

CHAPTER ONE

One of the tasks of a leader is to understand major societal and educational trends and to interpret and make sense of them for those in the school. Once that has been done the key task is to build for the school a vision of a future which will encompass these changes in such a way that it will enhance the learning of the children in the school. In building that future, the leader has to be an instigator of radical thinking; in fact he/she has to 'think the yet unthinkable'.

Davies, 1995: 6

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.1 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research was to identify the aspects of the role of principal which are perceived by stakeholders in the integration process - district superintendents, principals, "support" teachers, mainstream teachers and parents - as being the most important in selecting and training principals to effectively lead schools offering integration programs. The study set out to identify any criteria additional to the seven "generic" criteria already in use which might be proposed, either as the basis for "special fitness" appointment of principals, or as areas of suggested principal induction or inservice modules, aimed at enhancing integration programs in mainstream public schools.

It was the opinion of the researcher that, by systematically gathering the opinions of the key stakeholders, “grounded” theory may emerge regarding the ways in which these parties in the integration process expect the principal to participate in its implementation, and to contrast these expectations with an exposition of the ways in which principals actually spend their time on matters relating to integration. In the exploration of the aspects of the principal’s role most closely associated with effective integration programs, the inclusion of all the stakeholders mentioned earlier provided the opportunity to establish commonalities and to highlight disparities in perceptions about the principal’s role in relation to integration. It was also proposed that issues and problems arising out of mismatched perceptions might be identified as bases for further study.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

The New South Wales (N.S.W.) Department of School Education enshrined its commitment to the integration of students with disabilities into “least restrictive” learning environments with the introduction of its Policy for the Integration of Students with Disabilities in 1988. The Policy arrived in State public schools with great fanfare but, in the absence of comprehensive training and development support for principals and teachers in mainstream schools, its implementation

rapidly became a matter for individual region and school interpretation.

With the added complicating factor of diverse levels of physical access and human resource support in public schools, the integration of students with disabilities has continued to be a piecemeal undertaking, despite the infusion of generously funded support from both Commonwealth and N.S.W. Governments under the Department's "Special Education Plans", Year 1 - 5, particularly in the years 1990 - 1992. This funding created additional teaching and teacher's aide (Special) positions in all regions and provided for the development of specific training modules for Support Teachers (Learning Difficulties). More recently, under Special Education Plan Year 5, further executive positions have been created in Schools for Specific Purposes (SSPs), admitting more Deputy and Assistant Principal and Executive Teacher (Support) positions. While these positions were allocated "on establishment", meaning that no nett increase in staffing to SSPs resulted, the decision was considered to be an acknowledgement of the significant additional workload of the principal in schools where instruction and program planning were largely an individual enterprise, negotiated for a single student, and where the management of staff and resources were more complex, more community oriented and more dependent upon the production of detailed annual submissions and evaluations.

Of significant interest to the researcher was the absence of additional executive position allocations to regular schools accommodating “support” classes or providing integration opportunities to students with disabilities into mainstream classes, although these students’ learning needs were similar, as were the programming and supervision requirements of their support teachers. The responsibility for the implementation of special education programs has remained, therefore, with the principal of the mainstream school, unless the number of “support” classes exceeds two (attracting an Executive Teacher or Head Teacher (Support) position), or five (attracting an Assistant Principal (Support) position in the case of primary schools). It should also be noted that the provision of funding for additional teacher or teacher’s aide (Special) support to mainstream schools providing integration programs is made on the basis of the same submission and evaluation structure as applies to SSPs.

This situation underscores the fact that, throughout the implementation of the Policy, little consideration has been given to the implications of integration for the principalship. Specifically, there has been no obvious systemic examination of the basis for principal selection in schools providing integration programs to determine whether the seven “generic” criteria used to assist panels in choosing a principal are

appropriate for ensuring the selection of a school leader who has the qualities, skills and knowledge to oversee integration programs which achieve more than simply the physical relocation of students with disabilities from an SSP to a mainstream school setting. Nor has any determination been made as to the degree to which the effectiveness of integration programs is affected by the personal qualities, skills and knowledge of the principal. Finally, there has been no systematic canvassing of practising principals' opinions to determine which aspects of the management and leadership of integration in mainstream schools are perceived as being sufficiently problematic or challenging as to require specific preparation and/or inservice training for principals.

1.3 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF INTEGRATION

“Integration”, “inclusion” and “mainstreaming” are key concepts which will be discussed through the literature in Chapter Two of this work. The three terms require definition, though, for the purposes of this study, they are treated as synonyms. They will, nevertheless, each be defined later in this chapter. Australian and U.S. convention have determined which term is used; however, as Mittler (1995:5) has pointed out:

Because of the ease of communication and the proliferation of fax machines and electronic mail, it takes only a short time for new terminology to spread across the world. In no time at all, terms such as mainstreaming and integrated education are out of fashion, if not actually reactionary. Inclusive education becomes a universal and unquestioned aim all over the world.

All three terms, in the researcher's own words, mean "the placement of students with disabilities and/or special learning needs into specific educational programs, designed to maximise their participation in mainstream learning experiences in regular school settings". This definition was synthesised by the researcher from several "textbook" descriptions because it highlights the special program, the notion of maximum possible participation, and the assumption that learning will occur. The researcher has consciously omitted factors such as remediation, curative education and withdrawal teaching (terms which will later be defined). MacMullin and Vaz (1995:26) have proposed that:

Put simply, the idea of inclusion according to Salisbury (1991) is that all children will be based in the classroom they would normally attend if they did not have a disability. Of course, we would add that these children would not merely be based in these classes, but participating and achieving personal, social and academic success in these classes. ... the key idea is that of being a full member of the classroom group - of fully belonging.

