

CHAPTER FOUR  
METHOD OF CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH AND  
ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The researcher adopted a naturalistic approach to this study, with use being made of case studies which focused on the roles of and issues faced by the personnel under study. The research project was considered by the author to be one of discovery; the aim was to explore an entirely new area and to demonstrate that the given group of respondents possessed a number of professional development needs that could be assessed and expressed.

The Design of the Research

In designing this research it was considered by the author that the external validity of the study would be high as the sampling technique would be random, therefore allowing possible generalisations beyond the respondents, based on similarities of environment and roles assumed. The construct validity of the study was also considered to be high as the data collection instruments were designed to collect data relevant to each of the hypotheses posed. Additionally, the respondents' interest was considered to be high as the research related directly to their daily duties and their possible future career paths. The possibility of the construct of disinterest being increased by

factors such as fear or a lack of motivation was considered to be low as the researcher, whilst an intruder, was not representative of any investigative body that could utilise data negatively to affect the respondents. On the contrary, the researcher represented a group that would utilise information to provide additional professional development activities to assist the D.P.s participating.

#### The Selection Of Participants

Participants for this study were selected from the total group of newly-appointed D.P.s to the region during Term Four, 1988. It was not possible to overcome completely the problems associated with selective sampling. In selecting the respondents for this study, the researcher identified twenty-seven newly-appointed D.P.s who represented the total population from which the respondent group could be drawn. From this population, a stratum of D.P.s who were in a variety of school locations and circumstances (as perceived by the researcher as a result of experience in the region) was chosen.

To identify the stratum of D.P.s to be respondents, the researcher used a combination of accidental (first cases identified) and quota (taking of a given number) sampling in a simple random sample. As it was known that some schools had one or two D.P.s and that these schools might yield relevant information with regard to the effect environment has on Professional development needs, the researcher drew the names of

schools with newly-appointed D.P.s at random. As the project needed to be kept manageable, the author chose to select a maximum of ten respondents, but the last selection yielded a school with two D.P.s. This resulted in a total of eleven DPs being selected, representing eight different school environments.

The author intended the selection process would involve participation of the first D.P.s appointed to each of ten of the total eleven inspectorates within the region. The researcher was aware that the selection process would not allow generalising across inspectorates or the region. This 'desired' approach was not successful as, in some inspectorates, there were no newly-appointed D.P.s. As a result, the researcher conducted a random sample by selecting schools with newly-appointed D.P.s regardless of their location.

### Data Collection

The data collection strategy involved a pre and post 'test' period and utilised interviews, questionnaires and recording of issues confronted by the participants. The three different methods of data collection were used to ensure that it was possible to check the internal validity of the findings. Interviews were used to allow personal contact to occur, to enable follow-up of areas requiring clarification and to explore areas of interest in an open-ended way. Questionnaires

allowed respondents to reflect on issues and provided a cross-reference to the other data sources. The completion of the 'critical issue' diary provided a formative data collection source of use to both the researcher and respondents. The reason for adopting this three-pronged approach was to avoid excessive intrusion into the natural environment of the respondents whilst still being able to collect data concerning their interactions with others. Additionally, it was considered that the three sources of data would provide a means of cross-referencing various facets of the data collected. It was considered by the researcher that the short period of time over which the study was conducted, the possible changes that could have occurred within respondents, the study itself and the instruments used, would all in some small way affect the research. Nevertheless, it was felt that the data collected would not be adversely affected by any of these.

As an aspect of this project, the researcher utilised a case study approach that focused on critical issues experienced by the respondents. The research began prior to the respondents taking up duty in their new positions to enable perceptions and facts about roles to be collected. The timing of the data collection phase, because it focussed on the first term of the appointment to a new position, might contain issues that the D.P. might be confronted by for the first time and for which the new-appointee would have had minimum opportunity to prepare.

### Data Interpretation

The researcher utilised an approach that allowed D.P.s to generate their own responses as a reaction to interviewer prompts. Respondents were involved in applying self-ratings in domains that were outlined by the researcher. The self-rating nature of the research enabled the respondents to express their beliefs, feelings and attitudes very freely.

In interpreting the data collected, it was necessary to consider the roles and prior professional development of the new-appointees because these two factors were considered to have had relevance to the D.P.s' ability to react to and deal with the issues that confronted them. Additionally, it was expected that the role responsibilities of the respondents would be vital contributory factors that would need to be considered when attempting to identify the professional development needs of the respondents.

As the study was exploratory, it was considered that the case study approach would also enable a wealth of data to be collected which may yield information that would indicate the need for further study of aspects of D.P.s and their operations. Additionally, as the researcher was himself a D.P., permanently appointed to a class, there was only a minimal opportunity to spend time in the situations under study in the data collection phase.

It was expected that a 'core' of issues would emerge from the data collected by virtue of their 'commonality'. A sample of eleven respondents was considered to constitute a representative sample for the region and inspectorates, whilst still allowing the qualitative case study approach to be used. Additionally, it was possible to compare school environments and to make inferences based on the elements common to situations and the operations of D.P.s within them. It was considered that it may also have been possible at the analysis stage to analyse the relationships between responsibilities and actions commensurate with the role being performed or between various pre and in-service professional development activities.

In utilising a combination of data collection techniques, it was considered that it would be possible to gain high quality data and that the researcher could interact in a way that would permit further exploration of various points with the respondent throughout the study. It was also thought that the researcher could clarify and probe responses and control, to some extent, the context of responses.

#### Method Of Data Collection

To maximise the validity of this research, triangulation was used. The following points outline the comparative techniques used and the triangulations that were made:

1-in the area of the respondents, data elicited from the Principals, the issues confronted and the D.P.s was compared;

2-in the area of the methods used to obtain data from each of the respondent groups, questionnaires, an issues diary and interviews were implemented;

3-in examining the factors investigated, to evaluate the reliability and replicability of findings, data from the issues study, roles outlined and the professional development of the D.P.s were compared; and

4-in an attempt to confirm data and make recommendations, information from newly-appointed D.P.s, Principals and the Senior Education Office (Staff Development) were compared.

#### The Temporal Progression Of The Study

Although the researcher was constantly involved in cross-referencing and analysing data, the following temporal progression outlines the projected course of the study. This progression subsequently became the actual record of implementation of the research method.

##### A-Pre-Implementation of Data Collection

1-Application to U.N.E. and approval of thesis proposal

2-Application to N.S.W. Dept. of Education to undertake research and for funding.

3-Notification to District Inspectors that approval to undertake research had been granted and that D.P.s in their inspectorates were to be involved. The researcher contacted them to seek their approval to include the D.P.s concerned.

4-Enlistment of participants (D.P.s) as appointments were

notified (telephone contact followed by interview to explain the research)

5-Enlisting assistance of Principals and District Inspectors

6-Initial D.P. interview-survey of previous professional development preparation for the position to be fulfilled.

7-Interviews/surveys of: a)D.P.s

b)Principals

-to identify role expectations

-perceived professional development needs for position

to be fulfilled.

#### B-Implementation Of Data Collection and Analysis

1-Wks 1 and 2-Survey and Interview of D.P.s and Principals to establish any role negotiations undertaken and any variations between anticipated and actual roles

2-Critical Issue Case Studies-Each D.P. kept a daily record of critical issues for one term. Diaries were mailed to researcher at the end of each week.

3-Analysis of case studies-classification and validation of issues into categories at the conclusion of each week. Where necessary, clarification of issues was undertaken via telephone. Issues were analysed in terms of significance, category, role expectations and aspects of professional development needed to satisfactorily address the issues. The aim during this stage of the study was to 'reduce' the data being collated and to formatively evaluate both the process and the data.



4-Wks 5 and 10-Interviews with participating D.P.s and Principals to discuss and further investigate changes in roles and situations.

5-Throughout the collection of data phase there were regular consultations with the Regional Staff Development Consultant.

#### C-Post Data Collection-Term Two

1-Collated results, with analyses of findings and recommended topics suggested for inclusion in a school-based professional development course circulated to respondents for comment and prioritising.

