fiona underwent training to become a teacher in a special school for behaviour disordered children in N.S.W. where she taught for 12 months before she resigned from the Department. Earlier in her career in Queensland, "boredom with what I was doing [and] the lack of support ... the politics, it was a bit pathetic at times", were sources of dissatisfaction for Fiona, while in N.S.W., the "total lack of support from the Department" and the fact that she and her students endured a "dangerous situation for weeks" also caused dissatisfaction.

Someone who left school after Year 10 and later completed an honours degree, diploma and doctorate after gaining entry to university as a mature aged student prior to becoming a teacher, John taught for a total of six and a half years with the Department before resigning for a second time. For John, dissatisfaction came from "partly the Department, they are really out of touch with many things ... my PhD was not recognised [in either higher pay or status] ... there were decisions to combine classes, educationally not sound decisions". Dissatisfaction also came from "personalities and people in jobs, decisions made on mateship rather than educational grounds ... the kids always came last ... and strikes that were not on educational grounds but for money, it was constant ... the kids should have come first".

Leanne is a former secondary English and History teacher who had seven and a half years of broken service with the Department spread over 12 years. Dissatisfaction for Leanne came from "the places [schools] where there was no back up for staff, or where there couldn't be support because of the Aboriginal situation", Leanne meaning that there were no ways to effectively discipline Aboriginal students. She was also "annoyed" that her last school was seen as "a dumping ground for students no one else wanted" and how the "needs of the secondary students were not understood by the Primary Principal" at the school, a combined primary and secondary central school.

Sue taught secondary Home Science for eight years with the Department before resigning. Sue recalled how she "didn't like being treated like a number", particularly during the time leading up to her second forced transfer when no one on the Home Science staff wanted to leave the school and "every morning we were asked who was going to go ... The school wouldn't help to select someone, and eventually I was chosen because I had no senior class ... I had given it to someone going for promotion". The large size of her last two schools was also a source of
dissatisfaction to Sue because "you don't know [pupils'] names or the staff, and there is more chance of inconsistency" because of the large number of teachers. Not having time "to have lunch" and "arguing with kids" were also sources of dissatisfaction for Sue, as was the "nine to three" view of teachers held by the public.

Jack taught secondary Industrial Arts for nine years prior to his resignation. For Jack, dissatisfaction came from "the lack of support at my first school" and "being a nominated transfer after four years at my second school". The "poor attitude of the kids" at his last school also contributed to Jack's dissatisfaction. Jack was bitter that he "was never appointed to a school where I wanted to go".

Jack's wife Wendy also resigned at the same time after 13 years as a primary teacher. Wendy found the impersonal nature of the Department a source of dissatisfaction as:

working in a system which was impersonal didn't do much for the self-esteem either for staff or students ... negative publicity from the Department about teachers and schools was unhealthy and made negative teachers. This causes problems with the self-esteem of teachers and with pupil self-esteem. Good friends of mine are going down like sinking ships, losing their liking for kids. I still like kids.

Wendy said that she was "not totally in favour of the system" and that "maybe there needs to be a two strand system, academic and technical, I don't really know. Kids are forced to go on and are ill-equipped for the H.S.C. and for the world at large". Wendy also believed that:

teacher education is outmoded ... out of touch with the real world, e.g., violence, broken families ... teachers go straight back to school ... children have changed ... they don't think or act the same as years ago. A lot more support is needed, there is a need to look at teachers' roles ... too much is expected of one person. You have to juggle being an administrator, educator, specialist. People are needed for each role.

Marie resigned from the Department after 12 years service as a secondary Science teacher. For her, dissatisfaction came from "what I call the system, the Department of Education ... how it ran, what it expected ... I was only there for 12 years but I saw so much turning away from what is supposed to be the purpose of education, the children ... it reeked of politics and had nothing to do with the classroom".

With 13 years experience with the Department as a primary teacher, dissatisfaction for Hazel came from the "times when things didn't work ... I also had some element of frustration with the public image of teachers ... I saw the effect [of this] on the morale of teachers".

Alan taught for a total of 13 years with the Department as a primary teacher, resigning on two occasions. For Alan, dissatisfaction came from "colleagues who didn't do their job, particularly superiors ... I have never been supported by my superiors ... never had any sincere
recognition or reward from them", something Alan thought essential to the development of a "happy school". Alan said he used to:

look at my superiors ... I thought I could do better standing on my ear ... I had frustration with the Executive ... I took on jobs in the school so they would be done properly ... some Executive never took any work home, while the teachers had a car full ... Frustration [also came from] identifying problems with kids but we could not get support to do anything about it ... there was never the resources to do what the Departmental regulations said the kids were entitled to get ... in some cases they weren't even tested ... some had attended 14 schools and never been assessed in six years of primary.

Jan taught secondary Social Sciences for 15 years with the Department of School Education prior to her resignation. For Jan, dissatisfaction came from "the lack of resources at school, the pressure on money" and the "lack of discipline ... your hands are tied now, there is little backup from the Department ... students are suspended for a short time when they really should be out ... pushing kids through to the H.S.C. is really a waste of time". Jan was also very critical of the new promotions procedures where teachers "big noted themselves" and were promoted on the basis of "how well they could present themselves and talk others around ... they make terrible Head Teachers and are not supporting or realistic, they are no good in the classroom and couldn't teach their own grandmother".

With 17 years of teaching experience spread over 29 years, Vanessa resigned from her position at a special school to become a Probation and Parole Officer. Dissatisfaction for Vanessa came from "people treating it just as a job ... there is the same pay for good or bad unless you want to climb the ladder ... I did go for a List once, but this was after the [sexual assault] inquiry [see Appendix 4.27], and I was told from a good source, a very high up source, that I would be allowed to go for inspection but would be failed ... I withdrew four days before my inspection". Vanessa recounted how she was "doing 70 hours a week, but getting the same money as others who only worked school hours ... the more that you do, the more is expected". Other sources of dissatisfaction for Vanessa came from the "Scott Report which was dehumanising ... it talked about human resources and clients" and from the fact that "public perceptions of education had dropped ... people were ashamed to say they were teachers".

Helen was a primary teacher with the Department for 15 years prior to her resignation. Helen recalled how while she always gained satisfaction from classroom teaching, she felt growing dissatisfaction throughout her career:

I learned that I got on well with children at a personal level, but found I was getting into situations where I was having difficulty coping with their problems ... over time there were more and more difficult problems to solve. Parents expected schools to solve their problems ... the school was in an area of floating employment, there were few professional people, no access to cultural activities, it was isolated, travel was expensive ... so many families were on welfare ... I couldn't get the results the community wanted, there was no one to help me ... I couldn't leave it at school, couldn't handle bad altercations with kids, but it was not really their fault ... I became quite stretched. I also had a great deal of difficulty getting on with the
Headmaster, and this caused me a great deal of anxiety ... I had three kids while I was at the school, and he used to have P and C meetings where he said it was not right for my class to have two or three teachers while I was on maternity leave ... he got them to write letters to the Department to complain ... I was shot behind my back.

Ruth taught Aboriginal children in the Northern Territory and later taught at the Department of School Education's Correspondence School in Sydney for 17 years. She then taught for two months in a Departmental primary school before resigning. In her years at the Correspondence School, there was dissatisfaction for Ruth, in particular, that caused by:

a vicious little queen ... the place was full of homosexuals who were pretty decent people, but one was like a vicious animal ... insulting, abusing people, spreading lies and rumours ... he used to joke about people, their physical attributes ... he harassed me for 12 years ... I complained and complained, but was told that I could apply for a transfer ... we also tried to get smoking banned for years ... that was another cause of stress ... [Ruth also thought that there may have been] something wrong with the air at the Correspondence School ... so many people got sick ... I didn't. I always took a lot of vitamin pills.

With 14 years experience teaching secondary English and History, Sandra stated that dissatisfaction came from "the breaking down of my original idealism, from realising how political education is within schools ... I was not seen as being successful because I was not doing high profile things". In addition, by choice, Hilary had "moved away from History, but I couldn't go for promotion [as an English Head Teacher] because I majored in History".

An experienced teacher who taught primary classes in both New Zealand and Australia and who later taught as a secondary teacher before resigning to teach in a private school, Karen found the workload, particularly the work that needed to be completed out of school time, a cause of "frustration". Karen stated that in her opinion, English teachers tended to have a greater workload than other secondary teachers. She described teaching as "a seven day a week job" which "you could make a 24 hour a day job if you were not careful". Karen also "hated marking exams", particularly since she was unconvinced of their efficacy.

Sandra had 20 years of broken service in Departmental primary and high schools spread over 26 years, initially as a primary teacher and later as a "Support Teacher Learning Difficulties". For Sandra, dissatisfaction came from "Executive, people in charge who just didn't have a clue". Sandra also "didn't like striking, it was a poor image to portray to students and parents ... I don't like the Federation attitude ... politics is too much in it". Teachers "who had to be carried" were also a source of dissatisfaction for Sandra as "they would have been fired in private enterprise".

Grahame taught secondary Music for 16 years before becoming a Music lecturer at a university. However, while enjoying classroom teaching, Grahame stated that he was also expected to:
organise school bands, choirs, rock eisteddfods, play the piano on school assemblies, organise annual concerts ... I would get to school at 7-30 in the morning while maths teachers I shared a staffroom with arrived at five to nine and opened a text book ... I worked every lunchtime, after school, and most weekends and only got a period off a week, or at most two or three at my later schools ... It was a bit off.

Grahame also recounted how at one stage his pay stopped for six weeks and how he:

went to the Department, they were so inept, nothing was done ... I went to my local member, to the Federation ... no one was responsible. Eventually I received a grovelling letter from the Minister [for Education]. They then paid me twice for the six weeks! ... I sent a cheque for $5,000 back but it wasn't acknowledged. When I eventually resigned, they sent me a bill for the $5,000 ... The building society had to go right back through their records to find that the cheque had been cashed.

Grahame recalled how he ordered equipment and it would not arrive for 18 months, and how he had to spend up to $1,000 of his own money every year on "records, scores, even a cassette player the Principal wouldn't buy for me". The "power of principals over conditions, allocations and how you were treated" was also a source of dissatisfaction to Grahame.

Grahame was also deeply concerned with:

the inequity of the system ... at my first [disadvantaged] school I received only a $400 [annual] budget from the Principal and no help, at my second school $1,500 and plenty of help and moral support, which is even more important than money ... at my last school [on Sydney's more affluent north shore] the Principal apologised the first year because he could only give me $4,000 ... in my last year there he gave me $12,000 ... this made me think about the public system, its inequity.

With 18 years experience as a primary teacher, Bill thought that "face to face I had something to offer, but more and more the Department made justification in writing [for what he was doing] more important than being in the classroom". Bill "started to go for promotion twice, but was depressed to see people put on a show". Bill said that despite the fact that he did not "have a pretty room or pretty books", he thought that he was a good teacher and deserving of promotion but did not have the "gift of the gab" that others teachers possessed. When people he thought undeserved received promotion he found this "disheartening and pulled out twice". Other sources of dissatisfaction for Bill were "trying to teach music" and the way that people changed when they were promoted to executive positions and treated those under them as "inferior". Despite the fact that "the wrong people were being promoted", and Bill resented this, he said he was "happy where I was" as a classroom teacher.

A Teacher Librarian in a primary school with 25 years experience with the Department, Jackie had registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service to find alternative employment. Until she found another job, it was only her mortgage that was keeping her with the Department. Jackie recalled that when she had completed her librarianship training, she had thought that:
the sky's the limit ... you could go to in-service courses and come back and co-ordinate the whole staff ... you were a de facto executive. They were going to make it an executive position but now the number of tasks is the same ... Before, with 300 kids you used to get a full-time librarian and a clerical assistant. Now I have two libraries to administer, four days at one school and one day at the other, which is closed the four days that I'm not there ... I have a clerical assistant for one day only ... there is no hope of fulfilling all the roles, it really destroys me, it is so contrary to what we should be doing in an information age, so soul destroying.

A highly experienced primary teacher who later taught secondary Art, Debbie, 51 years old at the time of her resignation, recalled that "as a young teacher, I was grossly dissatisfied with the way we were trained ... it didn't prepare us for the realities ... I learned how to teach at the expense of my children ... We needed more experience in school ... it would have made what the lecturers said more valuable". Debbie also stated that "in the early years there was also frustration dealing with some dreadful old Headmistresses in the infants ... I also had trouble with one Deputy who was a bully ... you gradually learn to deal with people". The issue of equal pay for women was also a source of dissatisfaction for Debbie, and she recalled how there was a strike before this was granted where "everyone went out, even the Deputy".

A secondary Social Sciences Head Teacher, Malcolm left the Department after 17 years to work as a classroom teacher in a Catholic school. Malcolm stated he became increasingly dissatisfied with "the method of change" and with "the present system of promotion which is not necessarily the best ... they could have modified the old system so that if you did not take a promotion after say four years, you would be re-inspected ... I am cynical of the selection process at the moment". Malcolm was concerned that local selection procedures would see a "regionalisation" of education, with teachers finding it very difficult to leave a region and said he "could see myself being locked into the [Riverina] Region ... West of the ranges is at threat, particularly if they abandon the 'points system' [where teachers accumulate transfer points for service at isolated schools] ... even if it is not true, and I have plenty of informal evidence from friends that it is, the perception will be harmful, whether it is accurate or inaccurate ... morale and mobility will suffer".

A former secondary Home Science Head Teacher, Dianne resigned from the Department after 19 years service. For Dianne, her major source of dissatisfaction was "change being imposed on me without any input or choice at all on my part, no choice at all ... being told what to do by the Minister ... and the wash over of the really low morale of my colleagues".

