Middle managers in secondary schools: rhetoric and reality.

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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with contrasting the rhetoric and the reality experienced by teacher middle managers. A significant number of teachers interviewed in the study see this rhetoric as being generated at and promulgated from the 'centre'. The thesis considers how this centrally devised rhetoric influences teacher middle managers in secondary schools. The thesis utilized a 'grounded theory' approach. Class teachers, teacher middle managers and senior managers in two secondary schools were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. These teachers were also observed as they interacted with colleagues in both formal and informal situations. Those teacher middle managers interviewed and observed were concerned about the need to give considerable amounts of time in order to carry out the many tasks they were expected to undertake. The findings suggest that teacher middle managers perceive the public nature of teaching and consequently value the acknowledgement and approval of colleagues and pupils. The findings also suggest that teacher middle managers were keen to develop a balance between the demands made of them at home and school. Interview responses also suggest that class teachers and teacher middle managers seek certainty and control in their working lives but understand the need to compromise and develop coping strategies. Most significantly the findings suggest that teachers were seeking to hide (by using 'camouflage') from their senior managers and class teacher colleagues, the reality of their day-to-day teaching experiences. There is also some evidence that teacher middle managers are engaging in 'collusion' with class teacher colleagues and senior managers to expedite the meeting of bureaucratic 'targets' and rhetorical 'standards'.

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Abbreviations

BEMAS	British Educational Management and Administration Society
BERA	British Education Research Association
DES	Department of Education and Science
DfE	Department for Education
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GM	Grant Maintained
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectors (of schools)
INSET	In Service Education and Training (for teachers)
LEA	Local Education Authority
LMS	Local Management of Schools
NAHT	National Association of Headteachers
NC	National Curriculum
NFER	National Foundation for Educational Research
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
SATs	Standard Assessment Tasks/Tests
SENCO	Special Educational Need Co-ordinator
SHA	Secondary Headteachers Association
TQM	Total Quality Management

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Acknowledgements

Preface

The initial focus of this research study was the formal and informal roles of secondary school middle managers and the perceptions of these middle managers held by class teachers and senior managers. I have been a middle manager (head of department and head of faculty) in secondary schools in the north west of England for 13 years. It was apparent when talking with fellow middle managers that they were not always clear where formal and informal roles began and ended. A significant number of these middle managers appeared unsure about whether their primary role was to supervise, manage, monitor, motivate and/or lead a team or group of staff. Subject leaders (Heads of Department/Heads of Faculty) and pastoral leaders (Heads of Year/Heads of House) seemed unsure as to whether their primary role was to lead and manage a team of teachers or teach and manage their classes of pupils. Many of these middle managers suggested and/or implied that their attitudes and responses to pupils and pupil needs had changed with the changing demands of the secondary school after the introduction of:

- the National Curriculum

- OFSTED inspections

- target setting

- the plethora of initiatives that permeate secondary schools.

Many of those middle managers encountered throughout my career acknowledged that they experienced a dilemma between being pupil focused or management system oriented. They felt that they were being encouraged to choose between addressing the needs of their pupils and classes and at the same time being actively encouraged to

maintain a role that concerned itself with the rhetoric of management systems and the rhetoric of improving standards and effectiveness.

This initial research focus led to pilot interviews being planned and conducted with a small group of middle managers. The pilot interviews were transcribed and analysed. After analysing these pilot interviews it became apparent that those middle managers interviewed had made comments that implied they experienced significant stress in their day-to-day teaching lives. Whilst teachers expressing the occurrence of significant stress in their day-to-day working lives was no new revelation, it was the strength of feeling expressed by these experienced middle managers that became apparent. For this reason it was decided to enquire further into the day-to-day tensions experienced by secondary school middle managers in attempting to balance the rhetoric and the reality of secondary schools. There was also a desire to determine the origin of these stressors and what 'coping with' and 'managing' these stresses may mean for those who 'manage in the middle'.

To support the view that we need to gain some further insight into this issue of stress and middle managers, we have only to look at the comments made by two teachers in the pilot stage of the research.