2-Recommendations for the priority list of areas in need of treatment via a professional development course discussed with relevant departmental personnel (i.e. Senior Education Officer-Professional Development; Assistant Regional Director and members of the Primary Executive Development Committee.).

3-Thesis report finalised, compiled and submitted to U.N.E.

4-Evaluation of activities, funding, etc. that directly involved the Education Department completed, documented and submitted to the Directorate of Studies, along with a copy of the thesis and a letter of request to undertake activities to disseminate an outline of the findings and recommendations for in-school inservice to Principals in Metropolitan South West Region (after submission of the course outline to regional inservice committee).

5-Possible informal meeting of participating D.P.s

to establish a 'contact group' that will be able to provide support and further professional development ideas to members.

#### Questionnaire Formulation and Administration

Questions asked were open-ended. This approach to questioning was employed to enable the researcher to gain any possible 'fine shades' of ideas and to provide the respondents with satisfaction and motivation. An unfortunate, negative result for the researcher was concerned with the coding of data. As the open-ended questions posed led to a wide variety of responses it was necessary to analyse the responses and then to group them. This was a time-consuming and difficult task. Throughout interviews and sessions where clarification and further probing were carried out, the author made copious notes from which the reported data has been drawn.

#### The Role of the Critical Issue Diary

In proposing that the respondents utilise a critical issue diary, the researcher wished to give the respondents an opportunity to record issues of an important nature and, at the same time, to raise the consciousness of the respondents to ensure that they were aware of the need to stay alert and to take cognisance of critical issues. At the time of introducing the project to the respondents, the researcher outlined the possibilities that the interpretation and utilisation of the

results of this research held for the self-development of the individual D.P.s.

In an action research project, Tripp (in Hughes, 1987:215) stresses that the development of a critical consciousness is crucial as it is the key to a desire to change and hence to professional development. The researcher intended to raise the D.P.s' awareness of this approach to development, whilst ensuring that they were recording significant issues that could be referred to at a later date.

It was hoped that the development of the diary would cause the D.P.s to reflect upon their practices. It was also expected that these reflections would lead to the gaining of insights into their needs. The documentation of the diary was considered by the author to be a systematic way to record issues that could be used to imply possible areas of need for professional development. At the same time, the diary would provide a record that the respondents could refer to in discussions and which would stimulate 'connections' to link possible areas of professional development needs.

#### The Data Collation and Analysis Method.

As this study was exploratory, it was necessary to establish a possible framework that could be utilised as an initial categorising system for analysis of the professional development needs of D.P.s. To this end, the researcher delineated the areas of:

- 1-Teacher
- 2-Student Welfare Officer
- 3-Staff Developer
- 4-Supervisor
- 5-Community Involvement Coordinator
- 6-Curriculum Developer
- 7-School Administrator
- 8-Department/Area Administrator and
- 9-Other (as specified by respondents).

These areas had been used for consideration of roles and responsibilities at a number of professional development courses run by the Metropolitan South West Association for Educational Administration and would therefore probably be known and already accepted by some of the respondents. The aforementioned are outlined in the interview guide (see Appendix 6). It was believed that all areas of the D.P.s' day-to-day functioning would be able to be categorised into these areas. It was considered that these areas would allow a complete sampling of all possible areas of the D.P.s' professional development needs and that all things that were relevant to what the researcher was desirous of measuring would be contained in these areas.

The researcher collected interview, survey, case study and critical issue data that could be categorised generally into one or more of the possible areas of professional development needs listed. The data in each area was then treated as qualitative information and was analysed and coded into various types and

strengths according to comparisons made with other responses in the respective areas. These categories of data were then compared both within each respondent's total contribution and across the contributions of the group as a whole. In this way, it was possible to identify various types or categories of data along with the frequency and relative strengths of responses. The data referred to in the analysis stage is data that has been analysed, coded and interpreted.

### The Scope of the Research

In considering the parameters for the research the author chose to investigate preservice, inservice and post professional development experiences. The research included a focus upon the induction phase of the respondents' service period as it was this period that 'set the scene' and prepared the D.P.s for their early experiences as reported by McArthur (1981), Otto, Gasson and Jordan (1979), Power (1984), Telfer (1981), Tisher and Taylor (1982). The author, in researching this area of D.P.s' experiences, sought to establish what they needed and what experiences were helpful in assisting them to pass through this stage whilst preparing them to fulfil their later duties.

### Analysis of Findings-Introduction

Analysis of the data collected in this survey requires first, consideration of the data sources. As data was generated from a variety of sources, comparison of the data, both within

and across data sources was expected to show variation as a result of:

- 1-the perceptions brought to the data by the respondents; and
- 2-the factors that led to the generation of the data not being common to all sources. Discussion of the findings from each of the data sources is preceded by a discussion of the data source.

Findings have been analysed in terms of:

- 1-findings in areas that were common to all D.P.s surveyed, e.g. those derived from consideration of the environments of the D.P.s; those derived from D.P.s responding to questions about exactly what they considered their professional development needs to be; and those from other areas. This analysis sought to provide an indication of themes in professional development needs, either common to a number of D.P.s or particular to an individual D.P.

- 2-findings analysed as a result of a consideration of each D.P. as a single entity. The aim of this analysis was to develop a 'portrait' of each D.P. as an individual along with each D.P.'s particular professional development needs.

- 3-findings that would be able to be seen as general trends in terms of the professional development needs of all D.P.s and which have been identified in the earlier analyses. An analysis of the various case studies with comparison to the general themes delineated in the first analysis was designed to enable

the author to identify common themes and deviations and to explain various aspects of them.

Tables, included in the analysis, list the professional development needs indicated by the data. In all tables, the number in brackets at the end of each response, represents the number of D.P.s (out of the total sample of eleven) who identified a professional development need in the area/s indicated. In discussion of the themes identified for professional development needs, the following classifications, although somewhat arbitrary, were used:

1-Major themes were those with a frequency (in terms of responses) of six or more;

2-Minor themes were those with a frequency of two to five responses; and

3-Single responses were those with a frequency of one response only and, as such, were considered relevant to a particular respondent only.

#### Analysis, Part One - Findings Related To Specific Areas Of

##### Data Sources

The data analysed in this area is presented in sections that deal specifically with the data source (to include; collection and reliability) and analysis (to include; general findings of major and minor themes, single responses and conclusions generally).

The data analysed in this area has shown specific professional development needs are related to certain environmental areas of the D.P.s' daily lives. By considering the common or recurrent themes evidenced in a number of areas, the researcher identified trends and exceptions. Findings have been classified into professional development needs relevant to:

- 1-the school setting;
- 2-roles;
- 3-perceptions of abilities required;
- 4-professional development activities experienced and required ;
- and
- 5-issues confronted.

#### Findings 1-The School Setting

The data source, the school setting, was considered a major indicator of possible professional development needs. It was possible to collect a great deal of data based on a clear, objective view of the school setting. Additionally, the researcher, through involvement in each of the schools, was able to make objective decisions about the data gathered from respondents. All the school settings that were considered had factors that were common and which could be analysed easily. Each of the schools in terms of size and characteristics was comparable in that factors such as size and student numbers had led to the establishment of the position of D.P. The researcher collected data from the D.P.s and Principals using a discussion



guide. The particular aspects covered were common to all D.P.s in that they were asked to outline the school setting, means of transporting students to and from school, the socio-economic background of the students, the range of experience of staff expertise and other similar general questions. As these were outlined, the D.P.s and Principals were asked to discuss the professional development needs they believed arose from these particular factors. This particular interview was interactive, based on a general discussion that additionally assisted in setting the scene and raising awareness of what constituted possible professional development needs. The respondents were asked, as a final question, whether they believed there were any factors that were peculiar to their school and, if so, what competencies were required to undertake their role successfully.

In terms of data collection and reliability, the researcher found that it was also possible to discuss this source with a number of others throughout the study. Recurring responses added meaning to the qualitative judgements that were sometimes made of various aspects of the setting.