Further, in the case of this study, a broader definition enabled schools with "support" classes to participate. This was a pragmatic decision in

that there are many schools with such classes who also provided opportunities for students therefrom to be mainstreamed individually. This increased the range of schools available for the study. For, while there were 1,135 students with disabilities who were supported in regular classes across N.S.W. by the Integration Program at the time of the first formal Systemic evaluation in 1988, this number reflected only those students for whom funding was provided (for additional staffing or resourcing). In fact, integration programs were being provided on a less formal basis for many more students than these, through arrangements between SSPs and their neighbouring public schools, and in rural schools where parents were not able to access special education services due to their geographical isolation from larger regional centres. In these regular schools, principals and teachers have, since the introduction of the Integration Policy, attempted to provide whatever support they could for students with disabilities and special learning needs. Dempsey and Foreman (1995:47) support this contention in their analysis of trends in integration:

...it is difficult to obtain precise information on the extent to which integration is occurring in Australia, largely because of the 'limited and conflicting data base in the special education area' (Bain, 1992). The difficulty is exacerbated by differences among states in policy and practice, the ways in which data are collected, and the lack of consistency in the publication of this information (Lewis and Cook, 1993).

1.4 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

For the purposes of this study the definition of disability adopted by the N.S.W. Department of School Education is to be used. It defines a student with a disability as “... one having sensory, physical, psychological or intellectual impairment which has caused a significant loss or reduction of the ability to participate in a regular education program” (1989:4).

The study did not address any specific “category” of disability. It is the researcher’s opinion that these categories are, at best, arbitrary and, at worst, exclusive. Practising special educators may support the view that classifications are based on the *predominant* disability and fail to recognise the impact on learning of additional, concomitant disabilities. For example, in the researcher’s view it would be difficult to find a profoundly deaf student who did not exhibit severe communication disorders, a profoundly blind student with unimpaired mobility, or a student with severe intellectual disability whose behaviour was consistently appropriate. So ephemeral is the nature of disability that some clinicians claim that up to 15 per cent of the total population will suffer from some form of “minimal brain dysfunction” (Krivanec, 1984; D.S.M. III (revised), 1983).

1.5 THE INCIDENCE OF DISABILITY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS K-12 IN NEW SOUTH WALES

The Australian Bureau of Statistics's "Disability, Ageing and Carers: Data Reference Package" (1993a), cited by Dempsey and Foreman (1995:48), indicated that, of the 17,820 households (42,215 persons) surveyed (with a 97.6% return), 1,350 persons were identified as people with a disability aged 5 years or more who attended a school. This represented 2.87 per cent of all respondents. These data give a broad indication of the number of children with disabilities in schools nationwide. Data on N.S.W. public schools were not readily accessible at the time of this study for several reasons:

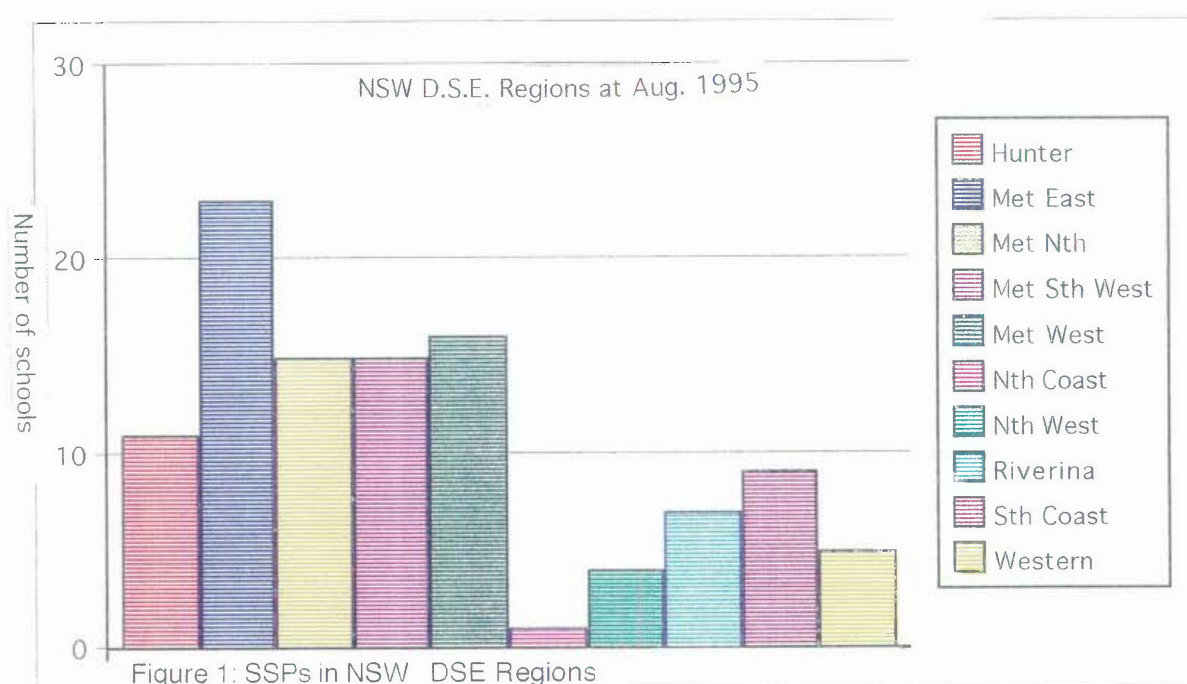
Firstly, as mentioned earlier, not all children with disabilities or special learning needs were able to access funding under the Integration Program. Children in SSPs and "support" classes, for example, do not generally qualify for this support.

Secondly, the numbers of students included in the 1989 Integration Evaluation were not only enrolled in Department of School Education schools - a percentage of Integration Program funding is also provided to private and independent schools.

Thirdly, there are students enrolled in regular public schools across urban and regional N.S.W. who, in relation to their learning capacities, are considered by their teachers and parents, but *not* by the Department of School Education, as having special learning needs. Examples of such students are those *medically* classified as children suffering from Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). While the learning capacities of these children may be considered to be significantly reduced, either by the medical conditions themselves or as a side effect of the medications used to control them, they have yet to be included as a group requiring special education intervention across the board (although this position is thought to be undergoing renewed consideration by the school System).

Finally, there is a line of thought among some educators that a significant subgroup of students classified as “gifted” also exhibit some characteristics of disability in relation to their learning styles and instructional needs, such that they do not (or cannot) maximise their learning potential under “normal” conditions. While this concept was not explored in this particular study, it is mentioned because the researcher believes that it requires further investigation to demonstrate whether gifted children are, in fact, “integrated” students.