Judith had 24 years teaching experience, culminating in her final appointment as Assistant Principal in a Riverina Region primary school, from where she resigned to take up a position at a country university. Judith found the unrealistic expectations held by parents for their children to be a source of dissatisfaction. Judith also recounted how she had worked very hard for her first inspection for promotion, and although successful, she resented how males that she had worked with appeared to pass inspection much more easily due to what she termed "the old
boys' network". Although she "may have done too much, the men appeared to do very little" and this made Judith "angry". Sexism from her superiors was a source of dissatisfaction and Judith stated that "I have worked with some very difficult men, and some very efficient women". The "new directions happening in education" were also a source of dissatisfaction to Judith. She believed that the "whole mould of education" was being changed with classroom teaching and curriculum development being downgraded in favour of "managing, computing and accounting". She believed that the government had "duped" schools and the public, and that while schools were supposed to be more independent, they had in fact lost control over areas such as curriculum where stricter controls were now in place.

With 33 years experience with the Department culminating in his appointment as a secondary Deputy Principal, Paul was very clear as to the major source of his dissatisfaction, which was "the bureaucracy which takes three quarters of the education dollar and does nothing for kids or teachers ... they are escapists from the system doing stuff all for the classroom. If they all disappeared, we would all be better off".

A former primary Assistant Principal with 30 years service with the Department, Doug resigned to take up an executive position in a Catholic school. Doug's greatest source of dissatisfaction was the "lack of confidence in where education was going [in the 1980s and early 1990s] inside and outside the system ... society said that we didn't know where we were going ... there was no one to stand up for us".

A former secondary principal, Michael resigned after 34 years experience and now worked on occasions as a casual teacher. Michael recalled how as a Head Teacher, he had "enjoyed the role ... it is the ideal position, but I haven't greatly enjoyed the Deputy or Principal positions ... The Principal's job bored me to an extent and the pressures from outside left me dissatisfied". Dissatisfaction had also come when Michael had been a Head Teacher and there was "antagonism for the subject matter from the boss ... it was quite traumatic, the small subjects really suffered in the school". As a Deputy Principal, Michael had "no worries with the boss whatever ... it was the nature of the job in a small country high school ... I was in charge of all the unmastered departments ... I had over half the staff. The best part of being a Deputy Principal was classroom teaching. I found it difficult to deal with other people's problems ... I am a little bit diffident in discipline ... I prefer all avenues to be explored before people are sent to me". As a Principal, dissatisfaction came from "frustration with the system, especially the hierarchy of the [Metropolitan West] Region ... sheer frustration at getting action or being able to do something about certain types of kids ... we had 1,420 kids but not as many disruptive kids as elsewhere".

Liz originally worked as a primary teacher before becoming a school counsellor attached to both primary and secondary schools. For Liz, dissatisfaction came from the "lack of ethics" on the
part of those in regional office and the "lies" she was told to "protect an incompetent" who had harassed Liz and her colleagues. She felt that being on the "bottom of the rung", she was "not valued".

Russell taught for 11 years as primary teacher before spending four years as a Home School Liaison Officer before resigning from the Department. For Russell, sources of dissatisfaction lay in the lack of "recognition or reward for being a good teacher ... it breeds mediocrity ... there is too much dead wood" and from the issue of qualifications and salary, Russell being paid less than four year trained teachers who had done a course "not relevant to teaching" and received a higher salary. A particular source of dissatisfaction for Russell came in 1978 when he was selected to represent Australia in football. He spent three months overseas "representing my country and lost three months seniority ... people behind me who had failed the basic maths test at College and were conditionally certificated overtook me ... my increments were always three months late from then on and my long service leave was due after 10 years and three months, later than every one else".

A former primary teacher who taught with the Department for five years, before becoming a secondary teacher for 18 years where he became a Head Teacher Administration, David then took up a position at the Head Office of the Department where he spent two years working in the field of computing. For David, dissatisfaction came from "rules and regulations ... the growing workload on senior teachers ... that good teachers got more and more work to the detriment of classroom teaching" and from "more and more accountability which was not real accountability". David also felt dissatisfaction from the "lower community status" of teachers and from "Government criticism that teachers weren't working ... community perceptions are put out by the Government that we work 9-00 to 3-30 ... It gave me very little satisfaction".

Joanne spent eight years as a secondary teacher before moving to the Head Office of the Department where she spent a further eight years before taking leave without pay and later resigning. For Joanne, dissatisfaction came from "really ratty kids at [her last two schools] ... how revolting they were to you at times". Dissatisfaction also came from her Head Office work, which at times was "incredibly tedious, I did the real work at home ... just accepted it ... I would get myself a good reputation and further my career ... but sometimes I got sick of struggling, putting so much in ... it was a bit much at times, I got very sick of that ... it was a very stressful job".

A highly experienced teacher with 22 years experience with the Department of School Education, the last 17 years spent on secondment and at Head Office, Clare recalled that as a teacher, dissatisfaction came from "administrivia not relevant to teaching such as standardised tests, which were just another negative thing for many kids". As an administrator, Clare was
dissatisfied with the fact that "you didn't need any knowledge in the area to be an expert, no educational background or experience".

Ross had 39 years service with the Department, culminating with his appointment as an Assistant Director in Head Office. Ross' sources of dissatisfaction came almost entirely from his time in Head Office. Ross expressed "frustration with Head Office machinations, the duplicity ... the bloody mindedness of politicians, Ministers ... I worked closely with them ... it was very frustrating".

**Teacher Stress**

All 50 teachers interviewed described their sources of dissatisfaction. It was apparent as a result of the analysis of this data that in many cases, these "dissatisfiers" were in fact stressors leading directly to mental stress reactions.

In addition, a number of those interviewed suffered from physical symptoms of stress which in several cases necessitated medical attention.

Further, as suggested from the results of the analysis of the pilot study, it was found possible for the mental and/or physical stress experienced by the interviewees to "spill over", affecting members of the interviewees' families which in some cases ended in marriage breakdown attributed, at least in part, to the effects of teaching.

As will be seen later when the category of "Post Resignation Condition" is examined, it was common for those formerly experiencing stress reactions in their employment with the Department of School Education to recount how these symptoms abated once the individuals concerned had resigned, even if their new occupation was also mentally and/or physically demanding.

Consistent with the findings of the analysis of the pilot study data, virtually all of those interviewed gave evidence of heightened mental stress associated with teaching. As with the sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, the sources of this stress tended to vary according to teaching experience and position held, less experienced teachers finding workload, preparation, and classroom management major sources of stress, while more experienced teachers, particularly those in executive positions, were more likely to cite administrative origins of the stress they experienced. Those in Head Office positions were more likely to comment on the restructuring of education since the late 1980s as a source of their stress. Relations with superiors also gave rise to stress in many cases.
However, as dissatisfaction has already been examined, this discussion is more concerned with the manifestations or effects of stress, rather than its causes, although obviously the two are closely related, as do appear to be mental and physical stress, the later appearing from this study to be a more severe reaction to stressors than the former.

What follows is an examination of the phenomenon of teacher stress through the eyes of those interviewed in the study. Although the sub-categories of "Mental Stress", "Physical Stress", and the "Impact on Others" were confirmed by the grounded theory analysis process, these sub-headings were not used in this examination of the phenomenon of teacher stress because to do so would have tended to fragment the case histories provided.

Resigned after only two terms, Mandy recalled how:

the work didn't let off ... it just got worse and worse ... I can't stand this ... I was being crowded in ... no relief ... none of the teachers seemed happy ... no one was fulfilled ... all were depressed. pessimistic ... I don't want to do this for the rest of my life ... I felt entrenched ... there were no happy role models ... I was told that if you were going to get out you had to do it quickly or you'll be trapped ... I had already made up my mind.

Jane's story has also been partly told before. A primary trained teacher who finally gained a permanent appointment after three and a half years of casual teaching, mainly in secondary schools, she lasted less than a term at her first permanent appointment as a primary teacher. It was obvious that Jane found this period extremely stressful, describing how she received little support, but was expected to plan lesson notes for her supervisor and write a program for the whole year. Because of the preparation required for both the lesson notes and her program, Jane was working until 3-00 or 4-00 a.m. every morning, while at school, no one came near her classroom or offered her any advice. One day Jane went to the Deputy Principal "with tears rolling down my face, I had hit a fifth class boy, something I had never done to my own children". In her words "drowning" in the classroom, Jane had to contend with the students "tearing up each others' books and throwing them out the windows". Jane was "determined to be tough and ripped up some books myself to show them what they were doing".

Jane's situation forced her to take 10 days off from school on sick leave due to her inability to cope with the mental stress caused by her situation. When she returned to school, she was confronted about the destruction of her pupils' books and reached breaking point, demanding a resignation form which the Principal refused to give her. Such was her state that she said she would "sit outside his office until he gave me one", which he eventually did.

However, there were also personal difficulties associated with her role as a teacher. Although the details of Jane's relationship with her then husband are not fully known, she did relate how her marriage broke up after her resignation. It appeared to Jane that her husband resented her achievement and she realised later that he had "tried to sabotage me all the way through ... after
[she had experienced a problem] he pretended to reassure me ... he called me 'the professional' and had urged me to give it away completely". Her husband and some of her friends had thought that Jane had changed "but I was the same person I had always been when I was working as a secretary, only more self-confident". Following her resignation, Jane was once again happy teaching in a secondary school, and her mental and physical stress had apparently abated.

Bill's story too, is indicative of how workload can lead to mental stress, and finally physical debilitation. A primary teacher, Bill was sport co-ordinator at his school and every year a major task was the organisation of the annual swimming carnival. In the weeks leading up to this Bill "worked at least 70 hours per week, and each year for the last four years ended up in hospital because of a heart problem caused by stress". Bill's doctor told him in 1990 to "get out of teaching" for the sake of his health. At the beginning of 1991, "strings were pulled" to get Bill a transfer to a new school, but he eventually resigned from this position to buy a newsagency in partnership with his wife. At the time he was interviewed, Bill stated that he was working "110 hours per week with only one half day holiday a year on Christmas day", but was "excited" by his new role.

Grahame was a secondary Music teacher who spent much of his supposed leisure time organising school musical activities, working before school, after school, and at weekends. Eventually he resigned to take a position as a Music lecturer at a university. Grahame recalled how, at his last school, he "had everything a music teacher could want ... a good boss, double music electives through to Year 12 which is quite unusual, the support of parents", but he saw his present position advertised and applied for it. He was offered the job the next day and went to his Principal who told him "if you don't take it, you're a fool, you would be fantastic and owe it to the system to help turn out good music teachers". The Principal arranged for Grahame to leave the school immediately and he started as a lecturer the following day. For Grahame, resignation bought "immense relief ... I had taken long service leave twice, I was burnt out the first time and found it really hard to go back after the second ... it was a physical relief [to resign]. I was always so exhausted ... no more rehearsals, I loved it but it was killing me".

Grahame maintained that despite his love of the classroom, he "could never go back, I don't have the energy", and that as a result of his new role he "sees the bigger picture ... I would be bored and frustrated in a school ... [there is] a mentally faster level in lecturing".

Michael's story has also been told in part. A high school Principal, he resigned after on-going conflict with his Regional Office. Despite an earlier happy and rewarding career, Michael recalled how he had experienced coronary problems in 1987, but was not sure whether this was due to heredity, diet, or stress. He had "never had a nervous breakdown or anything like that, but the stress built up". Following treatment for his heart condition, Michael became
"determined I wasn't going to sacrifice myself on the altar of the Department ... but I couldn't seek medical retirement because I wasn't really sick". Following this incident, Michael felt "growing frustration with the job of boss ... you went in on Monday expecting to do this much work in the week, but there was vandalism on the weekend, teachers sick ... the work just built up ... you can't do any real leadership because of the workload ... I did lead, but not as much as I wanted to ... I was diverted by trivia I couldn't really give to anyone else".

Finally, at the end of 1989 and the beginning of 1990, Michael "had a blue with the D.I. [District Inspector] and the Regional Director [now termed Assistant Director-General] over a suspension ... A student had 'physically affronted' a teacher by tightening his tie around his neck ... I wanted him suspended and moved but the Region refused ... for the first three weeks of 1990 there was a battle royal with the Regional Director ... letters arrived from [him] every two days ... Very grudgingly they moved the kid after the staff threatened to strike ... I said 'I'm not going to put up with it' ... it upset my family, and this, plus the medical problem and the extra duties being put on principals ... were the main reasons why I took early retirement".

Jan described how she resigned after 15 years at the same secondary school when she lost her permanent position when an attempt was made to make her a "forced transfer" while she was on leave. Eventually, as a result of her protests, she returned to her school as a "supernumerary" member of staff. Jan had gone to see her new Principal to discuss her situation, but found him very unsympathetic as "he said that he was not interested in my case". He had not given her a timetable despite the fact that Jan had four senior classes which a casual teacher had been taking during her leave, and informed Jan that "I would have to fill in for everyone for the rest of the year. When she complained he said 'look lovey, this sounds quite cushy' ... I felt that I was banging my head against a brick wall ... I had to babysit classes after 15 years of teaching".

When she decided to resign, Jan's fellow teachers "tried to talk me out of it ... the other teachers were very apprehensive ... they were worried and amazed I did it". Jan described her decision to resign as "a real trauma ... an agonising decision but I was really glad when I filled out the form". Jan stated how her new Principal's "negative vibes ... he really couldn't give a damn ... shattered me. The staff supported me but there was no handshake after 15 years, nothing. I was just a number, a piece of paper ... I was sad driving home but relieved. I'm really happy now".

Jan described how since her resignation there "was a lack of stress, no marking on the weekends. Other people, even teachers, don't realise how stressful it is, especially with a family ... it was having effects on my health, I had 'flu for months, it was mentally and physically starting to take its toll ... trying to be a mother, wife, teacher ... it was getting harder ... splitting yourself more ways".

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Joanne was a seemingly very confident person who had risen to a senior position in the Head Office of the Department by her mid-30s. By the mid-1980s, she was in charge of a branch at Head Office which "Teacher Librarians relied on for consultancy ... the Branch had stultified for a long time ... the people there had fixed ideas, irrelevant ... I felt very keen to change the Branch into something relevant and useful ... it was exciting ... I hired a lot of new people. We worked incredibly hard and I burnt myself out ... for three years there was this incredible missionary zeal and camaraderie".