It was a relatively easy task for the researcher to deduce possible qualities or competencies required of a D.P. in the school setting and, hence, possible professional development needs from the characteristics of the school setting. The reliability of these findings was dependent to a large extent upon the ability of the setting actually to influence a D.P.'s

execution of his or her role. Each D.P.s' perceived professional development needs could arise as a result of a self-evaluation of the situation and the impact that the setting actually had upon him or her. It was concluded, that, as a source of data, the school setting was productive, objective and contained many common characteristics that could be compared.

General findings in the area of the school setting gave rise to a number of possible qualities and competencies a D.P. might have been expected to exhibit. As this data was processed independently of respondents, the researcher found that it was possible to generalise, e.g. as a number of schools had very active community participation programs that were run by the former D.P., it could be expected that the new incumbent would be expected to undertake a similar enterprise.

The major themes that were evident in the data highlighted areas within which D.P.s would either be required to exhibit or receive professional development and are outlined in Table 1. The most significant professional development needs were those indicated in Table 1 (following) with a frequency of six or more. These items centred around needs concerned with the student body and staff members. Whilst some of the major themes were concerned with particular school settings, e.g. the ability to deal with students from low socio-economic backgrounds, it should be noted that these or very similar circumstances may be in existence in other school settings.

Table 1-Professional Development Needs Originating From Within The School

Environment

The school environment indicated that the D.P.s would need to be able to:

- \*successfully satisfy needs of significant numbers of N.E.S.B. (Non-English Speaking Background)students(10)
- \*address a significant number of beginning teachers' and promotion aspirants' professional development needs (8)
- \*satisfy an expressed need to set procedures, routines, etc. (7)
- \*operate in a D.S.P.(Disadvantaged School Program) school with students from poor socio-economic backgrounds (6)
- \*meet the needs of a growing school population (5)
- \*bring a major change K-6 (5)
- \*undertake extensive curriculum and staff development (5)
- \*develop specific teaching/learning programs for exceptional students(5)
- \*undertake implementation of community involvement programs (4)
- \*exercise positive, effective personal qualities in public relations(4)
- \*integrate special education programs (3)
- \*work towards and develop student self-esteem programs(3)
- \*provide motivation and develop morale (3)
- \*develop programs to transmit traditional values (1)
- \*satisfy student welfare needs (1)
- \*establish the new 'acting' position (1)
- \*counteract 'negative' staff views (1)
- \*professionally develop subordinate executive staff (1)
- \*display commitment and knowledge (1)

Additionally, factors such as the ability to cater for the needs of beginning teachers are relative to and capable of changing considerably within short periods of time.

The minor themes identified in terms of professional development needs included those items with a frequency of more than one, but fewer than six. Needs were associated with the development of specific kinds of educational programs, community participation programs and the exercising of and development of personal qualities in others.

Single response items indicated a unique and expressed professional development need. Included in these responses were needs related to dealing with specific, difficult situations and exercising of specific, personal qualities.

The professional development needs of D.P.s, as indicated by the school settings, had common themes that reflected, to some extent, the common elements of large schools in the region. As each school appeared to have a number of characteristics that it shared with a sub-set of the schools studied, the settings of the schools concerned indicated a possible sub-set of professional competencies that the D.P. would need to implement. It was clear, however, that a number of the schools and their D.P.s had situations that indicated the need for specific professional development competencies.

Findings 2-Professional Development Needs Emanating from Role Responsibilities

As a source of data, D.P.s reflected on their expectations and perceptions of their expected, actual and perceived roles. It was expected that data gathered in this area would be more specific to individuals and settings and that it would be more specific than that which was analysed in the initial collection of information relating to the school setting. The data analysed in this area would, it was expected, reflect role responsibilities that gave rise to professional development needs D.P.s.

Collection of data in this area was undertaken prior to the D.P.s' entry on duty and again at the end of the first four weeks of service. The data collected reflected the D.P.s' consideration of their expected, actual and perceived roles. Having discussed their roles, the D.P.s were asked to outline what competencies and qualities they would need and the possible professional development needs they either required before undertaking or after assuming their role.

Data collected and analysed in this area were valid in that they clearly indicated the D.P.s' perceptions and it was upon these perceptions that the D.P.s were acting. It was noted that D.P.s did, at times, relate the role and expectations to the setting. Some D.P.s made the point that the role and its

expectations and responsibilities did not always seem to be congruent with the school environment.

This data collection phase, involving the D.P.s' contemplation of their roles was a major career undertaking for the respondents. As many had revised their roles in terms of their experiences and observations after entering duty, there was an indication that they were reflective and able to deal objectively with complex situations. The D.P.s' consideration of their role responsibilities, of the competencies needed to fulfil them and of the subsequent possible professional development needs, provided a more individualised and relevant view of the possible professional development needs.

The analysis of the findings, indicated clearly, that many of the competencies needed to fulfil the role responsibilities were related to personal relationships and abilities to 'harness' or 'liberate' the expertise of others. An underlying theme concerned the D.P.s' abilities to be educational leaders within the educational setting.

The major themes (refer Table 2) within this area were generated prior to the D.P.s entering duty. Major themes included a belief by D.P.s that prior to or shortly after assuming the role they would be expected to develop or exhibit competencies requiring them either to undertake or to have undertaken professional development that would equip them to be knowledgeable and effective organisers of learning programs and curriculum development.

Table 2-Professional Development Needs Perceived by D.P.s as Inherent in Role Responsibilities

The professional development needs perceived by the D.P.s as inherent in their role responsibilities indicated that the D.P.s would need to have the ability to be able to:

- \*possess up-to-date teaching programs and practices (9)
- \*have a knowledge of students and educational psychology across the K-6 range (7)
- \*exhibit effective curriculum development practices (6)
- \*demonstrate a high level of organisation skills (6)
- \*exhibit and utilise knowledge of and expertise in adult learning methods and skills (5)
- \*delineate roles generally (5)
- \*conduct situational and needs analyses (4)
- \*exhibit knowledge and ability to supervise, monitor and delegate (4)
- \*model effective time management (4)
- \*display positive interpersonal relationship capacities (3)
- \*professionally develop executive staff (1)
- \*engage in many minor interaction (1)
- \*have a knowledge of and ability to implement D.S.P. philosophies (1)
- \*have a knowledge of and an ability to implement financial management procedures (1)
- \*professionally develop 'entrenched' teachers (1)
- \*promote and assist initiatives (1)
- \*use effective communication skills (1)
- \*conceive or tap and develop values and mission statements (1)
- \*display knowledge of students K-6 within the school (1)
- \*display knowledge of the teachers K-6 within the school (1)
- \*be seen and to provide 'visual' leadership (1)

Minor themes in this area indicated areas that may have existed prior to the D.P.s beginning their roles. The D.P.s believed that their professional development needs related to interactions with and professional development of other adults. The nature of the single responses in this section was reflective of the situation in which the D.P.s had found themselves. There was a number of themes that had been identified by respondents prior to entering duty that were cited by other respondents at the end of the first four weeks of service. Whilst a number of

these were identified and have been recognised as major themes prior to entry on duty, their reoccurrence led to them being strengthened in terms of overall responses. These recurring themes indicated that perhaps they had always been present but had not been identified due to a lack of perception on the part of the respondents. Items which occurred only once and prior to entering duty, indicated a wide range of duties e.g from undertaking day-to-day financial management to dealing with teachers who openly opposed change and development. At the conclusion of the first four weeks of service the 'new' responses made by respondents included the need for professional development to develop the ability to display knowledge of students and teachers K-6 within the school and to provide 'visual' leadership.

To conclude, it was evident that the responses from many of the D.P.s were repeated by others either before undertaking duty or at the 'end of the first four weeks of service' stage. This indicated that there were common perceptions of professional development needs inherent in the D.P.s' role responsibilities. Additionally, it appeared that as the stronger responses related to teaching and curriculum matters, the D.P.s would attempt to implement a very strong educational leadership role, rather than to undertake managerial functions taking them away from the 'business of teaching'.