For these reasons, it will be assumed for the purposes of this study that about 2.7 per cent, or approximately one student in 30 in N.S.W. public schools, has special learning needs of one kind or another which deserve or demand special attention from the teacher and the school. This does not equate exactly with figures estimated by the researcher from N.S.W. Department of School Education census information, as derived from the 1994 mid-year Census of Schools. The figures from this document indicate that of the total of 756,113 students enrolled in N.S.W. public schools, 3,798 were enrolled in SSPs (See Figure 1.).



To estimate the number of students with disabilities enrolled in mainstream public schools, the researcher has utilized the ABS incidence figure of 2.7 per cent to gain a possible total enrolment of

20, 415 students in Kindergarten to Year 12. This figure, compared with actual figures relating to enrolments of students with disabilities in “support” classes in regular schools and those enrolled in SSPs, indicates that fewer students are being provided with special education programs than may in fact warrant them. (See Figure 2. for proportions of children in special education programs in the two regions included in this study).

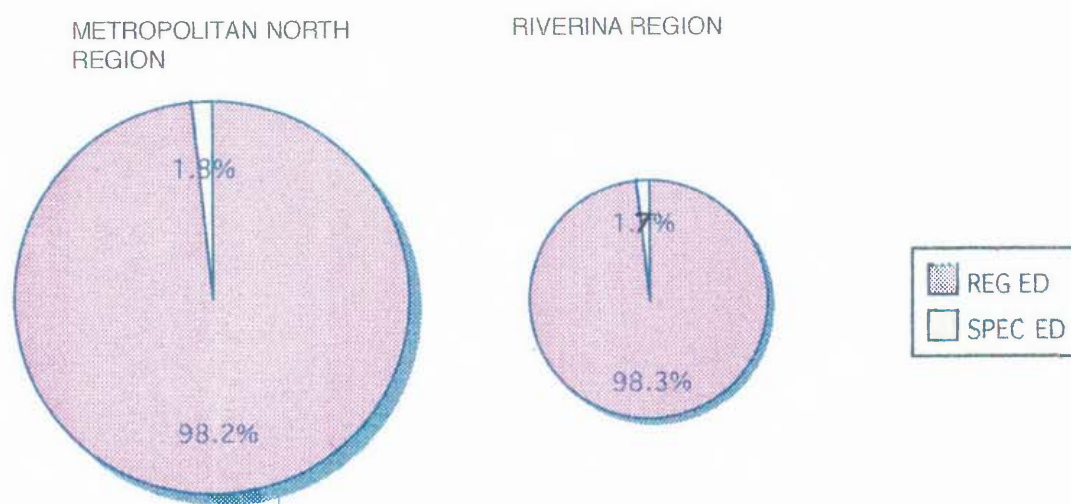
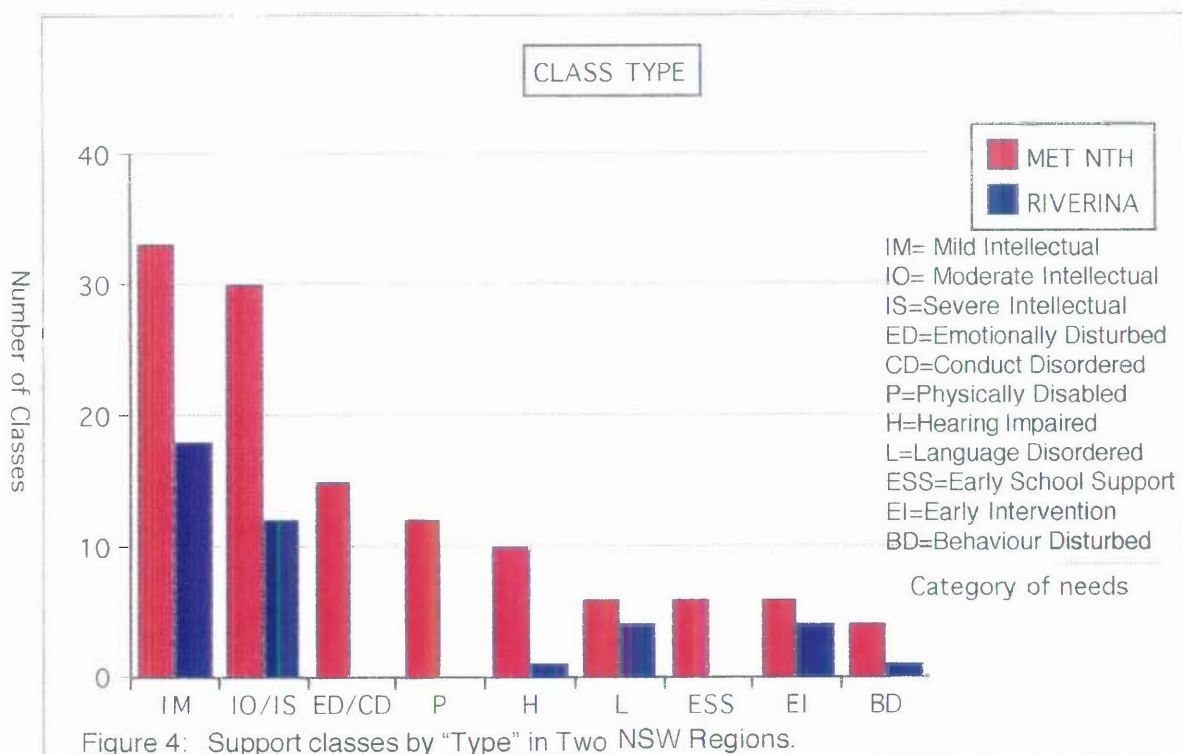
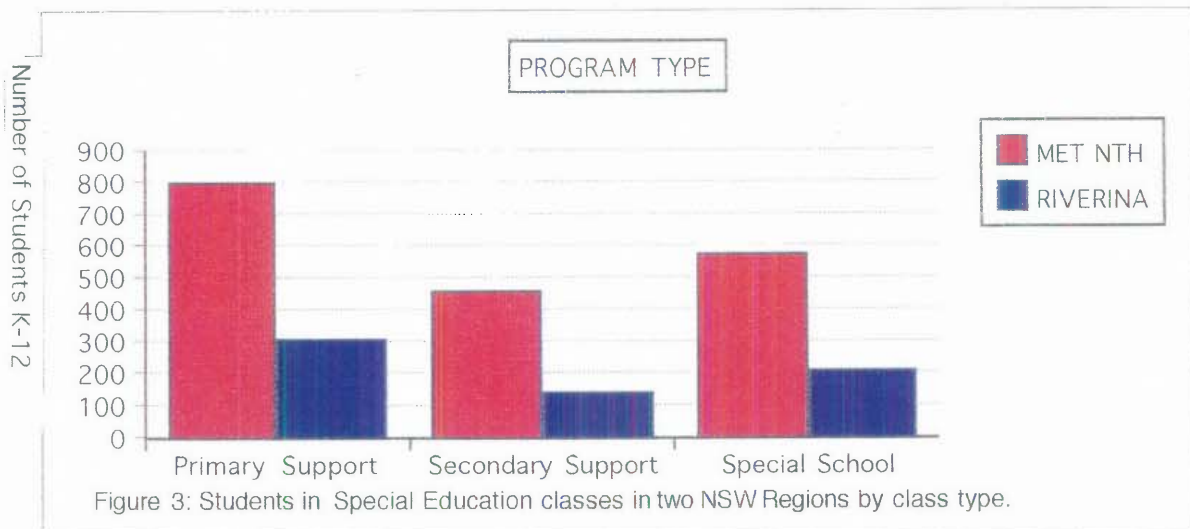