However as mentioned previously, over a long weekend in June 1989, Joanne "received a phone call from my Director ... there were big cuts being made in Head Office and the Director said my Branch of 26 people was to be halved ... I had to decide by Tuesday [when the Branch re-opened] which half were going ... I was devastated, it was extraordinary ... I felt it unfair that the cuts had to be so severe on one Branch ... it showed that Teacher Librarians are not highly regarded ... It was the beginning of the end ... we soldiered on but I felt, I don't know, like my heart was broken". Joanne said that she was "not an emotional person, but I realised six months after leaving the Department that I was depressed at the cuts at the Branch and at Head Office ... all the things we believed in are gone ... I am a positive person but I am hard put to find positive things to say about what is happening".

June resigned from primary teaching after 20 years with the Department to become a manager in her family's business. June described the circumstances leading up to her resignation and stated that "I wouldn't have done it without something to go to ... my father had been hinting at it for some years ... there had been incidents during my time in the [relieving] executive position ... the boss would call me at weekends to try to get me to get some of the other teachers around [to her way of thinking] ... my husband said 'no more of this' ... I was spending more time on others' kids than mine ... then my father offered the job ... I was having no leisure time ... the timing was right". June added that she "didn't like what was happening to education, to me ... I still loved kids ... but I was lost in being supermum ... I had been on high blood pressure tablets for six years ... now [in her new role of manager] I have six men working for me ... it should have been stressful, but it wasn't ... I went to my doctor who asked me if my new job was less stressful than teaching ... I said that I thought it probably was ... he then said that my blood pressure was down dramatically and halved my medication ... it was quite amazing". When June returned from seeing her doctor, she asked her family whether she was easier to get along with and less stressed than before "and they all chorused 'Yes!' ... I am calmer, have more time for the kids ... my health has improved". June also added that it was probably a contentious view, but she believed that "people who care about teaching are likely to drop out first ... it matters too much to them".
Ruth's story is also one of a person under stress. Following two years teaching in the Northern Territory which she found extremely stressful, Ruth taught for 17 years at the Correspondence School in Sydney before she was sent back to a primary school. She recounted how, at the end of 1990, the staff at the Correspondence School was to be wound down and the "staff sent out to schools willy nilly ... I believe that half were medically retired, they couldn't cope and had forgotten how to teach ... we had a few paltry training sessions which taught us very little". Ruth was posted to a primary school from the beginning of 1991, but took the first term off on long service leave, partly because Ruth was worried over the fact that she "hadn't been inside a classroom in 19 years".

Ruth reported to her school at the beginning of second term to find that she had been allocated the duties of Teacher Librarian and release from face-to-face (R.F.F.) Art teacher. Ruth had "no idea" of how to run a library and also found herself:

- going from class to class ... no one was helping me ... I was criticised for being a few minutes late to relieve teachers from their classes and for letting the students finish early ... for leaving a spot of paint on the desk. I had to carry my equipment with me from class to class ... I had to teach Year 6 maths, I had to complete 14 programs ... I hadn't been a teacher in 19 years ...
- I was not told anything, not helped at all. Only the Deputy Principal made a small effort ... I was so stressed out ... I thought that I was going to have a stroke ... a seven page document of criticism ...
- The Deputy had complained when I left early to attend a seminar for Teacher Librarians and he missed his R.F.F. ... The assistant librarian had told me not to worry about numbering the books as the system was going to be changed, then wrote a report saying I should have been doing it ...
- The class was colouring in and seemed to know what they were doing so I thought that they knew what they had to, but they ran out of work so I gave them more and then more ... when the teacher got back she went off her head. I was hauled over the coals for not searching the room for the instructions for the class ... I was a scapegoat, criticised by everyone. They were selfish people, narcissistic, and didn't care that I hadn't been in a classroom for 19 years.

Towards the end of her second month at the school, Ruth was assaulted by her husband and spent a week in hospital. The Principal came to visit her and was "concerned and was wondering when I would return ... he was a very nice guy". After she returned to school, Ruth was "shown a seven page inspection report written by the Deputy Principal" which contained:

- incredible criticisms and downright lies ... I was so blown out, I got up and walked out ... I was so stressed out ... I thought that I was going to have a stroke ... a seven page document of criticism ...
- The class was colouring in and seemed to know what they were doing so I thought that they knew what they had to, but they ran out of work so I gave them more and then more ... when the teacher got back she went off her head. I was hauled over the coals for not searching the room for the instructions for the class ... I was a scapegoat, criticised by everyone. They were selfish people, narcissistic, and didn't care that I hadn't been in a classroom for 19 years.

Ruth was "horrified" at what the report contained, but after thinking about it, decided to "use it to my advantage ... when the Principal gave it to me I thought that I was going to have a stroke and just walked out, but the next day I went to see him and asked him to please help me to get
medically retired ... he went scarlet and then helped me to retire ... I think that they wanted the other teacher back who did my job while I was on leave". At the time she left the Department, Ruth felt "so offended, so insulted, so horrified, how dare they insult me like that after putting me in such an intolerable position ... no one was helping me, just telling me".

It could be argued that the cases outlined above are the more extreme examples of stress contained within the interview transcripts, and there is some truth in this, but as mentioned in the introduction to the examination of this category, while not all of those interviewed gave evidence of physical stress or the impact of stress on others, there was sufficient evidence to suggest the existence of both these sub-categories.

However, there was no doubt as to the existence of the sub-category of mental stress, with virtually every former teacher interviewed describing mounting levels of "frustration", "anger", feelings of being "stretched", "stress", and even "burnout". On the other hand, the most common word used to describe the feelings of those interviewed following resignation was "relief", in some cases, "enormous relief", with a "weight" or "cloud" seemingly being lifted from the shoulders of the majority of those interviewed.

Clearly, resignation was seen by the overwhelming majority of those interviewed as a release from what was perceived to be a highly stressful situation which they no longer wished to experience nor attempt to cope with. The fact that so many of those interviewed had returned to some sort of educational role, either in private schools or elsewhere, and were apparently enjoying it, and the release from stress that resignation gave, are telling points.

The Resignation Decision

As was found with the analysis of the pilot interview data, there was the existence of strong commonality in regards to the resignation decision. In nearly all cases, with the possible exception of those with very little experience, there was a pattern of increasing dissatisfaction over time, interspersed with several critical incidents. Generally, despite this increase in dissatisfaction, the sources and levels of teacher satisfaction stayed relatively constant. Usually, towards the end of the individual's time with the Department of School Education, there was a major critical incident which precipitated the final resignation decision.

It was also common for the period of increasing teacher dissatisfaction to be accompanied by mental, and in some cases, physical stress, as seen previously when the category of "Stress" was examined. It was also common for this stress to "spill over" and affect family members.
While the general trends surrounding the "Resignation Decision" may well have wider relevance, it was apparent that there were a number of context specific forces at work. Many of those interviewed spoke of a sharp increase in teacher dissatisfaction since the late 1980s when the then Labor Government and the Greiner government which succeeded it, began to reform and restructure public education in New South Wales. Changes to promotions procedures, changes to curricula, changes to school administration, changes to the Head Office management of education, the introduction of new roles and positions within the Department, Regions and schools, new methods of accountability, the introduction of new forms of testing and assessment, greater political interference in education, the use of outside consultants to evaluate educational management and curriculum, increased media and public questioning, criticism and blame being apportioned to the education system for the nation's economic problems, with commensurate calls for schools to deal with increasing social problems, all played their part in providing a turbulent environment for schools and teachers in N.S.W. in the period since the late 1980s.

However while the above changes were relevant to the context of N.S.W. public education, it must be acknowledged that such changes were not confined just to that system, but were part of wider national and international trends, as indicated by the review of the literature. What might be unique to N.S.W., however, could well be the pace of change, the lack of effective preparation for implementation of that change and the manner in which the change occurred.

The key point, then, could be that such changes were not perceived by those interviewed to be part of a wider context, but were seen as things being done to the "Department" and to "them" by a critical and unappreciative Government and society.

Thus, the scope and pace of change in the N.S.W. Department of School Education was seen as a powerful determinant of increasing teacher dissatisfaction for the majority of those interviewed. However there were other forces at work, in particular, those relating to the personal background of those interviewed, their employment history, and their relationships with others within their particular school, home, and community.

The resignation act itself was found to impact both upon the individual concerned and others. Individually, those interviewed typically spoke of "mixed" reactions or feelings, with relief and even elation being accompanied by sadness and even depression. There was a feeling of regret commonly expressed at "walking away" from colleagues and students, but also a feeling that for the good of the individual concerned, and in some cases his or her family, the decision to leave had to be made. A number of those interviewed used emotive imagery, describing themselves as "hitting their head against a brick wall" or "drowning" prior to resignation, but then experiencing a "weight" or "cloud" lifting from them with resignation, "doors" opening...
and closing. In some cases, teaching colleagues were upset by the resignation of the teacher concerned, while in other cases, there was encouragement and even envy.

Clearly, the resignation decision, particularly for more experienced teachers, was a very significant one preceded and accompanied by a great deal of anguish and soul searching, but one which was largely theirs alone, even when family members and colleagues had been consulted.

Family members were generally relieved and supportive of the decision to resign, even when this resulted in some degree of financial hardship for the family. There were however several cases where the decision to resign was opposed by family members, but this situation was in the minority. Despite family ties, most teachers interviewed spoke of the resignation decision being a personal one, but made in consultation with family members and in some cases friends. Rarely was a Departmental official of the level of principal or higher involved in counselling the individual, nor was the Teachers Federation usually consulted.

It should be noted that in a number of cases the decision to resign was considered a forced one, with pressures from the Department of School Education seen as reaching an intolerable level. As mentioned previously, a number of those interviewed were officially considered to be early retirees, or beneficiaries of some sort of redundancy package, but the individuals concerned considered themselves to be "forced" into resignation, and in one case, "sacked" by the Department.

As indicated by the analysis of the pilot study data, the sub-categories of "Building Forces", "Critical Incident", "Impact on Self", and "Influence of Others" were confirmed in the grounded theory analysis of the remaining interview data.

Below are found selected case histories to support the above contentions regarding the category of the "Resignation Decision". Because much of the material relevant to this category has been already examined to this point, only a sample of case histories are provided, although the full details are provided in Appendix 4 to support the existence of this category and the conclusions drawn from the analysis of it. The case histories have not been divided into the four sub-categories identified for this category as this was found to unnecessarily fragment the discussion.

Linda left the Department after four years as a secondary Science teacher to work as an education officer at a Fauna park. Dissatisfaction for Linda came from the poor public perceptions of teachers and from the leadership at her school which she described as "not poor, but not great, not what it could have been". Linda did however enjoy the unusual experience of teaching at a small city school of only 400 pupils, although the uncertainty over the school's
continuing status did cause "low morale ... we were insecure ... the Department wouldn't tell us if the school was going to close [as] others had in the area". Linda described her school as "terrific, there were all sorts of ethnic backgrounds, but no group dominated". This was particularly important to Linda who, despite speaking faultless English, had an ethnic background herself. The school was "very laid back, maybe too much", although she understood that this situation was changing with the appointment of new senior staff. Linda did however describe her "frustration" with certain aspects of the school, including the fact that with all her qualifications [BSc, Dip Ed, MEd], she was not allowed to operate the photocopying machine, while "someone straight from school could". There were "lots of small things" in the school that caused Linda frustration.

Linda had "thought about resigning" at the end of her third year, as she "wanted to move on, do other things, I was not loving school as much, I was not so keen to go to school" and she tried un成功fully to obtain alternative employment. In her final year, Linda decided to give teaching one more try and gained a position as Year Adviser, something which she found very rewarding and which "improved [my] job and made me very happy". However, at the end of her fourth year her present job "came up" and friends suggested she apply for it. Things "went well" and she "got the job", taking leave without pay from the Department from the beginning of 1992.

Linda told a few people including fellow teachers, family and friends of her decision and they were generally "encouraging, even envious", although she was advised to take leave rather than resign in case "things didn't work out". Departmental regulations normally preclude working while on leave without pay but someone she spoke to at Regional Office said not to worry about this and her application for leave was processed "very smoothly ... they didn't seem to mind".

At the time she left her school, Linda was "excited, I wanted to leave, although I was sorry to say goodbye to my good friends at school ... I was sorry for the kids, I had some good classes and had some regrets that I didn't get everything out of [teaching] ... I was still getting better, but the job came up and all that wasn't worth staying for".

Dennis is something of an unusual case, having submitted his resignation at the end of 1990, then withdrawing it before taking leave during 1991, during which time he worked as a "long block" casual teacher. Dennis returned to full-time teaching in 1992, but maintained that he would resign as soon as he found alternative employment. Dennis recounted the circumstances leading up to his first abortive resignation. He had been transferred to a new school which only had Years 7 to 10 and was given four Year 7 and 8 English classes and one Commerce class. The classes were "mixed ability and I found it impossible to teach them ... I was not trained [in English, having a History and Economics degree] and did not like the way English was taught,
all Australian novels about adolescence ... in my old country we read literature from around the world, including Australia". Dennis stated that he "had absolutely no support, and had discipline problems with two of the classes ... I was the only male on a young female English staff with an older female Head Teacher. I was older and didn't fit into the mould. Because I was cosmopolitan she [the Head Teacher] thought I was a degenerate and was feeding stories about me to the Principal".

Eventually, Dennis was told that he was to be designated "of concern", the middle rank between being declared unsatisfactory or satisfactory. He "resented this ... I had arguments with the Principal, they had gone behind my back". Dennis submitted his resignation and then "withdrew it a week later and took leave without pay from the school instead". Dennis maintained that in the four years his school had been opened, eleven teachers had been designated "of concern", including four others at the end of 1990 who also "took leave without pay to get away". As mentioned previously, Dennis taught long casual blocks at Departmental schools and also taught at a T.A.F.E. college in the following year, despite the fact that he was not supposed to do this under the conditions of his leave. He taught Social Sciences for two terms and English for two terms, receiving "excellent references ... it proved that I could teach English". However, since returning to permanent work with the Department, Dennis had attempted unsuccessfully to have his year of casual teaching credited to his service record so that he could be placed on the same salary increment level that he would have been on had he stayed with the Department as a permanent employee. He had also tried to use his references to have the "of concern" designation removed, but had been told that references for casual teaching could not be used for this purpose and that he would have to be assessed later in 1992.