Analysis of professional development needs arising from actual roles assumed and as expressed by the Principals was another source of data. As the D.P.s' immediate superordinates, Principals interviewed at the beginning of this study expressed the opinion that they had given thought to the role to be filled by the incoming D.P. Consequently, they had considered the abilities and competencies the D.P.s would need to fulfil their roles. Principals were very sure about the professional development that they felt the D.P.s should have received prior to or in the first few weeks of undertaking the D.P. role. They spoke freely and in detail about this area, focussing specifically on the possible professional development needs that were relevant to the role to be negotiated with the D.P.s.

Data was collected prior to the D.P. beginning service in the new role to gain information relating specifically to the perceptions held by others about the position and the D.P. who would enact the role. The data source was very reliable, as it related specifically to a position for which the Principal often had pre-conceived ideas. Principals indicated that role statements would be negotiated and consideration given to the factors that would influence development and implementation.

In terms of data collection, this phase of the research was significant in terms of the relevance of the positions of Principal and D.P. and the relationship between them. The Principals in every case were the next in-line supervisors of

the D.P.s. The Principals' and the schools' interests would be best served if the D.P.'s role was filled by one who was competent and aware of responsibilities inherent in the position.

The findings, as shown in Table 3 below, indicated a wide variance in terms of what professional development needs the position required in the opinions of the various Principals.

Table 3-Abilities Required and Therefore, Possible Professional Development Needs of D.P.s as Analysed from Actual Roles and As Expressed By Principals

The abilities required and therefore, possible professional development needs of D.P.s as analysed from actual roles and as expressed by principals indicated that the D.P.s should be able to:

- \*develop and supervise human resources (6)
- \*display good teaching skills and knowledge of programming requirements (5)
- \*delineate roles (5)
- \*create roles for the position (5)
- \*display knowledge of and exercise an ability to develop curriculum (4)
- \*exhibit positive interpersonal skills (3)
- \*display and utilise knowledge of the educational process (3)
- \*understand and implement knowledge of adult learning (3)
- \*control community participation (2)
- \*manage time competently (2)
- \*analyse the needs of particular sections of the school (2)
- \*display and utilise knowledge of departmental policies (2)
- \*communicate effectively (2)
- \*competently analyse situations (1)
- \*manage and process data (1)
- \*accept appraisal (1)
- \*understand the Principal's roles (1)
- \*exercise financial management and 'globally' budget funds (1)
- \*possess knowledge of special programs such as D.S.P. (1)
- \*display knowledge of administrative processes and documentation procedures (1)
- \*develop the attitudes and values of others (1)
- \*assist the building of teacher-student rapport (1)
- \*counsel others (1)
- \*be organised (1)

Additionally, this source of data was the first to be open-ended in that some Principals had deliberately left a significant part of the role for the D.P. to 'create' role responsibilities. This meant that exact professional development needs could not be forecast, and that the D.P.s could perhaps utilise skills and abilities acquired as 'natural talent' or as a result of professional development activities undertaken.

As a major theme, Principals discussed professional development needs of other staff. In satisfying these needs D.P.s would need to be educational leaders capable of harnessing and optimising the physical and human resources within the school, assisting all personnel to achieve the educational functions of the school.

Minor themes indicated Principals' concern for the D.P.s' abilities to be effective educational leaders. The 'creation' of the role, as mentioned earlier, indicated an 'open/unplanned' approach to the D.P. role and the absence of a 'vision for the school' being possessed by the Principal. It was noted in the analysis of data in this phase, that one Principal, with two D.P.s who were to enter duty, had no expectations or roles for either of them, preferring instead to allow both D.P.s to create their own positions and responsibilities. A total of four D.P.s were to have no expectations of their roles, expressed for them. These D.P.s represented three schools and three Principals.

Other minor themes discussed by the Principals indicated an important 'people function' to be performed by the D.P.s. A

number of the Principals believed that the D.P.s should have received professional development that would enable them to undertake staff and community development utilising a knowledge of departmental policies. The personal qualities mentioned as minor themes could be considered as prerequisites for other professional competencies.

There were many single response items indicating a consideration of the managerial and administrative aspects of the D.P.s' roles. The single responses indicated that the D.P.s should have possessed ability to undertake the analytical and financial aspects often expected of Principals.

In conclusion, the data collected from the Principals indicated that they generally looked for skills and abilities in the areas of educational leadership and people management. The desire of some Principals to keep the D.P. role open for development suggested a desire to utilise the special qualities and abilities of the D.P. In utilising an approach of this kind, the Principals believed that the interests of the D.P.s and the schools would be best served. An approach of this kind meant that there was not considered to be any 'prerequisite' professional development. Instead, it was thought that there was a repertoire of skills and abilities the D.P. could exercise to operate in the role eventually delineated within the school.

Changes in the roles of D.P.s during the first few weeks of service resulted in further professional development needs. The D.P.s., at the end of the study, outlined any role changes that

had taken place and considered them in terms of whether the changes had given rise to additional professional development needs.

Information gained in this area was considered valid as the D.P.s were given the opportunity to reflect upon their roles and comment on any changes they perceived to have occurred. Of the eleven D.P.s, only three expressed opinions that their roles had changed and one of these indicated the first four of the listed six responses in Table 4 below.

Table 4-Changes in Roles of D.P.s During the First Few Weeks of Service and the Resulting Professional Development Needs

Changes in the roles of the D.P.s during the first few weeks of service indicated that they required professional development to assist them to manage:

- \*role expansion (2)
- \*increased delegation practices to avoid role 'overload' (1)
- \*a perceived need to improve communication skills (1)
- \*the setting and communication of plans (1)
- \*the need to further develop understandings of the role (1)
- \*the role being changed and renegotiated (1)

Although limited in number, responses in this area, were considered important, as the small number of changes in roles indicated a relative stability in the expectations experienced by the D.P.s. As the source of the data was the D.P.s themselves, the findings here were considered to be important indicators of professional development needs.

Overall, changes in roles and the resulting perceived professional development needs were associated with the development of personal qualities and the interpersonal skills

utilised within the school environment. There were no major themes indicated by a high frequency of responses.

The researcher noted that responses indicated that roles being fulfilled by the D.P.s were very 'fluid' and, therefore, any attempt to meet the expectations therein could well be frustrated as a result of the lack of role clarification.

In conclusion, the D.P.s' roles and their specifications for operating within the school have a significant effect on the skills and competencies that a D.P. might be expected to possess. They also suggest certain personal qualities as prerequisites for fulfilling the role or as actual qualities expected to be displayed as in fulfilling the role. That the roles of D.P.s should develop and change is to be expected, but that they should undergo rapid change in the first few weeks of undertaking duty is questionable.

### Findings 3-Possible Professional Development Needs: Perceptions of Others

The data indicating the professional development needs required by D.P.s as a result of analysis of their perceptions of others' expectations of them, was considered less reliable than the previous section as it was the result of each respondent attempting to analyse perceived expectations of others. Thus, it was reliant upon the D.P.s ability to 'read-into' the perceptions of others. This led to the consideration that the data gathered could have been rendered

inappropriate. It was, however, considered necessary to accept it as another source as it gave the D.P.s the opportunity to explore the possible gap (if any) that existed between the way they would have desired to have operated in the role and the way in which others desired them to operate.

The collection of data from interviews required more time than previous sections. It also challenged the respondents to undertake an analytical approach to the consideration of their respective school environments. The ability of the respondents to correctly perceive the expectations of others, or to accurately analyse and interpret the ramifications of the perceptions was of concern to the researcher. At the initial interviews, respondents mentioned possible expectations others would have of them. The low frequency of occurrence of many did, however, indicate that they were unique to the school setting. Most importantly, however, the responses from the D.P.s that were expressed after the first few weeks of duty identified a number of new expectations that had become known during that time. Additionally, a number of respondents mentioned for the first time responses that had been given by their peers at the earlier interviews.