Figure 2 : Proportion of students in all Special Education Classes in two NSW Regions.

To demonstrate, in the two Departmental regions involved in this study - Metropolitan North and Riverina - totals of 1,261 (of an overall enrolment of 104, 867) and 417 (of an overall enrolment of 37,973)

respectively indicate enrolments of students with disabilities in mainstream schools in these regions of 1.2 percent and 1.1 per cent respectively (See Figures 3. and 4. for a breakdown of support classes).



Students enrolled in SSPs number 575 in Metropolitan North (0.55 per cent of the overall enrolment) and 207 in Riverina (0.55 per cent of the overall enrolment). These percentages add up to 1.75 per cent and 1.65 per cent respectively. This would indicate that, extrapolating from the national incidence data from the ABS, nearly 1 per cent of students (756 students across the N.S.W. System) are not currently receiving special education intervention of any kind. The researcher considers that these students would certainly include those mentioned earlier - the ADD, ADHD and other children with similar learning disabilities who do not attract the attention or support of the System, but who, nevertheless, pose particular challenges for schools and principals throughout their school careers.

1.6 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

This study set out to determine the role of the principal in relation to integration. Clearly, the role of principal has changed rapidly over the years 1990 - 1995, due to "Schools Renewal" (Scott, 1989) strategies, several major restructures at Senior Executive Service (SES) level, a change of State government, an increase in class sizes and the number of composite classes, the introduction of the principles of Merit Selection to replace a seniority based system of transfers and promotions, the establishment of school councils in the majority of schools, the implementation of Quality Assurance Reviews, and a legion of other

initiatives, large and small, aimed at achieving the “three Rs” of economic rationalism - “refining, reforming and reducing”- within education structure and governance.

Moving in parallel with these changes has been a steady increase in the number of children with disabilities seeking enrolment at their neighbourhood public schools. It is likely that they will have had access to specialist early intervention, some since birth. Consequently, these children are considered by their parents, carers and teachers to have a right to enrol at their nearest school so as to maximise the gains afforded through early identification and assistance, and to minimise the environmental handicaps suspected by some school communities to result from segregated (special) schooling.

The researcher needed to establish in the first instance whether this trend had had any impact on the principal's role. Secondly, the proportion of the mainstream principal's time devoted to integration tasks needed to be determined. Thirdly, the researcher set out to discover if the combination of changed role and changed time should, in turn, alter the criteria used in N.S.W. to select principals for schools offering integration, when “Excellence, Choice and Equity” are claimed to be the cornerstones of public education.

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Thus, several questions arise from the Problem:

- 1.7.1 What criteria, if any, specific to the appointment of principals need to be added to the current “generic” criteria to ensure that integration programs in N.S.W. public schools are implemented effectively?
- 1.7.2 To what extent, if any, should principals of schools offering integration programs be special educators themselves?
- 1.7.3 To what extent, if any, does the role of principal vary between schools in N.S.W. offering integration programs and those not offering such programs?
- 1.7.4 What contributions do principals make to integration programs in mainstream schools?
- 1.7.5 How do the actions of principals regarding integration programs compare with the expectations of relevant stakeholders, including principals themselves?
- 1.7.6 What proportion of a principal’s time is devoted to managing the integration program?

1.8 ISSUES ARISING OUT OF THE PROBLEM

1.8.1 THE SELECTION CRITERIA

The seven criteria in current use by principal selection panels in N.S.W. public schools Kindergarten to Year 12 are (paraphrased):

- Demonstrated successful leadership
- Demonstrated provision of quality education and improved student outcomes (outstanding teaching skills)
- Demonstrated successful management of programs in welfare and curriculum
- Successful establishment of effective decision-making structures and communication procedures
- Demonstrated success in effective, efficient and equitable resource allocation
- Documented evidence of success in developing and training staff applying E.E.O. (Equal Employment Opportunity) and EAPs (Employee Assistance Programs) principles.

- Demonstrated capacity to meet specific criteria identified by a panel.

(Full details of Selection Criteria can be found in Appendix 1, page 342.)

Hereafter, in discussion of these criteria, they will be referred to as the generic criteria.

In addition to these *essential* criteria, specific *desirable* skills, knowledge and qualifications may be listed in an advertisement. These criteria are determined by a Merit Selection Panel, locally convened to fill a vacancy, and usually referring to specific programs and initiatives within the school where the vacancy exists. Multi-cultural, performing arts, debating and gifted and talented programs are examples of such specific initiatives.

Two problems can arise from the principal selection process in connection with schools where there are integration programs. The first is that the existence of the integration program may not be listed in the desirable criteria because there may be other initiatives within the school which the Merit Selection Panel consider a higher priority (and a 75 word maximum for the advertisement makes brevity essential). The second is that, where reference to experience and knowledge of

integration programs *is* made, the candidate's requirement to respond to this criterion, when weighed up against others, may be reduced. This is particularly true in the case of "hard to staff" (isolated rural, or "tough area") schools.