Apparently, Dennis' new school had yet to informed of this and Dennis was waiting with some trepidation for this to occur. He maintained that he was "doing really well now at school, the Head Teacher is happy and I get on well with the other teachers and the students. Everything will be going fine until the letter arrives, 'check him out' ... I've been prejudged by bureaucrats who won't face me, I've rung Regional Office but the people there won't talk to me, 'oh no, you're the teacher who left -------- High School under false pretences', they say".

Dennis said he felt "very bitter against my previous Principal and Regional Office for the way they treated me ... The Principal was both prosecutor and judge ... I felt that I was doing the job as well as anyone else ... One day the Principal reprimanded me on the assembly for touching a student in front of all the kids ... There was harassment, the Deputy Principal rang me up at 9-30 at night while I was in the bath to tell me I would have to teach maths the next year ... They thought I was a trouble maker because I was involved with the Federation at the school". Dennis said that he "had my heart set on teaching once, but I'm totally disillusioned now ... I think that I would have been happier in law or in advertising, I was much happier then than I am at the moment ... However, at his new school Dennis said that "I have regained
some confidence, I've improved in all areas and I want to get on with it, but have the 'of concern' rating hanging over my head ... there are no specific charges, just petty allegations such as I was late for school five times in two terms ... it is difficult to defend".

Jack described his decision to resign as a "gradual one". His wife has resigned shortly before him and being "a two income family with a mortgage" meant that they could no longer support themselves on one wage. Jack had been involved in making furniture for some time and he and his wife decided to go into this full-time, and thus, "it was an economic decision". However, Jack also "didn't like teaching at ------- High" and "didn't agree with the changes that were happening with [the implementation of the] Scott [Report] ... it looked like we would lose our transfer points for teaching at ------- and I would never get out". Jack believed that his decision to resign "was easier than if I was still at ------- [his second school]" where he had been more content.

When Jack announced his decision to resign his "Head Teacher tried to get me to stay" and because Jack "felt a commitment to the staff at the school ... not so much the kids", he "went back casual three days a week to replace myself until the end of the year when I was replaced". At the time he submitted his resignation, Jack "felt very happy once the decision was made ... I had no second thoughts ... I don't see myself ever going back to do it ... A lot of other teachers I know wish they could do the same [work for themselves]".

Wendy, Jack's wife, described the circumstances of her second resignation from the Department, saying that she:

didn't want to go. I was due for long service [leave] and had been having some physical problems. I had a hysterectomy in 1988 but my Principal had tried to convince me to delay the operation as it was the Bicentenary and there was a lot to do at school. I had the operation, but did a lot of behind the scenes work [for the school]. Two years later I was having physical problems, my insides were in a mess, and I wanted to take long service later in the year when it was due, but my doctor questioned my continuing and said straight off that I had to leave teaching that day. He knew I was the sort of person who can't take it easy and would be heavily involved until I left. He was a friend but I resented it at the time ... I now realise that it is the best thing that could have happened. [Wendy's Principal] tried to talk me out of it [resignation] and said that he would recommend highly to the Department that they take me on again after some leave but when my decision was clear, he made life hell for me ... it was an angry reaction liking a kid taking his bat home. He had a few problems that fellow, and vented his problems on others ... he hit kids and was hard to deal with ... he found it impossible to recognise the achievement of others.

At the time of her resignation, Wendy felt "personally, a sense of loss, losing relationships with a lot of kids which was important to me ... sadness that I was losing good friends. It was a big adjustment ... to be told rather than choose, I had mixed feelings. The Department was impersonal to the end and not supportive".

Paul, a secondary Deputy Principal who resigned to return to classroom teaching, recalled how from the age of "50 on, I had no ideas of going past 55. I'm keen on physical fitness and saw
the job harming people physically ... I was probably the fittest Deputy in Met-West ... the others were frazzled, it got on top of them. I used to treat the job as a workout, I went to school and knocked it over". Despite his years of experience, Paul, saw "no point in pursuing a principal's job. When the promotion system was changed I lost all my seniority ... I went for two positions and all the males missed out ... it added weight to my decision which was reinforced by the best brains in the business on the Superannuation Board. Resigning was the only way to go financially and health wise".

Paul had fully intended to return to classroom teaching and described his feelings at the time of his resignation as "great, I had total security and the knowledge from the boss that I could be involved back in my school". One term spent touring around Australia following his resignation convinced Paul that he had made the correct decision. He described how he met other people in his age group and felt that he "mentally lost the edge [from the lack of activity] ... I was not all that keen on it". He returned to his school in a part-time capacity and continued a number of projects he had been involved in, including the school's environmental committee which was involved in beautifying the school grounds. He was greatly enjoying this work, particularly as "there are no meetings to attend ... I am the school's most experienced teacher". Paul was appointed as a permanent teacher early in 1992 but maintained that he "works for kids, not for the Department ... they are more meddlesome than helpful".

Doug, a former primary Assistant Principal who resigned to take up a similar position in a Catholic school, described how he gradually came to the decision to resign. In 1987 "a friend who was a Principal, 49, dropped dead ... later that year [a Principal who was an inspiration to Doug] died. I felt that at 47 'I don't have to do this for the rest of my life' ... In 1988 I took six months leave and looked for jobs during this time ... I tried selling insurance with a friend but it wasn't for me. I realised that teaching was what I wanted to do". Doug returned to his school for the latter half of 1988. Later, Doug was to have two terms as Relieving Principal at the school and recalled that "I had a great time ... I thought that I had lost the drive to be a Principal". In 1991 Doug saw a job advertised in a Catholic school and applied successfully for it. Doug's Principal told him to "just take leave, but it was too complicated with super' ... different principals I knew said 'wait, don't go' but I made the break".

At the time of his resignation, Doug felt "very nervous, tension, anxiety ... it was difficult to make the break from a system that had been good to me, and I had been good to it ... it was the system, it had been attacked, eroded ... I didn't like that".

Fiona formerly taught Physical Education in Queensland before retraining as a teacher of behaviour disordered children in N.S.W., where she taught with the Department for 12 months before resigning. Fiona took up a position at a new special school which was:
temporarily located in a youth club, but it was closed down because it was at street level and there was noise and pollution, so we were moved to another temporary site in a hall at a primary school, but this was not suitable, we had adolescent kids with behaviour problems, a primary school was not suitable at all ... we were then moved to another site at an old primary school which had been closed and was targeted to be sold ... it had big bolts sticking out of the walls, sub-standard equipment ... the Department appeared to be loath to help ... some of the staff members were difficult and the Principal was upwardly mobile herself, she wasn't prepared to go out on a limb for the good of the school. This disappointed me.

Fiona's resolve to resign hardened in the:

last six months, there was a total undermining of what you do ... the routine was undermined, you were wanting to discipline but couldn't, given the structure of the school ... I felt that the school wasn't doing what it was meant to be doing, which was giving the students new skills for getting on in society ... it was building on inappropriate skills they already had ... plus, there was a critical incident when a kid threatened to throw me out of a two storey window ... it became an unsafe environment for me.

Fiona described her decision to resign as "my decision ... I had talked about how things were going with the boss earlier and she had made an effort to help but I had made up my mind ... I couldn't work there any more, I couldn't do any good ... maybe someone else could". At the time of her resignation, Fiona felt "absolute relief, over the moon ... it was like closing a door and opening a new one on a new life ... I would never go back".

Vanessa also resigned from a position in a special school after 17 years experience with the Department spread over 29 years. Vanessa described her decision to resign as "fairly gradual ... I was getting a lot of flak from my parents for attending local [Teachers Federation] Association meetings, I couldn't just sit back and say nothing ... they thought that I was some sort of communist". Vanessa also found that the amount of "meaningless paper work was becoming incredible". Vanessa had actually been offered her present job two years earlier, but "had turned it down ... but I was restless after ... not willing to toss it in ... I liked working with the kids".

However, Vanessa stated that when she finally resigned, she:

would have left anyhow, even without a job ... we had a new Principal who was upwardly mobile and she made us write lesson notes, mission statements ... rewrite aims and objectives ... I had to write my personal philosophy and the Principal changed it! ... I no longer even owned my own philosophy ... principals like to leave their mark, and we had a high turnover of principals.

When Vanessa decided to resign, "my son 24 and my daughter 18 cheered ... they said 'that's wonderful', my parents said 'you won't get the holidays' ... my husband said 'it should have happened years ago' ... I was incredibly stressed ... two close friends at the school who were two or three years older in their fifties said 'if we were younger we would go with you' ... everybody applauded it".

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Vanessa received some publicity for her decision to resign, with the high circulation local newspaper publishing a story, and with letters to the editor of various other publications. Vanessa described her feelings at the time as:

total relief ... I was very sad to leave the kids and most of the staff ... we had been together for some time, through the terrible inquiry [into the sexual assault of pupils at the hostel attached to her school which Vanessa had helped to instigate and which the Department attempted to cover up], all the principals ... it was like a cloud lifting.

Russell was a primary teacher who spent four years as a "Home School Liaison Officer" with the Department. After four years as a H.S.L.O., Russell was required by regulations to return to the classroom, and was told that he could be sent to "any school in Met-North". He had great support from principals, parents and community groups to stay in his position as H.S.L.O., but this meant nothing, as "there was a blanket rule that I couldn't stay ... for all the expertise I gained, I would lose $1,200 [allowance for being a H.S.L.O.] and a car ... it was not logical to me, I was not going to have them dictate to me ... they were not looking after me ... I decided to resign and had many job offers".

No one in the Department attempted to dissuade Russell from resigning, as "they couldn't care less, they wouldn't know ... I had received an award two years earlier for my work as an H.S.L.O. and two years later they tried to force me out ... I didn't get anything when I left, no letter, no form, no thanks". At the time of his resignation, Russell "felt a relief, happy that I was making the move and not the bureaucracy ... I am extremely confident I made the right decision".

Dianne was a secondary Home Economics Head Teacher who resigned because of the restructuring of the secondary curriculum and staff into "Key Learning Areas" which resulted in the elimination of her subject area as a discrete faculty within secondary schools. She was a full-time university student at the time she was interviewed. Leaving teaching was not easy for Dianne, and she "took a long time to think it over". She eventually took leave because "I just wanted to see how I performed out in the workplace ... to see if I could get a job ... to see how I would react ... time out to make decisions away from school but retain a safety net". When her leave expired, Dianne "had to resign ... I don't want to apply for study leave ... I don't want to be tied, to have to go back ... I needed the long service leave money ... I am totally supporting myself".

Dianne's "immediate and extended family were involved" in her decision to leave teaching as "decisions all my life have involved them as well, particularly my parents ... it involved them very much ... they were surprised yet very supportive of the decision ... I always believed I would work until retirement ... teaching was my work for life".
Dianne described her feelings at the time she left. She said she had been at her school "such a long time, it was very emotional ... I left a lot of friends ... yet I was relieved that I had made the decision ... I wouldn't have the feeling any more of being overwhelmed by what was happening around me".

At the time she resigned, Clare, a former primary teacher, held an important position in the Head Office of the Department. Clare traced a change in her attitude towards the Department "starting with [Education Minister in the previous Labor Government] Rodney Cavalier, the beginning of politicisation of education in the state ... people outside education thought that education was costing the State too much money".

Clare described the circumstances leading up to her decision to resign, and mentioned how "it was nagging at me, my friends were saying 'why hang in there?' ... I was depressed, working long hours, like the boy with his finger in the dyke, there wasn't progress, it was totally reactive, no one wanted to know about new ideas or ventures". There had been a rumour that all seconded teachers would be sent back to the classroom, and Clare was concerned by her lack of choice if this eventuated. She had been approached about her present position as a Registrar in a private college and decided to take it "a little earlier than I wanted, but I decided to go ... I had been making lots of inquiries about how I could best look after myself ... I had done my bit for the Department".

Prior to formally submitting her resignation, Clare "spoke confidentially to a person in the legal section for advice on the minimum notice needed to resign, which was two weeks, one pay period". After gaining this advice and submitting her resignation, Clare "told them [her colleagues] ... some said to me 'you'll be all right', but I didn't want to be around when all the jobs had been devolved and there was still the same amount of work to do ... people were working so hard and getting no thanks whatsoever".

At the time of her resignation, Clare was:

so pleased, I really, really believed I had made the right decision, I had no regrets at all ... I really believe in public education, although I'm now not in it ... I didn't like how the system is becoming two tiered, the haves and the have nots ... equity is no longer the flavour of the month, now it's choice and diversity. I have grave reservations about teachers and kids in disadvantaged areas, despite the retaining of the [transfer] points system ... Teachers in Wilcannia or other areas wouldn't even get to interview [for another position] outside their region.

John taught for a total of six and a half years with the Department as a secondary Social Sciences teacher before resigning for a second time. He had taught for a year with the Department before resigning when he received a forced transfer. Approximately 18 months later in mid-1984 John was offered a position by the Department at a small central school in the North West Region. John accepted and described the period up to 1989 as being "great ... my
previous Social Science Master was the Deputy ... it was home away from home, a real nice place ... the Deputy and I got on very well professionally and personally, he used to come around for dinner”.

However, John described 1990 as being: terrible, absolutely ... there was a new Deputy Principal and the place fell apart. Parents took their kids away from the school ... I started looking for work ... I got three offers in two days ... however, there was a critical incident which broke the camel’s back. Every year at ... there were forced transfers ... one lady [a Social Sciences Teacher] was made a forced transfer at the end of 1990 but fought it successfully, so they left her there and picked someone else. Someone from another faculty ... there were only three Social Science teachers and I took the senior Economics and another teacher took the senior Geography ... I was told that my senior classes would be taken off me in 1991 ... they gave them to her ... this would leave me with no senior classes and make me the most junior Social Science teacher there ... I asked if the decision had been made because of my poor teaching, but I had the results, the kids did well every year in Economics ... they couldn’t tell me. The Executive made the decision, it was unsound, made on friendship grounds ... it was all done behind closed doors ... there was lots of wheeling and dealing, cloak and dagger.