This source of data served to highlight the differences between the ways the D.P.s would have preferred to operate and the ways in which they did operate as a result of the perceived expectations of other staff. The data included a number of very significant responses that indicated possible professional

development needs, although they may have been, at the time, particular to a certain situation.

Overall, as shown in Table 5, data indicated that the D.P.s were expected to be staff with well-developed, people-management competencies and developed, competent organisational skills. It was also evident that the D.P. was seen as a person who should be relied upon to be a 'developer' of situations, either as a catalyst or change agent.

Table 5-Professional Development Needs Required By D.P.s as a Result of the D.P.s' Analysis of the Perceived Expectations Other Staff Had of Them.

The professional development needs perceived by the D.P.s as a result of the perceived expectations others had of them indicated that the D.P.s would need to have the ability to be able to:

- \*manage time competently (5)
- \*effectively communicate by exhibiting positive interpersonal skills (5)
- \*develop policy and curriculum (3)
- \*be an exemplary teacher (3)
- \*develop roles of others (3)
- \*be a competent negotiator (3)
- \*operate in the K-2 section of the school in a knowledgeable manner (2)
- \*develop the staff k-6 (2)
- \*develop organisational systems (2)
- \*develop knowledge and understanding of the community (2)
- \*supervise and professionally develop others (2)
- \*disply knowledge and communicate effectively (2)
- \*be positive and motivated (2)
- \*be flexible (2)
- \*be able to analyse the ability and needs of others (2)
- \*be and educational leader(1)
- \*be a source to provide release from face-to-face teaching for others(1)
- \*be a major change agent (1)
- \*establish his/her credibility (1)
- \*establish and analyse the needs of others (1)
- \*be able to provide organisational expertise (1)

In previous analyses, major themes were identified by a frequency of responses of six or more. Using this system of categorising, all responses in this section of data were



indicative of minor themes. In the first, 'prior-to-entry on duty' interviews, the more frequent responses indicated a need for D.P.s to have received professional development to be effective managers with positive interpersonal skills. The second interview session occurred after the D.P.s had had time to experience and to know their respective staffs. Two other previously mentioned themes emerged from the second interviews. Four D.P.s who had previously not mentioned it, said that the staff at their schools expected them to have the necessary skills to be competent time managers. Five others mentioned that the staff had expected them to have been a developer and negotiator of the roles of others. Whether staff had expressed these opinions because they thought that the D.P.s' level of competence might impinge upon their daily operations was not explored as an issue.

In the initial interview stage, the D.P.s expressed beliefs that their staffs expected them to be effective teachers in the K-2 section of the school and be able to develop the K-6 staff's knowledge and understanding of the community served. The major theme running throughout the responses in this section tended to imply a necessity for D.P.s to have highly developed 'people' management skills, to be able to be brought to bear, to improve the school setting in a way that the staff members considered possible and necessary.

Later interviews elicited data that indicated minor themes that the D.P.s might have professional development needs

including development of the ability to be able to provide staff development and organisational expertise. The need to provide professional development had also been mentioned in the initial interview stage, its reoccurrence indicating its importance. Once again, findings in this section indicated the need for the D.P. to be a proficient people manager.

Single response items recorded at the initial interviews indicated that the D.P.s should have received professional development enabling them to be educational leaders able to effect change through organisational expertise.

At the later interview stage, many single frequency responses referred to areas previously mentioned by others at the first interviews. These single responses suggested that D.P.s should have received professional development enabling them to exercise effective communication, interpersonal, leadership, management and negotiation skills to effect change. The D.P.s saw that the expectations others had of them related to interpersonal skills and their ability to assist others to carry out their tasks.

In conclusion, data indicated that the D.P.s were considerate of the opinions of others and that they were aware that others expected them to have developed abilities that would assist in their dealings with staff and, to a lesser extent, with the students. Data indicated that educational leadership functions of the D.P.s were considered by those who worked with

them to be of less importance than their ability to fulfil a facilitating and assisting role in everyday activities.

The professional development needs of D.P.s as perceived by Principals provided another source of data. This source was 'tapped' to gain information about what Principals considered the general professional development needs of D.P.s to be, without specific reference to the particular position that was to be established within their schools. The source was once very relevant as the Principals had all been, at some time, in the position of middle manager within the school setting.

The collection of this data was undertaken at the beginning of the study. The Principals were not aware of the identities of their incoming D.P.s or of their particular attributes. Principals were able to reflect upon the previous D.P. or upon their experiences in the position. Additionally, they were, as a group, aware of the demands that were being placed upon educational administrators at the time.

The Principals were considered a valuable source of information as they had had the time and experience in the Principals' role to reflect upon the position, and to consider the qualities they believed a D.P. needed to possess. Two Principals considered that because of the changing nature of education at the time, and because of the diversity that was beginning to develop between and within schools, D.P.s' professional development needs were difficult to assess. They

therefore declined to give a response to this section of the survey.

The findings in this area, as indicated in Table 6 would suggest that the D.F.s needed professional development to equip them to be educational leaders able to harness and utilise the human resources present within their schools.

Table 6-Professional Development Needs of D.F.s as Perceived by Principals

The Principals perceived that the D.F.s might have required professional development that would assist them to be able to:

- \*identify staff development aims and to train and motivate others (3)
- \*understand the curriculum development process and be able to convert the theory into practice (3)
- \*display awareness of the professional development and curriculum development processes (3)
- \*display effective interpersonal and communication skills (3)
- \*communicate and negotiate (3)
- \*develop a knowledge of, be interested in, and to establish community contacts (2)
- \*establish their credibility as a D.F. (2)
- \*display and utilise a knowledge of current initiatives and events (2)
- \*utilise awareness of policies (2)
- \*utilise situational analysis skills (2)
- \*understand and develop roles (2)
- \*analyse personal professional development needs through the use of a checklist of performance indicators (2)
- \*document, achieve and evaluate goals (2)
- \*be an effective teacher (1)
- \*be aware of students' needs (1)
- \*manage time (1)
- \*be informal (1)
- \*be aware of support agencies available (1)
- \*exhibit effective organisational skills (1)
- \*implement the Scott Review and Carrick Report changes at school level (1)
- \*cope with change (1)
- \*delegate responsibilities (1)
- \*be involved in all areas of school life (1)

There was once again, a clear indication that the D.F.s needed to be competent people managers. There was a wider range of responses given in this area than previously and a lowering of the frequency of a number of responses.

The major themes to be considered in this area were identified as those that received the highest frequency of response within this particular data source. Unlike other areas, the highest frequency of response was three. Major themes indicated that Principals believed D.P.s should receive professional development to enable them to develop and motivate staff and to use effective interpersonal skills to develop curriculum. It is acknowledged that, within the responses elicited in this section (refer Table 6), there appears to be an overlap between the first two and the third responses. The distinction occurred as a result of the Principals stressing the actual wording used. They considered their interpretation to be crucial to the competency they sought in the D.P. Similarly, responses four and five appear alike, but the Principals concerned once again stressed the subtle difference as being important.

Minor themes, in this section, having a frequency of two responses, indicated that Principals expressed beliefs that D.P.s should be able to, or should receive professional development that would enable them to be able to establish community participation and implement a number of technical competencies to implement departmental policies. The emphasis in this area was once again upon the people management and interpersonal skills area of the D.P.s' functioning.

The single response tend to refer to areas of actual teaching and to administrative roles to be implemented by D.P.s.

These indicated that the D.P.s should have either developed or should have access to professional development to enable them to develop an ability to be effective in interactions with students and in organising people to effect change. Some responses, whilst being very general (e.g. be informal), indicate personal qualities which might assist the D.P.s to achieve their aims.

Responses in this area indicate that Principals as a group saw the necessity for the D.P. to be an educational leader and a leader of people. The generality of the responses indicated that there was scope for the D.P.s to operate within boundaries. Additionally, the mention of a number of personal qualities as well as reference to the administrative and organisational aspects of the D.P.s' roles, indicates that these are seen as corequisite or support abilities and skills that will assist the D.P.s to fulfil their roles.