To clarify, if a candidate were considered outstanding in the seven generic criteria, and if this person had proven abilities in desirable criteria other than those relating to integration, a panel may determine that this candidate was superior to another who, whilst having excellent knowledge of integration, did not have the same level of demonstrated achievement in an area the panel considered was of higher priority. It is the researcher's hypothesis that the integration of one student with a disability, or the addition of one "support" class for a group of students with disabilities, has the potential to generate more comment among staff, students and the community than any other single initiative the school will undertake. It is further hypothesised that, whether this activity and comment are positive and *proactive* or negative and *reactive*, depends upon the attitudes, values, skills and knowledge of the principal.

It was considered crucial, therefore, that the selection criteria currently in use be explored to enable these research questions to be addressed. If the questions did prove to be a valid source of “grounded” theory, then the answers needed to be promulgated to ensure that those who attain the principalship in schools offering integration are genuinely equipped to deal with what will frequently be difficult, sensitive, legally and ethically problematic negotiations with stakeholders whose views may be in diametric opposition. For the area of disability and, more particularly, integration, is one which continues to polarise opinion and galvanise action in N.S.W. public school communities. (Figures 5 ,6 and 7 are examples of clear public reaction in this regard.)

<h2 style="text-align: center;">Schools to receive integration guidelines</h2>		
<p>by Ted Kenny</p>		
<p>Federation is sending guidelines to all schools on the enrolment of children with disabilities. These guidelines should be used by Federation Representatives and staff in determining the enrolment of students with disabilities in regular classes. It is extremely important for Fed Reps to maintain contact with local Federation Organisers when implementing these guidelines.</p> <p>A landmark decision on the issue</p>	<p>of integration was handed down by the Queensland Anti-Discrimination Tribunal on January 18, 1996.</p> <p>The decision, which will be an important precedent for all other states and territories, upheld the right of the Queensland Department of Education and of a Brisbane state school to terminate the enrolment of a student with disabilities. This decision was made by teachers at the school when they could no longer adequately meet the educational, social, behavioural and physical needs</p>	<p>of the student concerned.</p> <p>The decision of the Queensland Anti-Discrimination Tribunal is an important development in the ongoing integration debate and represents a powerful boost to the professional decision-making responsibilities of teachers.</p> <p>It should also silence much ill-informed comment about the legalities of the integration debate and the outright threats made to many teachers.</p> <p><i>Ted Kenny is an Organiser.</i></p>

Figure 5. *Education* , Journal of the N.S.W. Teachers Federation
12.2.1996.

Expulsion is an outrage

I am writing in response to a story I read in *The Advocate* (5/8/95) titled 'Student forced to leave Orara High'. I was outraged when I read this article. The child in question was expelled from this school because of a piece of paper called an 'indemnity'.

The mother of this child told the school the indemnity letter was of a discriminatory nature, yet this child was still expelled.

There was no negotiations on the re-wording of the indemnity or any other options put before the mother of this child.

I believe a grave injustice has been borne against this child and her mother. Policies are a guide and the school principal chose to apply hard tactics and enforce the supposed new policy to the hilt.

Every child deserves the chance to an education and as far as I'm aware in Australia, has the 'right' to an education.

Every school has sufficient resources within its system to provide adequate care for its pupils.

I see this cruel act as a manipulative ploy to coerce the mother to sign a piece of paper.

The school, the school education department and the Minister for Education in this situation should be made accountable for this 'terrible dilemma'.

An innocent child has been expelled for doing absolutely nothing wrong. Doesn't she have any rights? I ask the members of our community. Would you give away the rights of you child?

Teachers call for medically trained staff

The New South Wales Teachers Federation is calling on public support for a campaign to have medically-trained staff available to the State's public schools.

The call for support has come from the regional organiser of the federation, Mr [redacted], in a letter to *The Advocate*.

The letter was referring to the situation at [redacted] High School where parents of a 15-year-old student, [redacted], had withdrawn her from school because she could not get the daily medication attention she needed.

Her parents refused to sign an indemnity for the school, which they described as discriminatory.

The principal of the school, Ms [redacted] said at the time they were following guidelines set down by the Department of School Education which had created a 'dreadful dilemma'.

Yesterday [redacted] said the student had returned to the school three weeks ago after a 'very cooperative process between the teacher, parents and the department, to ensure she gets the education she deserves'.

The situation highlighted the lack of properly trained medical staff available to schools to cater for students' needs, according to Mr [redacted].

Figure 6: *The Advocate*, 2nd September, 1995.

Student forced out

My attention has been drawn to an item 'Student forced to leave High School' (The Advocate 5/8/95), the reading of which fills me with sadness and disgust. 'Dreadful dilemma' was the principal's description of the situation. Just a touch more than that, I think.

To a child in situation, suffering spina-bifida and hydrocephalus, 'going-to-school' means something totally different to our own narrow academic interpretation. For it is her life. It represents almost totally, her social contact outside of her home, her interaction with the community and the community with her hydrotherapy, physiotherapy, psychotherapy.

It also represents eight hours rest each week-day for her mother. This lady is now in the unenviable position of being unable to go anywhere at all without lifting who is 15 years old, a young adult, in and out of a vehicle. That is at least four times on any one excursion. How long is any woman's back supposed to cope with this situation? And where does this leave her back in?

'Dreadful dilemma'? Well, sort of. I guess the degree of 'dreadfulness' of any dilemma depends upon your perspective.

The tragic stupidity of all this is that for 11 years of her 15 years has been attending school, being catheterised at noon each day as part of her daily routine set out by her specialist at Camperdown Childrens Hospital. Now suddenly we

have a 'dreadful dilemma'!

From whence does this 'dreadful dilemma' emanate? One is set to ponder. From the Education Department in Lismore who are seemingly devoid of all-knowledge?

From a suddenly produced 'incemnity' document, which on legal advice mother has refused to sign (which document has been in existence since 1987 only to be released from its departmental sarcophagus in 1995)?