On hearing he had lost his senior classes on the last day of the 1990 school year and having previously been offered a highly paid job with the Roads and Traffic Authority, John “just walked out ... I didn’t tell anyone at the school, you didn’t know who you were talking to ... I walked out and then wrote a letter applying for leave ... I waited to see that I was happy in the new job before resigning ... I only told my wife”. At the time he left his school, John described his feelings as "furious, absolutely furious that you could put in so much voluntary work over the years out of school time ... for that to happen ... I felt fury, unspeakable fury".

A former secondary English History teacher, Rebecca traced her decision to take leave and ultimately to resign to the year she spent in England on exchange in 1988. She "was thinking I needed variation but England confirmed that teaching everywhere was much the same, with a lot of stressed out teachers ... I decided that teaching should not dominate my life. I wanted to modify my work ... I decided not to take any work home ... I realised it was a job. It was a real change for me ... everything lost its lustre". When she returned to Australia, Rebecca began to "check the employment section of the newspapers. I started seeing training officers' jobs, but I had never been for a job, never been for an interview except when I got my scholarship. I thought that this organisation didn't care about its people at all ... I started looking seriously and saw my [present] job advertised ... I put an application in and got it. I decided to take leave to see if it would work out”.

When she decided to leave, Rebecca did not tell anyone at her school, although she did discuss it with some teachers at her previous school and some friends in business and who gave her advice when she applied for her new job as she "needed a corporate way of thinking". At the time she left, Rebecca "felt it was the opening of a new chapter ... I knew the [new] job [as an Education Officer with a major newspaper] and wasn't frightened ... I regretted leaving the
staff at --------, they were terrific ... I thought that I was betraying them, the people stuck in it. We had worked hard together and I had made some nice friendships”.

Rebecca was upset that when she informed the Department of her decision to take leave as "no one even asked why ... does anyone really care anyway?". When she submitted her resignation, there was a similar situation, and Rebecca said she was "crapped off at Regional Office ... they don't give a stuff about teachers, no one follows it [resignation] up ... there were no questions, no personal interest from a Cluster Director or anyone else".

David is a former primary teacher who became a secondary Head Teacher Administration, and later took a number of positions at Head Office in the area of Computer Education. He now worked as a systems analyst in the public service sector of the Department of School Education in a non-teaching position. David recalled that he was sitting in his office at school after a "very busy week" listening to the then Minister for Education Dr Metherell "saying on the radio how teachers had to work harder ... I said to a friend of mine in Head Office that night 'people get good money for what I am doing [computing]', and my friend offered me a job in Head Office ... I went in next term ... if it wasn't for Metherell I would still be teaching".

David enjoyed his time in Head Office and "developed more and more skills", but when the cuts began to be made in Head Office staff David put in an application for transfer "back to schools" at the end of both 1989 and 1990 "because we didn't know what was happening". He was offered a school each time, but remained with the Computer Education Unit, even after it was relocated to Parramatta and many others had lost their jobs. David came to the realisation that:

            this was not a career, going from branch to branch ... one day I was sitting in a 'sensitive and caring session' when I noticed a planner showing the future of the Department Head Office ... my position and my name were missing from the planner ... I knew it was over ... I said to my new boss who had only been there one day 'it was nice knowing you' and he said 'I mightn't be here long either' ... when I was offered the job [with another area of the public service] everyone I knew said 'go for it, get out'.

At the time he resigned, David felt "very sad, education has always fascinated me ... the whole Department", although he said he "had a suspicion I would be back ... I had a two or three year plan to return". When David formally submitted his resignation he "gave it to the clerk ... I waited, I expected something more ... he just said 'thanks', that was all ... I did get a nice letter from the Board of Studies, and the Teachers' Federation wrote me a nice letter although I was in another union ... that sort of letter should have come from the Department ... it was really remarkable, I just walked out ... that was that".

A former secondary English and History teacher, Hilary's decision to resign was a "combination of things. Teaching was really wonderful until I got married late at 28 [while at her last school] and had children ... before I used to sit up marking on Saturday nights ... go
on excursions ... it all changed ... it became harder to cope ... I now have four kids from 10 months to seven ... it was difficult to function properly ... I'm a bit of a perfectionist". Hilary also commented how things changed in her last school and "women were pushed to do more, not just teach ... at the end, it was no longer enough being a classroom teacher, you had to be seen to do more, but with my family I was already doing as much as I could".

Hilary "did discuss it [resignation] ... people at school said 'can't you get around it?' ... but I thought 'if I'm going to have four children, I'm going to look after them'". No one "personally" tried to influence Hilary's decision to resign.

**Post Resignation Condition**

As suggested by the analysis of the pilot study data, the category of "Post Resignation Condition" was found to contribute and impinge upon the core category of "Attitude to Teaching" held by those interviewed. Once again, there were found to be two sub-categories which in turn comprised the category of "Post Resignation Condition", these being termed the "Personal State" of those interviewed, and their "View of Education and the Department" following their career experiences and resignation.

Some aspects of "Post Resignation Condition" have relevance to other categories and have been mentioned elsewhere. For example, many of those interviewed described how their levels of mental and in some cases physical stress had decreased since their resignation. On the other hand, it was apparent that some of those interviewed had suffered a degree of loss of status and identity as a result of their resignation.

In other cases too, some of those interviewed indicated how they were still involved in and committed to education, but were working in another context. As will be seen below, a sizeable number of those interviewed stated quite definitely that nothing would induce them to work again for the Department of School Education, such was their attitude to the Department and the changes in education that had recently occurred.

What follows is a selection of comments made by those interviewed to support the existence of the category and two sub-categories in this particular instance. Once again, the emphasis is upon the individuals concerned "telling their own story".
a. **Personal State**

As mentioned previously, Jane felt "terrible sadness at [the time of her] resignation ... they knew I was drowning and nobody helped ... I was resentful of my inhumane supervisor and thought it was the end". However, there had been a marked improvement in her self-esteem and confidence following resignation as a result of her being approached to take on casual secondary teaching, something she had done successfully prior to her first appointment as a primary teacher. Jane said she "loves" high school teaching and "would love a permanent job ... I love kids, enjoy teaching and enjoy seeing their eyes light up" and said that she "was not disillusioned with teaching". She was valued in her present school and believed that teaching had made her a "more self-confident person, made me see I have something to give, good organisational skills ... broadened me as a person, but made me more humble, does that make sense?"

Since her resignation from her position of Assistant Principal in a primary school, Judith had found her new position as a university lecturer and the freedom she enjoyed in this role to be greatly fulfilling and was "a lot happier and relaxed now".

A former secondary Science teacher, Julie believed that her experiences with the Department in the last few years "flattened" her, and that she "lost my dynamic, I was surrounded by idiots ... I saw the whole school plummet, it flattened me, flattened a lot of people" and that there was not "a snowflake's chance in hell" that she would work for the Department again. However she had decided that she "really wanted to teach again" and was regaining her enthusiasm at her new Catholic school and said she was almost "back to my best" again.

Another former secondary Science teacher, Paula resigned and spent the next eight months travelling overseas. At the time of her resignation, Paula felt "no sadness, there was only one class I got somewhere with, I liked them ... I didn't miss the school ... [resigning was] a relief".

Resigned from her position as a secondary Home Science teacher and now retrained as a special education teacher working with the Department, Sue was at present "a bit shell shocked" at her new school, but believed that she would be better off there because it was smaller than her previous schools and she would be "less lost in the system". Looking back over her experiences to date, Sue really "didn't know" how teaching had affected her, although she said that she "always extended myself ... I completed night courses to keep up with my subject area", but that she "gained most from my year out of teaching when I worked for myself" in a small business "making and selling kids' clothing".
As mentioned earlier, Bill had been hospitalised a number of times due to a heart problem his doctor attributed to stress associated with teaching. Resigned from his position as a primary teacher on his doctor's advice, Bill and his wife had been operating their newsagency since May 1991 and despite working "110 hours per week with only one half day holiday a year on Christmas day", they were "loving it".

When asked how she felt about teaching now, Hazel, a university lecturer, said "I miss it, miss the kids ... I often think of being back in the classroom ... trying this and that ... I haven't regretted it, but I miss it". Hazel believed that teaching had been "a very positive effect on me ... brought out my strengths and helped me bring up my weaknesses ... challenged me ... I was lucky enough to have people around me to say 'try this' ... I don't know whether I would have got it in another field ... it is a social field".

"Nothing" would stop Hazel from returning to the Department, as "nothing ever came between me and teaching ... I could still work in the system without it upsetting me". However, Hazel said that "one of the biggest problems teachers face is unrealistic expectations which they don't have time to face ... changes to curriculum, community demands ... teachers are just like the infantry ... they slog on and do their job". Hazel closed her interview by saying that although she knew there were problems in education, "I'm lucky, I've had very positive experiences and there was always someone to help".

Jan described how since her resignation from her position as a secondary Social Sciences teacher there "was a lack of stress, no marking on the weekends. Other people, even teachers, don't realise how stressful it is, especially with a family ... it was having effects on my health, I had 'flu for months, it was mentally and physically starting to take its toll ... trying to be a mother, wife, teacher ... it was getting harder ... splitting yourself more ways". She believed that teaching had given her "organisational ability" although she didn't feel as confident in communicating to large groups as others thought she was because in school she was "isolated from the public, you are used to communicating with kids and staff ... I feel quite nervous".

Resigned and working in a Catholic school, at the time of his resignation, Doug felt "very nervous, tension, anxiety ... it was difficult to make the break from a system that had been good to me, and I had been good to it ... it was the system, it had been attacked, eroded ... I didn't like that". Doug believed that he had a good chance of being promoted to Principal in the Catholic system but would be "not all that worried if I don't make it". His "philosophy is now tied up with the Catholic faith ... it has given me an extra dimension to the job".

On considering how she felt about education now, Vanessa, now working as a Probation and Parole Officer, said "my stomach is tied up in knots because of the bureaucracy ... too much anger, but I do miss the contact with the students". Before Vanessa would return to the
Department, there would need to be "a change of philosophy, of the direction the Department is taking ... it is gradually pulling down everything schools and teachers have stood for ... the kids come last". Vanessa believed that "teaching has taught me to be much more confident ... as things became worse in the Department I learned to speak up". Teaching also helped Vanessa to "understand my own kids, it was good in that respect". Vanessa said that she "feels quite frightened for the next generation of children, who will teach them and what will they [the teachers] be like? ... teaching is a second choice for many people ... I have a daughter at university who is great at Maths and Psychology ... she also picked up Education and loved it ... she would make a great Maths teacher but she says 'Who wants to be a teacher? They are the scum of society' ... I have higher status now as a Parole Officer, I keep criminals out of jail".

When asked how she felt about teaching and education now, Joanne replied that she had "an enormous number of friends in Head Office ... we still meet regularly. I feel very sad ... some friends have really suffered, abominable things have happened to people ... the question I ask myself is ... 'Is what is happening in the classroom any better than it was five years ago?' ... I don't think so". Joanne was also concerned that while many competent people had lost their positions at Head Office, "there is a recycling of incompetent people ... the people who should have been kicked out are still there".

Joanne said that she "never regrets having been a teacher. You never appreciate how many skills you acquire ... the key is to understand how you can apply them to something else ... it takes determination to leave the public sector". Joanne feels that her current job is "not as stressful as in the classroom, but I have less holidays ... hardly any time to myself, but I'm prepared to put up with it, I like to move on ... I have no regrets although I did think that I would be in the Department forever". Joanne said that she was "not an emotional person, but I realised six months after leaving the Department that I was depressed at the cuts at the Branch and at Head Office ... all the things we believed in are gone ... I am a positive person but I am hard put to find positive things to say about what is happening".

On reflecting how her career had affected her, Helen, resigned and working in an antique shop, stated that it had been "a real education, I know so much about problems in society, the problems that children and teenagers face ... I worry that the system isn't doing the right thing by kids ... It is a tough, really hard job ... there are heaps of really excellent teachers ... they don't get the recognition they should nor the money, especially teachers like me". Helen would "like to go back and finish my degree [of which she has completed one quarter] but I'm going to wait until my own children are bigger ... it's so hard, no child minding, I taught out of town ... I could have stuck with it, but I don't regret it ... the antique shop is so peaceful, calm".
At the time she resigned, Hilary had felt "a great sense of loss ... a bit of a crisis I hadn't really imagined myself going through", but Hilary also felt "relief in some ways ... I would get the superannuation and the family would be more financially secure". No longer employed, Hilary felt "a loss of identity ... my parents used to introduce me as their daughter the high school teacher ... what would I say I did now?" Six months after her resignation, Hilary said "I still don't feel as if I would like to walk back into a classroom ... I pushed myself for too hard for too long ... I was a little burnt out at the end". Hilary stated that she would only return to the Department if "I would not be expected to do a whole range of other things, just teach ... I lost that feeling of success in just being a good classroom teacher". Reflecting upon how her teaching career had affected her, Hilary said that 'I'm rather bossy when around others' children ... a bit bossy, I have the confidence to tell others what to do ... teaching gives you a false sense of power at times". Hilary was also "quick to defend teenagers today. When people say how bad they are ... that gets to me". Hilary said that she was also "kind of more aware of what goes on in schools when it comes to my own kids" and that she "used to be straight up the line, but [I] have softened a bit as a result of having a family".