The expressed needs of D.P.s as perceived by D.P.s are outlined in Table 7 following. The researcher believed that as the study progressed, the D.P.s would prove a valuable source of information in that they would be able to express what they perceived to be their own professional development needs. Responses would be elicited as a result of needs felt and would, it was anticipated, indicate the professional development directions the D.P.s were considering. Two particular types of professional development needs were to be considered - those recognised as the study progressed and which were considered to be applicable at the time, and those the D.P.s would benefit

from and which would either assist them to fulfil their current role or which would prepare them for the position of Principal.

Table 7 --Expressed Needs of D.P.s as Perceived by D.P.s

The D.P.s expressed beliefs that they required professional development to enable them to be able to:

- \*know exactly what support networks existed and how to access them (7)
- \*undertake financial management and global budgeting (5)
- \*develop and understand new curricula (4)
- \*develop administrative and organisational systems (4)
- \*know how to foster staff creativity and initiative (4)
- \*manage time efficiently (3)
- \*plan and develop staff professional development practices (3)
- \*know how to effect change (3)
- \*know how to delegate and develop others (2)
- \*conduct needs analyses (2)
- \*possess knowledge of departmental policies to compile school documents (2)
- \*possess a knowledge of how students learn (2)
- \*develop teaching ideas (2)
- \*understand adult learning practices (1)
- \*possess knowledge of structures to assist in developing community involvement (1)
- \*know how to be involved in everything that was happening (1)
- \*assist exceptional students (1)
- \*counsel students (1)
- \*develop child-centred resources (1)
- \*develop communication practices and consultative leadership (1)
- \*set standards (1)
- \*develop their personal qualities (1)
- \*undertake long-term planning (1)
- \*create and maintain a school vision (1)
- \*know how to operate as a Principal (1)
- \*develop a knowledge of legal implications of actions (1)
- \*develop a self-evaluation system (1)
- \*implement departmental initiatives (1)
- \*cope with change(1)
- \*know how to satisfy school needs (1)
- \*plan and develop staff professional development practices (1)
- \*conduct needs analyses (1)
- \*possess a knowledge of departmental policies and school documents (1)
- \*know how students learn (1)

The data collected throughout the study was considered to be valid as it was indicative of the D.P.s' perceptions of their needs. This process was particularly important as it gave the

D.P.s an opportunity to express their needs and to indicate their perceptions of their level of development. Overall, the D.P.s referred to professional development needs that were mainly concerned with educational leadership, the nature of education, students and fellow teachers. It was noted that there was a wide variety of responses. The D.P.s, able to delineate their current professional development needs, gave far fewer responses when asked to outline future ones.

The major theme, once again indicated by a response with a frequency of six or more, indicated that the D.P.s believed they required professional development in the areas of knowing exactly what support networks existed and how to gain access to them. This was the only major theme indicated as being of importance at that particular time. The D.P.s, when asked what they perceived their future professional development needs to be did not elicit responses that had a frequency of five or more.

The minor themes considered reflected the previously mentioned desire of most D.P.s to deal specifically with their current needs, rather than those of the future. Responses that referred to the D.P.s' immediate professional development needs included the need to be able to undertake financial management and other administrative functions, whilst developing staff and providing educational leadership. The minor themes identified as future professional development needs were concerned with the same areas of their functioning, indicating the managerial



functions as being more important than those concerned with educational leadership.

Single response items mentioned as important at the time of the study far outweighed the responses relevant to future professional development needs. The researcher attributed this to the fact that the D.P.s were not yet fully conversant with their new role. Additionally, they did not either have or exercise an ability to predict the future of a system that was beginning to undertake major change. It could also be considered that they did not have the ability to predict their future professional development needs.

The single response items mentioned by the D.P.s as being important to them indicated the need to be able to fulfil a comprehensive range of educational leadership and managerial functions obviously particular to certain schools and their situations. These 'short term' needs appeared once again to outline the D.P.s' desires to focus upon the business of educational leadership and the education of students.

D.P.s' expressed future professional development needs included a desire to develop their competencies to accumulate a repertoire of skills and abilities of assistance as 'resources' in the future. Once again, a wide range of educational leadership and managerial-style functions were indicated.

The perceived present and future professional development needs of the D.P.s suggested a difference in terms of nature and content.

Findings 4-Professional Development Activities Received and Professional Development Needs.

An examination of professional development activities experienced by D.P.s prior to undertaking the D.P. role it was hoped, would provide a further indication of what the D.P.s expected the role to require of them and their preparation for it. Examination of this area would also indicate the kinds of professional development activities being presented for D.P.s. Data in this area was collected at the beginning of the study. Table 8 outlines the responses.

Table 8-Professional Development Activities Experienced by D.P.s Prior to Assuming the D.P. Role.

The D.P.s experienced professional development activities, prior to assuming the D.P. role, that included:

- \*participation in an informal network (3)
- \*attendance at regional level courses that had been run by various professional associations (3)
- \*attendance at Assistant Principals' meetings (2)
- \*various specific courses at regional level (2)
- \*experiences at the previous level of operation (2)
- \*school level, individually initiated activities (1)
- \*professional reading on a personal level (1)
- \*school-level discussion with a principal (1)
- \*experiences in student welfare practices (1)
- \*support of others (1)
- \*work in various K-12 activities (1)
- \*work as a consultant (1)
- \*deliverance of inservice courses to others (1)
- \*work in a particular curriculum area (1)

The data was considered valid as it came from the respondents who had received the professional development which may have in some way assisted them to attain and operate in a D.P. position.

It is noteworthy that five of the eleven respondents denied access to any kind of professional development activities during the twelve months prior to their undertaking the D.P. role. This would seem to imply that specific activities designed to assist D.P.s in their professional development are perhaps:

- 1-not being made available (either through not being implemented or through those desirous of attending being refused the right to do so);
- 2-not specifically designed to cater for D.P.s;
- 3-not being communicated to D.P.s as being available; or
- 4-being considered by D.P.s as not being appropriate as an area of considered need.

The delivery of professional development to D.P.s in preparation for their undertaking such a position would appear to be of paramount importance to properly prepare them for the position to which they aspire. As an indicator of professional development needs, discussion of the area of activities experienced should have indicated what was and what was not relevant or successful in preparing the D.P. Analysis of findings from this data is limited to those areas in which some of the D.P.s did receive limited professional development.

It was found that D.P.s received professional development as a result of either inservice activities in the position occupied prior to undertaking the D.P. role, or as a result of involvement in collegial groups.

In this area, two responses, represented by a frequency of three, indicated that the D.P.s had been afforded professional development through activities that were dependent on friendships and professional groups.

The minor themes, those accorded a frequency of two responses only, included involvement in activities at a local level and related to specific tasks or positions. It was noted that the regional courses mentioned (refer Table 6) were courses held during school time run by various professional bodies, organised within the day-to-day school settings, and designed to meet the specific needs of various groups. The professional associations mentioned in the major themes section were, on the other hand, semi-autonomous bodies that ran courses outside normal school hours. Attendance at Assistant Principals' (A.P.) meetings was relevant to the A.P. position which is normally undertaken prior to assuming the D.P. role. Two of the respondents referred to the fact that they had held positions other than as A.P.s prior to becoming D.P.s and that in these previous positions they had received what they considered to be more relevant professional development.

Single response items indicated the wide variety of ways in which D.P.s could undertake professional development and that they had received such as a result of their involvement and motivation in what were mainly work-related, experiential activities.

In conclusion, the statements by five of the D.P.s indicating that they had not been involved in any professional development activities appeared to be a serious problem in terms of preparation for the positions sought. It can be considered, however, that many of the D.P.s would have been receiving a form of unplanned and unrecognised professional development by being afforded the opportunity to undertake relevant, associated activities associated with the A.P. role in their former schools.