From the 'Federation' who have apparently advised the High School support unit staff not to administer any 'medications' whatsoever? (catheterisation is not in any way a 'medication' in any case).

Or could it even be with Australia Post's seeming inability to deliver a letter from

to reach in under eight days; four days after removal from her school?

The mind boggles? If is in this big a 'dreadful dilemma' it may even be advisable to quickly flush itself into an ocean outfall and leave its effluent dilemma on land!

Incidentally the High School letterhead on which 'dreadful dilemma' was conveyed to her officially reads, 'Striving to maximise human potential in a co-operative, caring environment'. Mmmmmmm.

GWYN AUSTEN
Red Rock

Figure 7: *The Advocate*, 9th September, 1995.

1.8.2 THE INTEGRATION PROCESS

The placement of students with disabilities in N.S.W. public schools follows a “cascade” model, meaning that levels of support decrease from fully segregated to minimally supported, fully integrated placement, depending on the student’s assessed needs at school entry and, thereafter, six monthly review. (Appendix 2, page 343 illustrates the “Cascade of Services” Model for N.S.W. DSE schools.)

The decision to enrol a student with disabilities into a regular school in N.S.W. over the last decade has not generally involved the principal until the “moment of enrolment”. The determination as to whether to integrate a student is usually made as the result of psychometric (IQ) testing, completed by counselling staff at any of the Department of School Education’s ten Regional Offices, often in response to a referral by a doctor or parent. (Since the August 1995 restructuring, and the accompanying dissolution of a regional tier, this responsibility is in the process of being reallocated and may ultimately be undertaken by District Offices, of which there are 40 across N.S.W.) The child’s special needs may have been identified early, even at birth, and may have already been considered sufficiently disabling to attract special education support at pre-school level.

Students considered suitable to enter integration programs usually do

so some time between Kindergarten and Year 6. If a child has already been provided with some support to be integrated in the pre-school years, it is often the case that entry into an integration program at Kindergarten level is the next logical step in his or her preparation for life, provided progress meetings with involved personnel indicate that this is appropriate. It is unlikely that the principal of the enrolling school will have had any involvement in these meetings, just as it is unlikely that the principal would be involved in the enrolment of any other pre-schooler to the Kindergarten class in his or her school. The only exceptions to this standard would be if the enrolling school had an Early Intervention Program attached (as part of a pre-school).

While the issue of enrolment without principal consultation could be considered appropriate in terms of equality of educational opportunity and the principles of “normalisation”, the notion of the principal’s capacity to inform such placement decisions from the standpoint of the school itself has been largely ignored. The insights the principal might bring to the decision to integrate the student could relate to the “climate” of the school, the composition of the student body, logistical issues, such as class size, room location or the timetable, or even the preparedness of the existing special education or mainstream staff to support additional students. These could, potentially, be influential in the success of the student’s integration and, although it is beyond the

scope of this study to establish in any detail whether this is so, it might seem reasonable to assume that all factors mentioned above are relevant to some extent. Certainly, the furore reported in Figures 6 and 7 might have been avoided had prior consultation with the principal helped to determine whether there were personnel on staff who were prepared to undertake all aspects this student's care.

1.8.3 N.S.W. DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION POLICY

Of more general value to the success of integration programs may be the principal's commitment to an "inclusive" education policy. The N.S.W. Department of School Education's Enrolment of Children with Disabilities Policy Statement (Memorandum 88-007;1988) and the Integration Policy (Memorandum 88-008;1988) clearly set down the rationale for inclusive education and detail the procedures to be followed. Of interest is the statement from the Memorandum 88-007 that "The Principal is the officer responsible for making the offer of enrolment to the parent" (1.3) In the cases of the two regions included in this study, the letters of offer of placement in support classes came from Regional Office personnel, while no formal offers of individual integration placement were made by any of the principals interviewed by this researcher. Access to reports, contained in District Guidance Files, was limited and only rarely forthcoming on personal request to

the District School Counsellor. Principals were, and are, expected to receive enrolments for children about whose needs they know little, and may then be subjected to criticism when there is a problem. Hence, their commitment to inclusive education needs to be strong because it will frequently be tried!

The Policy also outlines avenues for additional funding by submission to support students with disabilities placed in regular classrooms. Where students are to be enrolled in “support” classes - segregated classes consisting of a comparatively small number of students with disabilities and usually taught by a special educator - there exists a Review protocol which ensures that student placement in a segregated setting continues to be in the best interests of the student - the “least *restrictive* environment”. Where the student has had access to Integration Program funding, the Review focuses on how the funds were spent, in short, whether the integration was *cost effective* - a rather less student-focused basis for evaluation, to say the least!

The principal of a school accommodating “support” classes will have varying degrees of involvement in the Review process. “Support” classes are those which provide programs for students with particular disabilities (intellectual, physical or sensory, for example). Class sizes are small (usually fewer than ten) and programs are generally prepared

and implemented by special educators. Students usually participate in school-wide programs for at least part of their time, some entering same-age mainstream classes individually for certain learning programs, as considered appropriate. The importance of the principal's advice in the monitoring of placements of children in either fully or partially integrated programs was included for examination in this study to establish the perceived value of this advice to stakeholders. Current practice varies widely, and it is often the case that, while several key personnel may attend Reviews, the principal's involvement may begin and end at arranging a venue for the meeting, or funding relief for "support" or mainstream staff to attend the Review.

1.9 ADMINISTRATIVE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The researcher believes that this study is the first into the role of the principal in integration in N.S.W. schools research. As such, the gathering of data about what relevant stakeholders perceive to be critical aspects of the principal's role in schools offering integration programs will serve several purposes:

1.9.1 Principals may examine aspects of their work which they and their school communities perceive most closely relate to successful integration.

1.9.2 The time principals spend completing tasks related to integration in their schools will be mapped, and the tasks will be described.

1.9.3 The expectations of teaching both “support” and mainstream teaching staff for the principal’s role in integration may be clarified.

1.9.4 The expectations of the role of principal by the parents of children with disabilities can be determined.

1.9.5 District Superintendents will have the opportunity to compare their assumptions regarding the principal’s involvement in the integration program with actual practice.