Resigned after just two terms as a secondary English and History teacher, Mandy felt "relief, then secondly sadness to leave the kids, but mainly relief ... I had made up my mind I would never go back ... I was glad to get out of it ... I don't think I would go back ... there are too many unresolved issues like class sizes, poor status, lack of facilities, overcrowding ... I taught in a noisy, hot room with lino on the floor ... no resources". When asked how teaching had affected her, Mandy said that she "feels more of an adult now after teaching adolescents, being in control of a class ... it was my first full-time job ... now I'm ready to move on ... I still believe that teaching is a noble and worthwhile job ... so important to society, it's just a shame the Government doesn't do something when it could be so good with enough resources ... I don't regret my training, I just feel disappointment".

While many of those interviewed felt "relief" following their resignation, at the time of his interview, John said he was "still very hostile to the people involved ... there are major problems ... I have four kids in Government schools, some of their teachers are very poor ... I would let my kids do anything ... collect the garbage, but I would discourage them from teaching".

b. **View of Education and the Department**

Resigned and working in a private school, Karen said that at present, she "wouldn't want to return, I have no desire to go back [to the Department]". Despite this, Karen believed that "education is really good" in N.S.W. and although she is at a private school, there are "the same rules, it is really the same system". As to how teaching had affected her, Karen stated
that "it is part of my life, my central being, it is inconceivable not to be a teacher, I have been a teacher for so long". Karen believed that teaching had made her self-confident and that she could get up and speak in front of people without any fear, although possibly this was more a function of her age, where, at the present stage of her life, Karen "no longer cares what other people think".

Karen did express concern about recent changes in Education in N.S.W. which she thought were "happening too quickly ... there is no support system around to help classroom teachers to implement the changes". She also disliked "teacher bashing in the media and the political interference in education in the last few years such as the Basic Skills tests which are a load of crap ... I have little faith in tests". Karen concluded by stating that "teaching can still be very exciting, although I resent the hours sometime, I'm only one person ... society expects far more of us now, we have to teach all the kids all the skills".

Resigned and working as a university lecturer, the only way that Judith would return to the Department was in some form of consultancy role, but not on contract, although ironically, in the past 12 months, still living in the same town as previously, Judith had been approached twice by the Department to sit on interview committees to select teachers for promotion, a situation which Judith finds "amusing, they sought me out".

Paula believed that her teaching experiences "put me off kids a bit and made me realise more the problems of families in society". She saw the teaching role "becoming more like social work, especially for Deputy Principals ... there is not enough counselling to get the kids right". She also believed that her teacher training "didn't prepare me for all the discipline problems" that she experienced in teaching. Paula felt that she will return to teaching some day, "but not at the moment", although there was no way that she would teach at an all male school, believing that a young woman faces too many difficulties in that situation and that "if you don't play sport, you have to win them over in other ways".

Resigned from her previous position and now working again with the Department as a special education teacher, Sue believed that:

the system is a killer. I had endless trouble ... They lost my file at the beginning, then I had two forced transfers ... the system is too big ... there was an incredible bureaucracy when I wanted to get a casual number. I waited five months then found out that they had lost my file again ... I only got my present job on hearsay, someone knew that I had just completed the vision course and I was offered a job ... This is my third Tuesday [at the special school] and they only gave me the 'entry on duty' form today ... It will probably be another four weeks before I am paid.

According to Bill, a resigned primary teacher, "things are changing too quickly in education" and the only way that he would go back to the Department would be as some kind of mathematics consultant. He could not be a classroom teacher again. Bill believed that teaching
"narrows your life and outlook unless you have a social life", although having his "own kids made me more aware". Bill recounted how he had recently returned to visit both his previous schools and that his visit "made me feel really sorry for teachers because of the conditions, the kids, it is a horrible bloody job". Bill was very critical of the Department and of "politicians and bureaucrats who try to justify themselves by changing something that is working well". Bill strongly believed that "the most important thing in education", despite the fact that recent teaching graduates are "good people", was that trainee teachers need to "get into classes quicker under classroom teachers [and] for much longer periods ... teachers' college taught me nothing".

Jan believed that "a lot" would have to change before she would return to the Department" and that she "really objects to people saying that what they are doing is for the good of kids ... it's really to cut costs ... penny pinching, it's lousy for kids, teachers and schools".

Wendy maintained that she "would not go back with the Department. I would do voluntary work with kids but not in schools where they are exploiting teachers. I have been offered special education jobs, one to one, but no way. I'm the sort of person who gives, and after one day would be there for a week". Wendy believed that teaching had "opened my eyes, working with problem kids in and out of school ... I've seen the real world and are more worldly wise", although there have been negative effects in that she now sees how "Principals and others in control feel threatened by people with ability ... Teachers also feel threatened by their pupils and try to squash them down, which is sad. They should be trying to bounce off them, their energy and creativity ... I've taught five years olds with abilities far greater than mine", although now, in business with her husband, Wendy finds it "very rewarding following my own creative abilities, not the kids".

Wendy had some final comments to make about education, including the fact that the Department:

should support teachers rather than bashing them down ... [and] needs to recognise stress ... There also needs to be recognition, financial rewards for good teachers who are being burnt out ... Good friends of mine stay home, they're drained, not from the classroom but from changes ... they can't keep up e.g. with computers. We are losing a lot of good talents, good teachers ... others are angry and frustrated but still in the system waiting for their payout ... [society is] putting emphasis on education or educators as a good investment for the future ... by not putting an emphasis on quality, there are going to be a lot of problems in the future ... I know a lot of teachers and I don't know one happy one ... I used to know many.

Doug, now working in a Catholic school, stated that he would only return to the Department if "someone high up gave me a call to say that 'there is a school where we really need you to be Principal' ... an appeal to the ego". He added that "there a lot of good teachers out there working very hard from day to day ... I am proud of the system and my 30 years in it, but I needed the pressures of the last few years to make me make the move to another system".
Doug closed by making the comment that the interview had been "a bit like Confession ... no one really wanted to know or listen before".

Now operating her own pre-school after resigning from Head Office, Kay stated that she:

- wouldn't want to go back to the Department ... there are too many changes. It is typical of N.S.W. to do everything so quickly ... no one knows where they are ... there is no transition time ... they need to get to the crux of the matter here which is educating students [in teacher training] ... they are not well prepared ... sometimes I think that they are a product of their environment ... too inflexible ... we pick up on other countries' ideas ... take the worst of them ... we are always five or 10 years too late ... we shouldn't listen to other countries ... it is such a shame ... education in N.S.W. has a lot going for it, we are just not doing it right.

When asked to state how she felt about teaching now, June said that she "still has a lot of respect, empathy, sympathy for teachers, but I don't ever want to go back". "Financial need" would be the "only thing" that would induce her to work again for the Department of School Education. She also noted how, despite her "belief in public education" she had reluctantly sent her children to private schools in recent years because of the lack of facilities and maintenance at the schools they had formerly attended. However, June's "biggest gripe was that too much time is spent on things that don't relate to the classroom ... bosses are not there now, not visible". June stated that she was "determined to continue to defend teachers ... for the most part they are not lazy ... they work such long hours ... young teachers are being thrown to the wolves ... they have enough trouble with discipline without having to write inventive creative programs ... they are being asked a heck of a lot ... it is really sad".

Sandra believed that there were "far too many trail blazing ideas with not enough research before or evaluation after" in education today and that there was "not enough sameness in schools for kids who change schools ... kids and teachers need more structured learning ... there are too many thrills and spills ... kids expect to be entertained and given what they want, not what they need ... the needs of kids are neglected".

Resigned and now a full-time student, Dianne, a former secondary Home Science Head Teacher, saw no future with the Department following the re-organisation of the secondary curriculum into "Key Learning Areas" which she believed disadvantaged both her subject area and herself. Of teaching, Dianne stated that she "still loves it, the whole process of education, learning ... I still believe that I will remain an educator because I am good at it ... my skills would be wasted if I didn't". When asked what would it would take to induce her to work again for the Department, Dianne said "My God" and paused for some time, before saying "probably, if I was offered some kind of long term consultancy work where my abilities were used and recognised for what they are ... if my growth was supported, e.g., if they paid me while I finished university". By way of final comment, Dianne said that "being two years away from it and with plenty of connections, I query how rapid the changes have been and what the long term effects will be ... how little the people involved have been ... I don't think the
changes will be all that positive”. Dianne was “concerned with the quality of people who have
gone” and had "a level of sadness for the kids ... change is inevitable, but the rapidity concerns
me. Why does it have to move so fast? What was so bad about it before, what I had done for
20 years? What is behind it? Perhaps history will tell”.

Attitude to Teaching

The analysis of the interview data gathered following the pilot study confirmed the existence of
the core category of "Attitude to Teaching". In fact, elements of this category were found in all
the categories identified in the grounded theory analysis of the interview data and each category
in turn could be seen to impinge upon the core category, which was thus found to be a dynamic
construct rather than static phenomenon. As a result, the key aspect or influence of change was
identified, change in any one of the sub-categories and categories being seen to impact upon
related sub-categories, other categories, and ultimately the core category.

In the context of the case study of the resigned teachers interviewed from one educational
system in particular period, if the scope and pace of change was sufficient, and if the
individuals concerned could or would not influence or adapt to this change, then it was found
that the "Resignation Decision" could be made, this and the following category of "Post
Resignation Condition" also being seen as impinging upon the core category.

Being such a central and crucial category, the "Attitude to Teaching" was seen to be shaped by
one's "Personal Background", "Pre-service Training"", and overall "Employment History".
"Society", "Departmental/School Policies and Procedures" and "Relationships With Others"
were also seen to influence "The Teaching Role", with both "Satisfaction" and
"Dissatisfaction", and possibly "Stress", arising from the performance of the teaching role in
this context.

All these forces thus were found to impinge upon one's attitude to teaching where, as stated
above, if the nature and scope of change could not be accommodated, the individual might
make the "Resignation Decision". Forces impinging upon the core category and the other
categories and sub-categories were found to be of both human and structural in nature, as
suggested by the literature review.

Because one's "Attitude to Teaching" was seen to change over time, the sub-categories of
"Prior to Training", "During Training", "Early [Teaching] Experiences" and "Changes During
Career" identified as a result of the analysis of the pilot study data were retained. In addition,
as a result of the analysis of the remaining interviews, the additional sub-category of "Result of
Resignation" was also identified.
Because, as mentioned above, the elements of the core category infuse all the sub-categories and categories identified and examined above, quotations to support the existence of the core category are found within all the other categories and sub-categories, and as a result, will not be repeated in this section. Probably the best and most complete evidence for the existence and importance of the core category can be found in the interview transcripts themselves in Appendix 4.

Table 9 which follows shows the modifications made as a result of the analysis of the remaining interviews to the categories and sub-categories which were originally identified from the open coding of the pilot interview transcripts and illustrated in Table 7.

Figure 5, which showed the relationship between the categories derived from axial coding of the pilot interview transcripts was found not to require modification as a result of the axial coding of the remaining interview transcripts. However, it was found that the category of "Stress", while seeming to be derived from "The Teaching Role" via "Teacher Dissatisfaction", was in fact also represented elsewhere in the form of stressors which have the potential to lead to teacher stress. For example, the stressors implicit in "The Teaching Role" could derive from other categories such as "Relationships With Others", and could thus lead in turn to stress. In this respect, the relationship represented in Figure 5 is based upon a conception of teacher stress as being a product, although stress and stressors are of course also the source of further stress, the workload of teachers being considered a stressor which could lead to mental stress and then possibly to physical stress, for example.

Further, it was acknowledged that there could be a degree of feedback from the category of "The Teaching Role" to some of the other categories such as "Relationships With Others" which were found to impinge upon it. Nevertheless, these minor points aside, the open and axial coding procedures applied to the remaining interview data were found to support both the categories and their relationship to the core category first identified in the analysis of the pilot study.

Following Table 9, the findings of the study proper are related to those of the pilot study, and in turn to the literature, and this is followed by modifications made to the grounded theory as a result of the analysis of the remaining interviews.
Table 9: Categories Arising From Open Coding of the Remaining Interview Transcripts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSONAL BACKGROUND</th>
<th>EMPLOYMENT HISTORY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Own School Experience</td>
<td>a) First Appointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) The Influence of Family and Others on Career Decisions</td>
<td>b) Transfers and Promotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Availability of Career Options</td>
<td>c) Leave and Previous Resignation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Other Employment Experience</td>
<td>d) Final Resignation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Early Opinion and Orientation to Teaching</td>
<td>e) Post Resignation Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) The Influence of Scholarships and Bonds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRE-SERVICE TRAINING</th>
<th>ATTITUDE TO TEACHING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Nature of Pre-Service Training</td>
<td>a) Prior to Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Perceived Benefits of Pre-Service Training</td>
<td>b) During Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Perceived Deficiencies of Pre-Service Training</td>
<td>c) Early Teaching Experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) Changes During Career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e) Result of Resignation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS</th>
<th>DEPARTMENTAL / SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Department of School Education</td>
<td>a) Appointment, Transfer and Leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) School Superiors</td>
<td>b) Changes to Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Other Teachers</td>
<td>c) Changes to School Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Students</td>
<td>d) Changes to Promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Parents and Community</td>
<td>e) Political Influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Family</td>
<td>f) Salary</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIETY</th>
<th>THE TEACHING ROLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Nature of</td>
<td>a) Classroom Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Expectations of Education and Teachers</td>
<td>b) Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Status of Teachers</td>
<td>c) Extracurricular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Criticism of Teachers and Schools</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEACHER SATISFACTION</th>
<th>TEACHER DISSATISFACTION</th>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEACHER STRESS</th>
<th>RESIGNATION DECISION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Physical</td>
<td>a) Building Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Mental</td>
<td>b) Critical Incident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Impact on Others</td>
<td>c) Impact on Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) Influence of Others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| POST RESIGNATION CONDITION | |
|-----------------------------| |
| a) Personal State | |
| b) View of Education and the Department of School Education | |
Relationship of the Study Findings to the Pilot Study

Introduction

The conduct of the remaining interviews and the analysis of the transcripts of these was closely based on the procedures utilised in the pilot study. Overall, despite the far greater amount of data available as a result of the 50 remaining interviews, there was a confirmation of the appropriateness of the methodology, and more specifically, of the findings of the coding processes and the grounded theory developed as a result of the pilot study.