An understanding of the professional development activities experienced by the D.P.s prior to and in the first few months of service suggested a need to undertake professional development in the areas participants had chosen. Investigation of out-of-school courses enacted to satisfy the D.P.s' needs, and the delivery of professional development activities within the school setting was undertaken. It was considered that as the D.P. was responsible to the Principal and as both people represented the senior school managers there would, as a matter of course, be some interaction and professional development of the newly-appointed D.P.s. Table 9 outlines the many professional development activities experienced by the D.P.s.

Table 9-Professional Development Activities Experienced by the D.P.s Prior to and in the First Few Months of Service as a D.P.

The professional development activities experienced by the D.P.s prior to and in the first few months of service were designed to assist them to be able to:

- \*experience 'on-the-job' and self-directed activities, both formal and informal (5)
- \*attend various district level meetings and courses (4)

- \*participate in various meetings (3)
- \*participate in specific meetings at a regional level (3)
- \*interact in professional associations (3)
- \*interact with a District Inspector with specific regard to promotion (2)
- \*accept responsibilities being delegated to the D.P. (2)
- \*be involved in the development of a professional network (2)
- \*attend conferences (2)
- \*undertake personal professional reading (2)
- \*be involved in activities in professional associations (2)
- \*participate in development activities that resulted from the necessity to deal with 'near-crisis' situations (2)
- \*develop of understanding of and participation in the Effective Schools Program activities (2)
- \*practise teaching activities (2)
- \*be involved in professional development activities that in the opinion of the D.P.s were not related to their professional development needs (2)
- \*participate in meetings and be involved in activities generally (3)
- \*experience on the job and self-directed activities of both formal and informal kinds (2)
- \*develop ways to improve communications (2)
- \*develop negotiation skills (2)
- \*develop supervision techniques (2)
- \*negotiate professional development and school goals (2)
- \*meet at the local level (1)
- \*consult with consultants (1)
- \*be given feedback/evaluation on activities undertaken (1)
- \*receive information packages from various department sources(1)
- \*develop a personal network (1)
- \*discuss and interact with varied personnel (1)
- \*be involved in an analytical approach to professional development activities (1)
- \*undertake personal evaluations (1)
- \*experience activities to develop motivation strategies and practices (1)
- \*learn about the devolution of power within the department (1)
- \*undertake financial management courses (1)
- \*enact activities to develop staff (1)
- \*develop an understanding of future directions in education (1)
- \*react to situations as a basis for the development of a proactive planning style (1)
- \*undertake role negotiation, monitoring, support and feedback (1)
- \*develop ways to promote 'self'
- \*undertake preparation for and participate in inspection for promotion (1)
- \*be involved in professional development activities that actually related to the previous role and were not specifically designed to assist with the D.P. role (1)
- \*have specific responsibilities delegated to them to complete (1)
- \*be given the freedom to act independently (1)
- \*discuss and interact with varied personnel (1)
- \*experience executive staff school meetings (1)
- \*develop activities to develop motivation strategies (1)
- \*be given assistance to cope with change (1)
- \*participate in role negotiation, monitoring, support and feedback (1)

The data in Table 9 includes information relating to courses at venues outside the school setting. This indicated that D.P.s attending had to vary routine significantly to do so, thereby signifying a belief in the worth of the activity. On the other hand, where an activity was delivered at school level, the need for it was indicated by the fact that time devoted to the activity was valuable and could have been expended elsewhere.

Information in Table 9 indicates efforts organised and designed to satisfy the expressed or implied needs of the D.P.s. If, however, the activities were being designed and delivered in a somewhat random manner, where there was no relationship between the needs of the D.P.s and the courses enacted, then the attendance of the D.P.s would indicate, not so much a desire to meet a perceived need, but rather to create yet another 'resource' capability that could be called upon when the need arose.

Analysis of data signalled that D.P.s received a majority of their professional development via interaction in various types of meetings with professional groups or as a result of inservice activities experienced in enacting their role and undertaking new tasks. It was also apparent that there was only a minor amount of what the D.P.s considered to be professional development delivered by their Principals. This occurred perhaps, as a result of their daily interaction rather than as a result of a deliberate and planned development program.

There were no major themes apparent in this data. The most frequent minor themes indicated that the D.P.s had received professional development by experiencing 'on-the-job' and self-directed activities, or as a result of attendance at various district level meetings and courses. Less frequent minor themes indicated they had received professional development as a result of being involved in activities (other than those delivered by the Principal) including participation in various meetings and interactions with other personnel.

A number of D.P.s referred to professional development activities that were delivered by Principals and which indicated minor themes. They stated that they had been involved in activities with their Principals including participation in meetings and involvement in activities that were either general (e.g. day-to-day activities) or specific (e.g. discussion of negotiation skills) in nature.

Single response items indicated a number of varied activities in which D.P.s had received some form of professional development. D.P.s referred to professional development received through sources other than the Principal and indicated involvement in activities that were often self-initiated and self-directed and involved reflection on practices or the school environment. The single responses related to direct, deliberate attempts by Principals to provide activities designed to help the D.P.s fulfil roles dictated by the Principals.



Consideration of single responses attributed to the Principals' delivery of professional development indicated that many of the activities mentioned were very strictly inservice, 'on-the-job' activities. It could be expected that all D.P.s had participated in some kind of executive meetings, but it was noted that only one considered these contributed towards professional development.

It was concluded that the professional development activities experienced by D.P.s are viewed differently by them. There is a wide variety of activities, viewed as being of worth, that D.P.s may participate in to achieve professional development. It would also appear that D.P.s prefer and tend to utilise whatever collegial groups are available to them when striving to receive professional development.

#### Findings 5-Problems Faced by the Newly-Appointed D.P.s

The anticipated problems faced by the D.P.s in the first few weeks of service were valid indicators of the professional development needs compiled in Table 10. Data indicated the preconceived ideas the D.P.s had with regard to the possible problems they would face and allowed comparison with the problems faced by the D.P.s.

The data regarding the probable, perceived or anticipated problems the D.P.s might face had been gathered after each had received the offer of the position and prior to starting in the new position. On the other hand, the data relating to the actual

problems faced was collected from two sources. Initially, D.P.s were asked to keep a diary in which incidents that caused them concern could be entered. These diaries were discussed at subsequent interviews and additional data and/or other incidents duly noted and discussed. This often led to the D.P.s undertaking discussion of other events that were either related or which had caused them to alter their schedules to attend to the emergent issue/s concerned.

Data in this area was considered to be critical. It comprised of incidents that actually occurred and which were not easily managed by the D.P.s, indicating a gap between their abilities and those required. It was assumed that the 'gap' could best be closed as a result of professional development. It was also felt that a comparison between anticipated and actual incidents would indicate to some degree the D.P.s' understanding of both their own competencies and those required of them in the situation.

The main finding in this area was that the D.P.s encountered far more incidents that they had difficulty in dealing with than they had expected. The problems that arose indicated professional development needs concerned mainly with many different personal qualities that could to some extent be seen as prerequisites for the position. Data collected in this phase was once again quite diversified, with no responses having a frequency of six or more. The responses therefore indicated minor themes and single responses only.

The most frequent of the minor themes arose from incidents that had occurred during the study and were indicative of problems the D.P.s dealt with in their daily operations.