1.9.6 A comparison of the “generic” selection criteria currently in use will be made with these data to expose differences between knowledge and skills required for the principalship of schools offering integration programs and schools not offering such opportunities.

1.10 THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE STUDY

The rationale for undertaking a study into the principal’s role in integration rests on the belief that, wherever possible, students with special needs (disabilities, learning difficulties, medical conditions) should be able to access education at their local public school. It is

acknowledged that, for some students, segregated schooling *is* their “least restrictive” environment, both socially and academically speaking. This acknowledgement does not, however, preclude any student from accessing *some* aspects of integrated learning experience at *some* time in his or her school career; the suitability of the learning environment will always need to be assessed and reassessed at regular intervals to ensure that the student’s placement continues to be appropriate. For *most* students, however, regular schooling remains the optimum place for the student’s preparation for life:

This Policy (for integration) is based on the principle of ‘normalisation’, that is the creation of a lifestyle and a set of living conditions for people with disabilities which are as close as possible to those enjoyed by the rest of the population. The regular school environment has been found to be advantageous for many students who are disabled. A secondary benefit will be that the school community will learn about disabilities and develop a greater acceptance of people who are disabled. (Integration Statement, DSE Memo 88-008, 1988:1)

Furthermore,

Inclusion is a philosophy that acknowledges the importance of the real world for students’ learning. Every society has had to face the question of how to treat individuals who differ from the norm, and the vision of building strong communities based on peace, unity, and acceptance for all is an appealing one. We can begin to make this vision a reality in our public schools by accepting and valuing children with disabilities exactly as they are. (Van Dyke et al., 1995:475)

This viewpoint emanated from the pioneering work of Wolf Wolfensberger in Canada and Mark Gold in the U.S. during the seventies, whose studies into “normalisation” were persuasive enough to inform public legislation such as Public Law 94 -142 in the U.S., the Regular Education Initiative (REI) in Canada and a variety of anti-discrimination legislation here in Australia. So much evidence has been amassed in the last two decades to support the right of the child with a disability to a regular school education that the argument *for* would seem almost irrefutable.

Equally abundant is the research into “best practice” for school principals. N.S.W. research, predominantly from the Universities of New England and New South Wales, has contributed a substantial local literature on the topic, leading in the last decade to the design and implementation of specific post-graduate courses to broaden the knowledge and skills of practising and aspiring school leaders in this State.

What this research aspired to achieve was an amalgam of these theories - the benefits of integration and the characteristics of effective leadership - to propose a refined standard of principal selection and induction practices with the needs of children with disabilities in mind, so that policy makers will in future account for this most important

initiative in their planning for N.S.W. public schools.

1.11 DEFINITION OF TERMS AND KEY CONCEPTS USED

The key concepts referred to in this research are as follows:

ADD, ADHD are acronyms for Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

D.S.E. is an acronym for the New South Wales Department of School Education.

Curative Education is an educational intervention for students with moderate to severe multiple disabilities, involving gross motor programming, using equipment and massage to stimulate musculature and, it is claimed, intellectual development.

Directorate refers to a section of the Department of School Education, overseen by a Director. Examples of Directorates are Properties, Teaching and Learning, and Personnel and Employee Relations.

District is an area containing up to 60 schools. There are now 40 Districts in N.S.W. replacing the 10 Regions in place until August 1995. Each District is overseen by a Superintendent of Schools and comprises several members of staff to advise, consult and monitor various operations of schools. A District Superintendent oversees each District, conveying information to schools and reporting to the D.S.E. .

Generic Criteria are those criteria for staff selection and promotion which have been generated by the DSE as guidelines for all selection panels in N.S.W.

IEP is an acronym for Individual Education Plan, a program designed for a single student, usually including long term teaching objectives broken down into shorter term outcomes. IEPs are generally developed for a semester and reviewed regularly in response to student performance data.

Inclusion is a term referring to the practice of placing students with special learning needs into specific educational programs designed to maximise their participation in mainstream learning experiences taking place in regular school settings.

Integration is the practice of introducing students with special needs to full-time regular classroom settings with the view to assisting them to achieve some, though perhaps not all, of the learning objectives set for that classroom. Students may be assisted in this process by the addition of individual teacher or teacher's aide support.

Mainstreaming refers to the physical location of students with disabilities in regular school settings.

Mainstream Teacher refers to a teacher in a regular primary, secondary or central school.

Merit Selection is the process by which candidates are selected for a position on the basis of merit, with no account necessarily given to seniority within the System.

Outcome is a specifically defined objective to be achieved either by the student, through the completion of a project or segment of instruction, or by the teacher in the form of specific instructional plans.

Region refers to the geographic areas defined by the DSE until August, 1995. There were ten Regions in N.S.W., each administered by an Assistant Director- General.

Remediation refers to the instructional paradigm which targets the teaching of specific skills lacking in a student, such as literacy, with the intended outcome of bring the student “up to par” with peers’ levels. It is mastery based and does not account for notions of partial participation in an activity or skill.

Restructuring is the process by which staffing establishments are reviewed and rationalised to reduce or eliminate duplication of purpose. The N.S.W. DSE has undergone three restructuring processes since 1989.

Review refers to a (usually) bi-annual process in which key personnel discuss the progress of the students in their current placement, and make decisions about whether placement should continue, terminate or change. Written recommendations are submitted to Regional personnel (probably District personnel, and on to Special Education Directorate in future).

Review Committees usually comprise a Departmental special education representative (the Director of Schools for the Cluster in the past; it is not known how the Department will be represented in the future), the class teacher, the District School Counsellor, therapy staff as appropriate, sometimes the parent and, less often, the student.

SES is an acronym for the Senior Executive Service of the N.S.W. DSE. It comprises the Director-General, Deputy Directors-General, Assistant Directors-General, Heads of Program Directorates and Superintendents of School Districts.

Selection Panels are panels convened by the principal of a school or the District Superintendent or other Senior Executive Service officers for the purposes of short-listing and selecting candidates for employment or promotion. Selection panels in the N.S.W. DSE structure usually comprise a nominee of the Director-General, a peer of the candidate, a community member and, in the case of principals' positions, a member of the teaching or ancillary staff of the school where the vacancy exists.

SSP is an acronym for School for Specific Purposes. These are special schools which serve students with a specific type of disability, for example, intellectual disabilities.