The advice from Strauss and Corbin (1990) and others to trial the methodology with a pilot study before proceeding to the remaining data gathering and analysis was well taken in this particular case and is strongly advocated for the conduct of any similar project.

What follows is a more specific examination of the relationship between the findings of the pilot study and the study proper.

General Methodology

As mentioned previously, it was decided as a result of the pilot study not to modify the interview schedule, but in some cases to increase the emphasis given to certain questions or parts of questions. The way that the interview began with the researcher explaining the nature and purpose of the study, usually for the second time as this information had previously been provided when the subject contacted the researcher and the interview was arranged, helped to "break the ice", as did the use of simple closed questions to gather respondent variable data.

The method of then asking fairly general questions designed to take the subject chronologically through his or her career was seen to be beneficial in aiding reflexivity. Despite the deliberate avoidance of leading questions such as "What made you stressed?", "What do you think society expects of teachers and schools?" or "What do you think about recent changes to education?", it was remarkable just how much commonality there was in the responses to the open-ended questions, yet despite this commonality, each person interviewed was able to add depth and complexity to the discussion through reflection upon his or her own experiences and background.
The telephone interview itself was also found to be very effective, provided that certain conditions prevailed. To be specific, in most cases evening interviews when it was quiet and the subjects were relaxed and children had been put to bed, were generally found to be more effective than daytime interviews when the people concerned might have been at work, tending young children, or just arrived home and yet to "unwind". The setting in the subject's own home was found to be beneficial in relaxing the interviewee and it promoted an almost "stream of consciousness" effect which for some was obviously therapeutic, in that it enabled issues to be discussed and clarified. One subject even described the experience as being "like going to confession", while several others made the comment that "no one had listened before".

The use of an interview schedule which the researcher wrote directly upon with both marginal comments and direct quotations included was also found to be effective, as was the practice of periodically reading back to the subject his or her recorded responses. It is purely a personal preference, but the researcher found this method superior to audio taping, as taping tends to make the researcher more passive and in some cases, the subject more inhibited. With manual transcription, there is more onus on the researcher to think about the responses and to identify and clear up discrepancies or misunderstood aspects of the discussion as they arise. Reading back responses is also a check on the validity of what has been recorded, while providing the subject with the opportunity to think more deeply and add to previous responses if necessary. The necessity suggested by the literature for prompts such as "hm", "right", "could you tell me more about that", was confirmed, as was the advice for the interviewer not to enter into debate, but to simply be a facilitator.

As suggested by the literature, it was necessary to write up the interview transcripts as soon as possible before finer detail became blurred and while direct quotations could still be recalled. The interviews themselves typically took from 45 to 60 minutes, although several took longer than this, the interview with Ross, for example, taking 80 minutes as he reflected over his long career with the Department of School Education. In most cases it was possible to avoid having to interview more than one person per day, although on one occasion, due to circumstances, three subjects were interviewed, one in the afternoon and two in the evening. Given that each interview took up to two hours to transcribe, this sort of situation is best avoided.

It was interesting that even when the researcher was tired after a day's work and perhaps not looking forward to the interview later that evening, in every case, once the interview had commenced, this fatigue vanished as the interesting story of the subject unfolded. Thus, the interviews conducted enabled the researcher to enter and understand the lives of 50 individuals.

However, in two cases it was necessary to conduct personal interviews. Joseph, an overseas teacher with a non-English speaking background, contacted the researcher, as did his wife on another occasion, and it was extremely difficult for the parties concerned to understand what
was being said. Fortunately, Joseph lived only a suburb away from the researcher's workplace, and a personal interview was able to be conducted, although this too proved to be difficult. In the other case, Michael, a former high school Principal, declined to be interviewed by telephone, but he too was close to the researcher's workplace, and so a very valuable interview was able to take place.

Overall, the experience of the researcher with the telephone interview was a positive one, and the method enabled teachers from all over the state to be interviewed, a response that would have not been possible if only face-to-face interviews had been conducted.

The Results of Open Coding

The extensive array of concepts or phenomena identified as a result of the line by line coding of the interview transcripts in the pilot study (Chapter IV, Table 6) were found to present in the remaining interviews, although as a result of the far greater amount of data available and the additional phenomena identified as a result of the remaining interviews and the analysis of these, there was modification to the categories and sub-categories originally formulated in the pilot study (Chapter IV, Table 7), giving rise to a more detailed breakdown of categories (Chapter V, Table 9).

The Results of Axial and Selective Coding

The process of axial coding whereby the categories and sub-categories were related was conducted in the pilot study and gave rise to the schema illustrated in Figure 5 (Chapter IV). There was no modification made to this as a result of the axial coding of the data provided by the remaining interviews, although it was recognised that stress was both a cause and effect, as stress arising from relationships with others, for example, can in turn feed into the teaching role, leading in turn to greater stress. This possibility was therefore recognised as a result of the axial coding process, but no change was made to the schema developed as a result of the pilot study, despite extensive testing against the additional interview data.

Selective coding followed the axial coding processes, and involved the selection of the core category. Once again, as implied by the retention of Figure 5, there was a confirmation of the existence of the core category of "Attitude to Teaching", which was seen to occupy a central position in the schema and to be a construct or product of the other categories and sub-categories, and thus the result of change in any of these.
The Grounded Theory and Its Corollary

Once again, as a result of the general confirmation of the pilot study, the draft grounded theory and its corollary were also largely confirmed after testing against the data gathered in the remaining interviews. A more sophisticated version of each are given below with modifications from that originally put forward in Chapter IV.

The following theory concerning teacher resignation is proposed as a result of the conduct of the study:

A teacher's resignation decision is a result of a critical point in that teacher's "Attitude to Teaching" being reached.

The "Attitude to Teaching" is a product or construct of the interaction of the following broad factors:

- The "Personal Background" of the individual
- The "Pre-Service Training" undertaken
- The overall "Employment History" of the teacher
- The nature and demands of "Society"
- The "Departmental/School Policies and Procedures" in place
- The teacher's "Relationship With Others"
- The teacher's "Teaching Role"
- The "Teacher Satisfaction" gained by the individual
- The "Teacher Dissatisfaction" also felt by the individual
- The "Stress" experienced by the teacher

The "Attitude to Teaching" held by a teacher is thus subject to forces of change of both a human and structural nature which might impact upon any of the above mentioned factors.

Failure of a teacher to have input to change, to be committed to that change, to be involved in its implementation and to be assisted in both a personal and material sense in making such change can result in a critical point in the teacher's "Attitude to Teaching" being reached if either the pace of change or its dimensions are sufficient enough, at which time the "Resignation Decision" is made.

Following the "resignation Decision", the individual's "Attitude to Teaching" can undergo further change.

If the above theory holds true in the case of resignation, then the following corollary concerning teacher retention or persistence is proposed:

If teachers are to be retained, then the pace and scope of change needs to be carefully considered by those in positions of authority. Teachers need to understand the reasons for change, to have input to change, to be committed to change, and to be assisted in its implementation.

Where change is outside the influence of Governments, Departments of Education or schools, then its impact on schools needs to be carefully considered and modified or limited if possible.

Where change is of a personal or human nature, teachers need to be assisted to understand the nature of this change and its causes and to limit its harmful effects, where possible, through support by educational employers and others.
If teachers are to be retained, there needs to be careful monitoring of teachers' "Attitude to Teaching" and of any reasons for changes in this.

Efforts also need to be made to reduce teachers' dissatisfaction and increase their satisfaction through attention to the factors responsible for each.

In the case of this particular study, the category of "Departmental/School Policies and Procedures" appeared to have a great deal of influence upon the other categories, including the central category of "Attitude to Teaching". However, changes in the other categories also played their part in ultimately influencing the "Resignation Decision". It would be overly simplistic to attribute the resignation of those interviewed to this one factor alone, as resignation has occurred in the past in times of relative stability in so far as educational change is occurred, and thus, for any individual, the total range of categories and factors illustrated in Table 9 and Figure 5 need to be considered, and addressed, if teachers are to be retained.

It should not be implied from the above that the study proposes a panacea to eliminate teacher resignation. What is does propose is that the total issue of change, both human and structural, is an important one that needs to be addressed, but that teacher resignation remains a complex issue and that the "Attitude to Teaching" held by any individual is the product or construct of the complex interplay of a variety factors, some of which are largely out of the control of teachers, schools, Departments of Education and governments.

Concluding Comments

Before turning to the proposed model of teacher persistence and the specific recommendations arising from the study to promote teacher persistence within the N.S.W. Department of School Education in Chapter VI and the final conclusions and implications of the study in Chapter VII, a return is made to the literature which played such an important part in informing and directing the study. Various comments have been made to this point on aspects of the study that have tended to confirm, deny or further develop matters raised in the literature which were seen to have some relevance to the central phenomenon of teacher resignation. This is explored in a more systematic fashion below.
Relationship Between the Study and Previously Completed Work

Introduction

The intention of this section is to now return to the literature which as mentioned above, shaped and gave direction to the study. It can be seen from the discussion below how the study tended to confirm much of the previous work carried out in this area, although where new insights have been gained or the literature seemingly refuted, this is mentioned, as are areas where it is thought that further work remains to be done. The latter point is taken up further in Chapter VII.

The Teaching Context

The literature review had revealed that the period from the late 1960s to the present both in Australian and overseas had been characterised by innovation and change in education. This observation was strongly confirmed by the findings of the study where changes to educational structures, procedures and curricula were of great concern to those interviewed.

The problems posed by increased post-compulsory retention were also noted by those interviewed, with some questioning both the wisdom of governments in advocating the Higher School Certificate or its equivalent for all students and the suitability of existing subjects and courses for the students now being increasingly retained in secondary schools.

The emphasis upon educational management noted by Beare (1989) and others was also noted and questioned by those interviewed, with the observation being made that schools can not and should not be run as businesses. A key concern was that such change was the result of the politicisation of education and economic considerations, rather than a desire to improve teaching and learning conditions and opportunities.

One aspect of the context of teaching not adequately explored by the literature was the question of educational change management. Some of those interviewed commented that many of the recent changes in N.S.W. education were actually desirable, but that it was the manner and pace of the implementation of such change that was of concern, coupled with the criticism that such change implied. It would seem that educational change is one area where greater research is still needed, and more specifically, research on the impact of educational change in N.S.W. in recent times would appear to be warranted before too much further change takes place, a
concern noted by Eltis (1992). Unfortunately, however, the literature found no evidence to suggest that the pace or scope of change in Australian education showed any sign of easing, nor did those interviewed believe this to be the case.

There was a remarkable confirmation of the findings of the literature in regards to the gender balance, age, qualifications, position, salary and experience of the Australian teaching force, with those interviewed closely fitting the national profile in the above respects, although it is not claimed that those interviewed were representative in the positivist sense of the word.

The literature had suggested that the status of teachers in the general community had declined over time, and this was confirmed by the study, with those interviewed, particularly the more experienced, describing how teachers had enjoyed a higher reputation and were subject to less criticism in earlier times. Some teachers interviewed went so far as to say that they were reluctant to reveal their occupation in public, for fear of the reaction this provoked from non-teachers.

The literature had also suggested that public confidence in education had declined and that expectations for teachers and schools had actually increased. This too was strongly confirmed by the study, despite the fact that there is little firm evidence for a decline in educational standards in Australia (Schools Council, 1990: 129-131).

Physical teaching conditions had been suggested by the literature as being a potential source of teacher dissatisfaction and possibly resignation. This finding was not wholly supported by the findings of the study, where it appeared that teachers were prepared to endure unfavourable conditions provided that this did not detract too much from their role, although in a number of cases where conditions were particularly dangerous with bolts protruding from walls and leaking power points in a library with glass walls which faced the sun, for example, physical conditions could certainly contribute to teachers' stress and even physical illness.

The literature had also suggested that school "climate" or "tone" could have an influence on teachers, and this was confirmed by the study with teachers speaking of "happy" schools and other schools were the staff were depressed and divided. This matter is further explored under teacher morale below.

Overall, it was found that the findings of the literature in regards to the context of teaching tended to be strongly confirmed by the study, save for the area of educational change where N.S.W. had appeared to lag behind international and national trends, but then attempted to change one of the largest educational systems in the world in a relatively short period without adherence to generally accepted principles of change management and policy implementation.
Teacher Morale

The issue of morale tended to fall within the core category of "Attitude to Teaching" developed as a result of the grounded theory process. However, the uncertainty surrounding this phenomenon highlighted in the literature was also confirmed by the study, with morale being found to be intertwined with such aspects as teacher satisfaction.

As suggested by the literature, morale was found to be both an individual and group response to a set of factors and to be both a cause and effect, in that a downward or upward spiral could be set in motion. Morale was also seen to vary across individuals working in the same situation. The literature had also suggested the importance of leadership to morale, and this too was confirmed, with a "happy" school being changed quite quickly by the arrival of a new executive teacher, or by an "unhappy" teacher with seemingly low morale being revitalised when transferred to a new school situation with a more effective and sympathetic supervisor. A lack of congruence between individual and group morale was also found to be problematic, as the literature had suggested.

The existence of Smith's (1990) three essential elements or factors of morale which he termed "cohesive pride", "leadership synergy" and "personal challenge" was also confirmed by the study, although as mentioned above, a separate category for morale was not developed as it appeared to be an element of many of the categories developed, particularly the core category.

The necessity for approaches to improving morale such as those proposed by Andrew, et.al., (1985: 30-31) was also supported by the findings of the study, as was the importance to morale of the leadership style of the principal that Styants (1976: 173-174) and others had identified.

However, as the Schools Council had suggested (1990: 19-20), the link between low morale and resignation could not be accurately confirmed by the study, as some of those who resigned were still being satisfied and stimulated by their role, but their attitude to teaching had reached a point where they desired to teach or work elsewhere. In actual fact, there was some evidence to suggest that those who resigned might have been more committed to education than others who had, for whatever reasons, decided to remain with the Department. However for others, their personal morale and the morale of others around them was an influence on their resignation.