Table 10- Problems Faced by the Newly-Appointed D.P.s both Anticipated and Experienced in the First Few Weeks of Service

The problems, both anticipated and experienced by D.P.s in their first few weeks of service indicated a need for professional development to enable them to:

- \*manage their time, set priorities, and balance the teaching and professional development roles accorded to them (5)
- \*react to many small incidents and to be available whenever required (5)
- \*develop interpersonal relationships with staff (3)
- \*bring and/or effect and/or cope with change (3)
- \*establish seniority and delineate roles (2)
- \*be able to conduct a situational analysis and to be able to 'know the school' (2)
- \*be in control and to develop monitoring systems (2)
- \*have a knowledge of D.S.P. schools generally (2)
- \*interact with a new District Inspector (2)
- \*have a knowledge of various departmental documents or procedures (3)
- \*manage matters associated with financial management (3)
- \*correct mistakes of others and/or assist with solving problems or conflict resolution (2)
- \*readjust thinking to implement the role (2)
- \*negotiate organisational systems (2)
- \*communicate effectively (2)
- \*recognise and give attention to teacher welfare and morale (2)
- \*solve difficulties with community interactions (2)
- \*implement effective administrative procedures (2)
- \*have a knowledge of effective problem-solving procedures (2)
- \*delineate roles of staff (1)
- \*operate in an acting position (1)
- \*establish credibility in the new position (1)
- \*handle stress caused by competing factors (1)
- \*deal with truanting students (1)
- \*coordinate student teachers (1)
- \*avoid role 'overload' and attending to activities that were actually the responsibility of others (1)
- \*hold interviews with parents (1)
- \*deputise for the Principal (1)
- \*set standards and assist staff to comply with them (1)
- \*access outside agencies to provide support (1)
- \*motivate staff (1)
- \*make decisions without access to all available information (1)
- \*consider legal implications of incidents (1)
- \*be adequately prepared (1)

The main two problems faced by the D.P.s indicated that they either needed to receive professional development to equip them to deal with the problem or to set in place processes or systems that would avoid the demands being placed upon them. Two major themes that arose in this area indicated that the D.P.s needed to be able to manage their time, set priorities, balance the teaching and professional development roles accorded to them and, at the same time, react to many small incidents and be available to help whenever required. It is relevant that these problems are related in that they are concerned with time management. Both are also opposite in that the first, requires proactive planning whilst the second requires reactive responses to fulfil the expectations others had of them. It appeared that, as a number of the D.P.s had been assigned the role of the day-to-day running of the school, they were expected to be both proactive and reactive and that this was causing them considerable concern.

Fewer recurrent minor themes that arose prior to entering duty included those concerned with interpersonal relationships with staff and undertaking school development. The anticipated problems had a strong focus on personal qualities although some of these (refer Table 10) anticipated problems and the possible apprehensions that may have accompanied them could have been addressed in professional development activities.

The number of minor themes that arose as a result of incidents encountered was relevant. Many of the newly-emerging

items had a stronger frequency than many of the anticipated items. Problems that had been encountered by the D.P.s were associated with the D.P.s' abilities to handle situations involving interpersonal relationships, effecting change and managing day-to-day managerial functions. The problems that arose as minor themes (and hence the professional development needs arising) indicated a strong relationship between the personal qualities to be possessed and the processes to implement and utilise knowledge, as well as the knowledge itself. It would appear that the personal qualities required could be considered as prerequisites. A number of problem areas mentioned (e.g. knowledge of problem-solving and/or administrative procedures and understanding of staff welfare and morale) were not seen as possible problem areas at earlier interviews.

There were a number of single responses that arose in both the anticipated and actual problems phases. It is believed that the increased number of these may be attributed to the individual school settings. The D.P.s anticipated and expressed that they might experience problems requiring them to have received some professional development to avoid problems connected with items such as delineating roles of staff, operating in an acting position, establishing credibility in the new position and readjustment of thinking to implement the role.

At the conclusion of the study, the number of single responses from actual experiences was far stronger than the

anticipated responses. A large number of these were previously not mentioned by any of the respondents. The issues confronted by the D.P.s evidenced a need for professional development concerned with interacting with staff, outside agencies and students. The single responses indicated a wide range of professional development needs, influenced by the individual nature of the schools and once again, the fact that many of these emerging problems were closely associated with interactions with other teachers. It is important to note, that very few of the responses related directly to students -'the business of our business'- and that many of them appear to have arisen as a result of the inability of others to cope with their particular responsibilities.

It was concluded that the D.P.s experienced more problems than they expected within a few weeks of entering duty. It was also evident that they needed to solve their own professional development needs as a 'survival matter'. As the problems encountered often arose as a result of the D.P.s' interaction with others, it was clear that professional development activities concerned with interpersonal relationships were important. Additionally, as educational leaders, it was evident that the D.P.s were being forced to deviate from any visionary or proactive operations by being asked to assist others in a reactive way.

Data in this phase provided a rich indication of professional development needs. It also highlighted the need for

D.P.s to be, first and foremost, proactive in their daily activities.

Findings in the area of anticipated and actual problems encountered by D.P.s as perceived by principals, it was hoped, would establish a connection between the Principals' views of potential problems and actual problems or between perceived problems and professional development activities enacted. Analysis of findings was also expected to reveal judgements that the Principal may have made about the role of the D.P. and which had not been mentioned in previous areas of investigation.

Table 11-Anticipated and Actual Problems Encountered by D.P.s as Perceived by Principals

The anticipated problems to be encountered by the D.P.s and as perceived by the Principals indicated that the D.P.s would require professional development to enable them to manage problems concerned with:

- \*promotion structures (1)
- \*change and creating change (1)
- \*the exercising of control/power (1)
- \*interpersonal problems (1)
- \*convening of inappropriate/unnecessary meetings (1)
- \*the D.P. attempting to be a perfectionist (1)
- \*role clarification difficulties (1)
- \*the D.P.'s inability to overcome problems of 'resistance' (1)
- \*communications (1)
- \*time emangement (1)

Data collected in this area and shown in Table 11, was most disappointing as Principals chose to give responses that related to three D.P.s only. The Principals preferring not to respond to the questions in this area explained that either they had not considered the question or that they believed there would not be any problems experienced, or that they could not forecast

potential problems as they would depend entirely on the D.P. concerned.

Data was collected prior to and at the end of the study. The data was considered valid, especially in the area of responding to actual problems experienced as the Principals would provide yet another relevant viewpoint.

The Principals, as senior administrators in the schools, were considered to be a valuable source of data. The data although limited, did reflect and substantiate previous responses in other areas.

It was not possible to delineate major or minor responses, as each response received a frequency of one only. For this reason, the researcher considered each to be worthy of consideration. Additionally, as the responses were, in the main, indicated in other areas, it was considered that they were important as substantiating data.

Anticipated problems perceived by the Principals were associated with the D.P.s' fulfilling the role and exercising power (refer Table 11). Responses perceived as possible problems, in the opinions of the Principals, never actually eventuated. The professional development needs that the above possible problems could have been related to were either satisfied to deal with the problem/s or never existed.

Only one response was given by any of the Principals as an indicator of the actual problems confronted. The Principal cited



a perceived 'limited ability' of the D.F. as a possible problem but added that the perception had not been confirmed.

Consideration of the Principals' views regarding possible and actual problems should have marked a significant point in this analysis as a source of valuable data, provided by an 'on-the-spot' observer who could observe in a relatively unobtrusive way. Unfortunately there was not a greater number of responses in this area. As the amount of professional development delivered to D.P.s by Principals tended to suggest a lack of commitment to this practice or to any set programs, then perhaps the Principals were either unaware of the intricacies of the roles being fulfilled by the D.P.s or unable to devote time to monitor more carefully any such activities. The professional development being provided by Principals required further investigation to examine both its quality and quantity.

### Conclusion

Analysis of the areas common to all D.P.s has provided indications of the general trends underlying the professional development needs of this group. Consideration of the sources of the identified needs should make it possible for school-based personnel to predict possible professional development competencies required of incoming D.P.s. Whilst some areas yielded a great deal of data e.g. roles undertaken, it was unfortunate that other areas e.g. Principals' perceptions of possible needs, whilst seen by the researcher as being

potentially very valuable sources, were not very productive and failed to reach their predicted potential. General trends and the single response items indicated needs particular to certain individuals or situations and provided valuable insights into the area generally.

As this research was based on the study of a relatively small number of individuals, it is also considered necessary to consider each D.P. as an individual entity. The next chapter of this report seeks to add to the quality of the data thus far presented by discussing the needs of individual D.P.s in the context of their schools, thus allowing the reader to compare individuals with the total sample.