Support Class refers to a special education class established in a regular school setting and having access to the resources and activities of the regular school, including integration programs. Support classes can be classified as follows:

- IM - for students with mild intellectual disability (maximum 15)
- IO - for students with moderate intellectual disability (maximum 9)
- IS - for students with severe intellectual disability (maximum 6)
- P - for students with physical disability (maximum 9)
- L - for students with a language disorder (maximum 8)
- H - for students with a hearing impairment (maximum 8)
- B or BD -for students with behaviour problems (maximum 6, primary age)
- ED - for students with emotional disturbances (maximum 6)
- CD - for students with conduct disorders (maximum 6, secondary age)
- EI - for students in early intervention (max. part-time caseload 12)
- ESS - for students with mild intellectual disability K-2 (maximum 12)

Support Teacher refers to a teacher who develops and provides Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities or special learning needs. This teacher usually has additional qualifications to basic teacher training.

T.A.(S) is an acronym for Teacher's Aide (Special), a teacher's aide who works specifically with children who have special needs or disabilities. Their duties differ significantly from those of a teacher's aide in a

regular school, and include direct instruction of students, using programs designed and monitored by the special educator on the class. Teacher's Aides (Special) can also be responsible for feeding and toileting children, giving medication and transporting children. Many undergo training in the form of the Teacher's Aide (Special) Jobskills courses (Stage 1 and 2) offered by the Department of School Education.

Withdrawal Teaching is a mode of teaching involving removal of a student with special needs from the mainstream class for varying periods of the school day to provide intensive instruction. An example of withdrawal teaching is the Reading Recovery program in many N.S.W. public schools. A specialist Reading Recovery teacher will spend 40 minutes each day with a child who has reading problems, following a specific individual program which is designed to be followed for a term (10 weeks).

1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF THE STUDY

The area of disability is an emotive one for all stakeholders and an ethical and thoroughly professional approach is demanded to protect the confidentiality of informants and the privacy of the principals, teachers, children and parents whose schools are involved. Many principals and classroom teachers find themselves in situations in which they have been directed to integrate students with disabilities following some ministerial or departmental pressure. They may feel ill-equipped both professionally and logistically to manage these students' needs. They may feel personally opposed to integration for reasons they believe are justifiable, for example, class sizes of 30+ make it difficult to meet the child's needs, physical space needed for a wheelchair may hamper other students' access, playground duty may become more demanding, and so on. Or they may manage to teach in schools which are large and whose student body is so varied and demanding that integration represents just one more program to be sustained with dwindling resources.

Stakeholders participating in any research into a difficult or sensitive human rights area need the reassurance that their responses will be totally confidential. The researcher must make it clear both in standard letters and orally, and participants must be assured of anonymity.

It is also important to tell principals participating that they may have access to any findings, so that they and their communities may feel that their contributions have the potential to be a gain for themselves as well as the researcher.

Parent participation presents other ethical issues as there may be potential for feelings of suspicion about what is being said by other informants at the same school. Parents of children with disabilities may have certain beliefs about their children which make their participation painful and confronting. The researcher in this study believes that, while it risks biasing results to some extent, the protection of parents' privacy demands that school staff be consulted about approaching parents who are more likely to be comfortable about the questions asked, and more confident about responding. The researcher is of the opinion that such consultation is appropriate, and the risk associated with seeking advice about parent selection should be accepted as reasonable. Finally, the need arises with research of this kind to fully explain to participants the purpose and intent of the work, and to allow for schools where one or more key informants do not wish to participate, or where the school principal considers that the timing of the study places additional burdens on the school. While this may reduce the number of schools which may be included, it does serve to

produce participant groups who are really interested in, and committed to, the work being undertaken.

1.13 DESCRIPTION OF CHAPTER CONTENTS

CHAPTER TWO

A sampling of research and published opinion related to principal effectiveness and principal selection will be reviewed in this Chapter. There will be discussion of other work focusing on principals' and teachers' attitudes to integration. Some research findings about principals' roles in implementing integration programs, and published opinion about this matter, will be reported on, with a focus on the extent to which principals need knowledge and skills in special education. Finally, the literature related to parents' expectations will be reviewed.

CHAPTER THREE

The conceptual framework underpinning this research will be outlined in Chapter Three. The Chapter will then present details of the methodology used in this research, describing the sample selected, the location and descriptions of the schools involved, and the types of integration programs offered in each. The sequence and duration of

steps in the research will also be outlined. The methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation will be detailed, and commentary given about the problems associated with the conduct of this study. There will be discussion of the limitations of the research methodology at the conclusion of the Chapter Three.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings of the research will be detailed in this Chapter, under the headings suggested by five of the six Research Questions, namely:

- Principal aptitudes and effective integration programs.
- Principals as special educators - What do stakeholders think?
- Variation in personal qualities and attributes between principals in integrating schools and principals in schools not offering integration programs.
- Principals' current roles in implementing integration.
- Variations between the expectations of the principal's role in integration by stakeholders and actual practice.

Following on from Chapter Three, there will be further discussion of how data were arranged for interpretation prior to their detailed presentation. Implications of this research for principal induction,

training and selection will then be suggested, with a focus on currently used selection criteria.

CHAPTER FIVE

This Chapter will present the research findings regarding the proportion of principals' time that is currently devoted to integration, as compared to the amount of time stakeholders, including principals themselves, expect that integration should take. There will be exploration of the time taken to complete various integration related tasks, and the "integration time factor" will be discussed in the context of total school management tasks undertaken by principals in N.S.W. public schools. Some implications of the "integration time factor" for future role descriptions and selection criteria for principals will be proposed at the conclusion of Chapter Five.

CHAPTER SIX

This Chapter will summarise findings from this study and will propose answers to the six Research Questions asked in Chapter One. Conclusions will be drawn, and any conditions or cautions attached to these will be included in discussion of the limitations of the study. Recommendations

will be made regarding the ways in which principals are selected, inducted and trained for their roles in N.S.W. public schools as suggested by the findings of this research. Finally, questions arising out of this study will be indicated as suggested foci for future research into principal training and induction, principal selection and the principal's role in implementing integration programs.