Teacher Stress and Burnout

The literature had indicated that stress was a fact of life for the teacher, and this was confirmed by the study with virtually all of those interviewed describing their sources of stress and
describing a general pattern of increasing stress leading up to their resignation. In addition, a number of those interviewed described occasions on which they believed they had experienced burnout due to unabated stress.

Generally, control (see Otto, 1986: 39) was found to be an important aspect of stress, in that matters over which those interviewed had little or no control were found to be more stressful.

Otto (1986: 2) had also considered the matter of whether teaching had become more stressful over time. Certainly, the anecdotal evidence provided by the more experienced teachers interviewed tended to support this, but what could not be discerned was whether this was a result of the aging of these individuals or other factors.

Some writers on stress (see Brimm, 1983: 64; Dunham, 1984: 86-92) had promulgated the notion of a "performance curve", where a certain amount of stress was advantageous to performance, and where increasing stress enabled an individual to reach his or her performance peak, past which, if stress continued, performance then declined and burnout threatened. This view tended to be supported by the study, with some of those interviewed speaking of an increased workload and other pressures that they dealt with, but then found that as stress increased, performance declined, and that this decline was accompanied with increased physical symptoms of stress such as lack of appetite and difficulty in sleeping. For executive teachers, failing to "get on top of" their increasing workload was a common source of dissatisfaction and stress.

Of the causes of stress proposed by the literature (see Brimm, 1983; Dunham, 1984: 19-75), these are usually taken to be role conflict or ambiguity, work overload, inadequate compensation, interpersonal conflict, and increased administrative responsibilities. The study confirmed the existence of all the above sources of stress, although inadequate compensation was not present to the degree of the other factors. On the other hand, role conflict or ambiguity was seen to be a growing problem for those with administrative responsibilities in schools, with those in this situation describing how they had attempted to balance teaching and the welfare of students with educational administration and management, while educational leadership within the school also suffered. Those in Head Office positions pointed to a decline in collegiality and the growth of a climate of mistrust with people undertaking tasks and "knifing others in the back" to further their career, rather than working for the good of education.

In addition, the study found that pupils' failure to behave and work was a significant source of stress for less experienced teachers, while increased administrative responsibilities was more likely to affect more experienced teachers. A further source of stress not generally recognised by the literature which the study revealed was the issue of change and adjustment to change.
The issues of forced transfers and professional isolation within the classroom that Louden (1987) and others had identified were also found to result in stress for some of those interviewed.

A further source of stress arising from the study was that of having to compromise one's standards, which some (see Miller, 1979; Wilson, 1962) had pointed to.

The issue of stress and gender which some writers had considered (see Otto, 1986: 139-141), was also highlighted by the study, with a number of female teachers experiencing stress resulting from conflict with male superiors and because of perceived discrimination in regard to such matters as promotion. Several female teachers also spoke of the difficulties they encountered with sexual suggestiveness and disrespect from male students, particularly where these students were from a different cultural background.

Turning to the methods of coping with stress, those interviewed did not seem to have a great deal of success in this regard, with some seeking medical advice for physical and mental symptoms of stress. However, despite these largely palliative measures, the bulk of those interviewed simply endured their stress, with some taking periods of leave or resigning when stress became too severe. There was no evidence to suggest that those interviewed had been assisted by school or Departmental superiors to overcome their stress, let alone identify and deal with its causes.

Overall, what the study achieved in regards to stress and burnout was to confirm much of the findings of the literature, although as noted in Chapter II, the area remains one characterised by uncertainty and disagreement. What was resoundingly confirmed was the reality of teacher stress, and in some cases, burnout, for those interviewed in the study. Much remains to be done in the area of teacher stress, however, if the experiences of those interviewed in the study are of any guide.

**Teacher Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction**

There was strong confirmation in the study of the generally accepted sources of teacher satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The work of Herzberg, et al., (1959), Sergiovanni (1967), Holdaway (1978) and Kaufman (1984) had suggested that satisfaction and dissatisfaction were the results of largely separate sets of factors. This was confirmed in the study with teacher satisfaction being found to be more classroom centred and revolving around the work itself, while teacher dissatisfaction was found to be more school and system centred and revolved around the conditions of work such as policies, procedures and administration.
The major sources of satisfaction for those interviewed in the study were personal achievement, pupil achievement, the "reaching" of students in some way, and recognition. Additional sources of satisfaction, as suggested by the literature, were favourable relationships and responsibility. Sources of dissatisfaction for those interviewed were poor relationships with superiors, school and Departmental policies and procedures, administrative workload and matters such as forced transfers and being declared "unsatisfactory" or "of concern". Criticism from society, increased expectations, rising student retention and the politicisation of education were also sources of dissatisfaction.

However, what was revealed by the study which the literature had not mentioned was the importance of context specific sources of dissatisfaction, which in the case of this study, included the changes to education brought about in New South Wales since the late 1980s, and in particular, the role of the former Minister for Education, Dr Metherell, in these changes.

Teacher Resignation

A fundamental aim of the study was to gain greater understanding of teacher resignation from a human or personal perspective, and as such, it did not seek to replicate other more quantitative and in some cases, larger scale projects.

It was found in the literature review that there was a degree of uncertainty concerning the issue of teacher resignation and associated issues such as teacher morale and the influence of teacher salary levels. It is hoped that this study has gone some way to reducing some of this uncertainty, although it must be recognised that any case study such as this must be placed in context and thus its relevance to the wider occurrence of the phenomenon must not be overstated.

Turning to the literature in a more specific fashion, some such as Hewett (1990) had attempted to link teachers' low relative salaries with resignation rates. While this particular study tended to cast some doubt on this view, the comments about context noted above need to be taken in consideration. Firstly, the study took place during a recession, and the drop in resignation reported by Garcia (1992) for 1991 may well have reflected this. Secondly, there were significant pay rises for teachers during the period immediately preceding the study, and this might have influenced the number and type of teachers who resigned during 1991, and thus, this study should not be seen as effectively refuting the influence of salary on teacher resignation. Further, as mentioned above, even if salary was not a major influence on most teachers who resign, salary obviously will have a significant influence on those entering teaching, both in terms of the quantity and quality of teachers attracted to pre-service training.
An important finding of the present study was that the resignation decision was indeed a complex one, and thus earlier simplistic attempts to ascribe teacher resignation to a single factor or to equate the reasons for resignation with the destinations of resigned teachers have been called into question by the results of the study.

The literature had pointed towards the issue of "hidden resignation", a term coined in this particular study, to describe the situation where teachers might take some form of leave to have a break from teaching or to explore other employment avenues. Such persons would not be counted in official resignation rates, the implication being that effective resignation might be higher than the official figures available. Obviously, once the leave entitlement of these people expires, they are forced to either return to the Department or resign, at which time they would then be counted in the official resignation figures for that period. The study highlighted a number of cases when such "hidden resignation" had occurred, and it was found to be particularly prevalent with the female teachers interviewed.

The literature had also pointed to the importance of the first few years of teaching on teacher resignation. The study found that the average age of those interviewed was over 40, but of those in their first year of teaching, they did experience some significant problems of adjustment, as the literature had suggested. In fact, all those interviewed were asked to describe their early teaching experiences and it was common for this to be a stressful time, which, although most eventually overcame these difficulties, did point towards a greater need for support for beginning teachers, whether they be straight from training, former mature aged students, those returning to teaching after a break in service or teachers coming to the system from overseas or interstate.

Bruce and Cacioppe (1989) had found that a major reason for teacher resignation was lack of competence of the school principal, and while this was not true in a majority of cases in the present study, it was a commonly cited cause of teacher dissatisfaction. Certainly, for some of those interviewed, the lack of competence or interpersonal skills of their principals was a significant factor in their resignation.

A number of studies (see Diamond and Borthwick, 1989; Schlechty and Vance, 1981; Wilkins and Korschgen, 1989) had sought to test the view that the "best and brightest" were more likely to resign from teaching. While it is not possible to confirm or deny this given the data available in the present study, on a purely subjective level, the majority of those interviewed did impress with their professionalism and what they had achieved in education in addition to their routine teaching duties. It was found that just under one half of those interviewed had formally upgraded their qualifications by the completion of a degree or post-graduate diploma, and this evidence might support the contention that the more able are more likely to resign, as might the
fact that the bulk of those interviewed appeared to experience little difficulty in gaining re-
employment, despite the high unemployment of the time.

A number of writers (see Cawthron, et.al., 1980; Quong, 1991; Watson, et.al., 1989 & 1991) had considered the issue of context and teacher induction, resignation and persistence. Broadly, the concerns raised by these writers were underlined by the study, with the problematic situation of the least experienced teachers being posted to the more unfavourable areas of the state and enduring forced transfers and disruptions in their first years of teaching being a common occurrence. In particular, the concern that measures to staff the less popular areas of the state rely too much on "deficit" rather that "challenge" models (Watson, et.al., 1989) tended to be supported by the study, with the teachers interviewed typically having "done their time" in less popular areas until they could obtain a posting to a "better" area.

Other issues with influence on teacher resignation raised by other writers which the study basically supported included the bureaucratic nature of the system which tended to stifle creativity, the lack of teacher involvement in the decision making process, the administrative workload of teachers, the lack of recognition and reward for teacher achievement, inadequate programs of preparation and induction, the low status of the career classroom teacher, the need for women to raise children and the disruption to career planning that this caused, social attitudes about teaching (see Cory, in Stinnett, Ed., 1970: 31-60), the fact that change in schools often results from external pressure and that this pressure must be great before change will occur, that teachers' unions often put industrial before educational goals, calls for longer and more professionally relevant teacher pre-service training and that the fact that in education, administration tends to be more highly valued than classroom teaching (see Reiss, in Stinnett, Ed., 1970: 13-30).

Concerns that other writers had expressed such as the draining nature of teachers' work despite the supposed short hours and long holidays (see Seldon, in Stinnett, Ed., 1970), the need for teachers and schools to cater for "non-academic" post-compulsory students and the problems that this can cause (see anon, Education Monitor, 1990: 2-3) and the fact that there appears to be no relationship between teacher productivity and salary (Marlow and Hierlmeier, 1987: 10) also tended to be supported by the findings of the study.

To conclude this return to the literature on teacher resignation, it has been noted how aspects of the literature related to the phenomenon were confirmed by the study, which demonstrated that the resignation of teachers is the result of the complex interplay of a number of human and structural factors. It is hoped that the schema developed as a result of the grounded theory research process and the model of teacher persistence and recommendations derived from this will go some way towards reducing the uncertainty that presently surrounds the phenomenon of teacher resignation.
Research on Retaining Teachers

The literature had identified a number of incentives which have been advocated in the belief that they could increase the retention of teachers. The general issue of salary has been raised above. Another issue is that of merit pay (see Lines, 1984). A number of those interviewed in the study made the point that they resented earning the same or less than colleagues who apparently did less. However, many of those interviewed also expressed dissatisfaction with procedures to assess "merit" for promotion, and so the question of accurately determining merit amongst teachers remains to be resolved. While the potential of merit pay and merit promotion is not in doubt, the question of objectively determining merit certainly is.

The recognition of teachers who choose to remain within the classroom through their designation as "Advanced Skills Teachers" or the like has also been advocated by some and has in fact been introduced in most Australian educational systems, but the study also cast some doubt over this measure, with anecdotal evidence being provided of how in some cases the "wrong" people had been selected for this position and how Advanced Skills Teachers in schools had been "overloaded" with responsibility when in fact they were receiving little financial reward or time to fulfil their role.

What the study did underline was the importance of recognition to teachers' satisfaction and how this was not perceived to be forthcoming in the New South Wales Department of School Education, which tended to be impersonal and to take teachers for granted, according to the perceptions of those interviewed.

More effective pre-service training and teacher induction had also been advocated in the literature and the results of the study strongly supported these calls, with almost universal criticism of the pre-service training that those interviewed had experienced and with most recalling how their first year of teaching was characterised by overwork, problems with pupil discipline, and other problems associated with adjusting to teaching such as establishing collegial relationships and meeting community, parent and student expectations.

Within the issue of teacher induction, mentoring has been advocated (see Haipt, 1990) and the results of the study tended to underscore the potential of this measure, with some teachers describing the very positive benefits that they had gained from a relationship with a more experienced, empathetic colleague in their early years of teaching. Clearly, a formalised mentoring role has potential and should be seen as complementing, rather than replacing the more traditional supervisory roles within schools.
A number of those interviewed also expressed the desire to have spent longer and more regular periods in schools prior to beginning teaching full-time, and thus the study could be seen to support the concept of internship, although this needs to be considered in the light of the considerable criticism of pre-service training and any restructuring of this that occurs within teacher training institutions.

To conclude the examination of this aspect of the literature, the study found that teacher retention needs to be addressed in a systematic way. At present, much store has been put in the new "merit" promotion procedures and the recent salary increases awarded to teachers, but the study highlighted real concerns about the efficacy of the new promotion procedures coupled with the negative impacts that these procedures can have upon teachers, schools and learning outcomes, and as was seen earlier, salary did not appear to be a major factor in the resignation of those interviewed. Not all teachers desire promotion and thus more needs to be done to retain teachers than just to increase salary, introduce Advanced Skills Teachers, or introduce promotion on "merit". It is hoped that this present study has provided direction for some of these needed measures.

Reflections on the Literature

The review of the literature had enabled literally hundreds of variables potentially affecting teacher resignation and retention to be identified, which in turn pointed to the adoption of a particular research methodology. The fact that so many variables were identified (see Tables 1-5) was indicative of the uncertainty surrounding the phenomenon of teacher resignation.

As a result of the study, it is hoped that some of this uncertainty has been removed through the examination of teacher resignation from a more personal and human perspective.

What follows is a model of teacher persistence which can be seen to have been derived both from the literature and the methodological approach it suggested and informed and from the study that ultimately took place. This is followed by the general conclusions of the study and its implications for other educational systems and providers.