> '... how can I say it ... the children are the ones who dictate... '
> '...I do not like to be questioned every time I send somebody out... then I have to write another note about exactly what they did. '
> (Pastoral Leader)

> '... the monitoring has been used ... negatively ... in terms of finding fault with people... ' (Head of Department)

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The pastoral leader (a head of house) above was perceived by her colleagues to be a caring, effective and committed teacher and yet her strong feelings about pupils are clear to see. It is evident, if we focus on the latter part of her comment, that this pastoral leader is expressing concern about the manner in which her line manager '...questioned...' her and how this questioning resulted in this experienced middle manager feeling undermined and undervalued. This Pastoral Leader also acknowledges the need to record '... exactly ...' what happened. She is aware of the rhetoric that pervades teaching - this rhetoric places an obligation on teachers to explain and justify their actions incident by incident. The exasperation of having to '... write another note ...' is plain to see. The reality for this teacher is that she sees herself being distracted from her teaching by a disruptive pupil and then being distracted further by having to write about the disruptive incident. In the second transcript extract the Head of Department acknowledges the rhetoric of '... monitoring ...'. He makes it clear that he believes monitoring can be used to undermine teachers. The reality for this head of department is that he is aware of senior managers using monitoring as a means of '... finding fault ...'. It is evident from the two comments above that teacher middle managers, encountered at the outset of this study, were succinctly expressing feelings of discontent with their daily experience of teaching. These strongly held beliefs and feelings of being under stress were obviously going to stay with me throughout this study. These two experienced middle managers were also well aware of the rhetoric pervading the teaching and managing taking place in secondary schools. More importantly these teacher middle managers had to contend with what they saw as the day-to-day reality of teaching and managing in a secondary school.

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The last twenty-five years has seen a growing body of work concerned with teachers and stress (Kyricaou and Sutcliffe 1978; Dunham 1984; Travers and Cooper 1996). There has been less research on the impact of stress and the demands made of teachers and on the role and function of teachers over time. No evidence was found of research that interrelates both the teacher middle manager's role over time and the prevailing focus on management systems rhetoric. This focus on management systems has manifested itself in activities, such as target setting and performance management, which have become interconnected with the implementation of the National Curriculum.

By interviewing teachers, middle managers and senior managers it was hoped to give them the opportunity to tell me why they feel under stress. To derive an insight from such interactions was not going to be easy and achieving objectivity would be challenging and perhaps even at times elusive. The desire for objectivity makes it vital that each stage in the process of writing this is made explicit. It is also important that the interactions observed and the researcher's reflections on these interactions are also made explicit.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) encouraged the use of 'grounded theory' as a method of obtaining an insight into social systems. The social system of the secondary school is complex, and whilst many teachers' day-to-day experiences can be positive, many teachers experience conflict, ambiguity and contradiction. Because of the nature of schools and the relationships within schools it was felt that utilising the 'grounded theory' approach as a framework for the enquiry may provide some insight into this complex context.

Throughout this thesis, the term 'teacher' is used as a generic reference to all teachers including class teachers, middle managers and senior managers. 'Class teacher' will be taken to mean any teacher who has no middle management function. The term 'teacher middle manager' will be taken to mean any teacher who has a teaching role combined with a significant management role. The term 'senior manager' will be taken to mean anyone who has a role within the senior management team of a school, usually a whole school responsibility.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Schools and ideology

Education 'ideologies' have been discussed at length by many influential educationalists and philosophers such as Dewey (1915), Hirst and Peters (1970) and Bernstein (1977). Dewey was more concerned with the needs of the pupil and what s/he needs for 'growth'. He considered concepts such as 'problem-solving' and wished to see young people engaging with topics that challenged them and their thinking. Dewey's focus on the individual can be contrasted with Hirst and Peters' concerns with the needs of the curriculum. They held the view that activities such as 'science' and 'philosophy' are worthwhile to have in the curriculum because this knowledge allows the illumination of many areas of life. Bernstein also focused on the curriculum. In particular Bernstein concentrated on identifying types of curricula that could be discerned - curricula where content is insulated and bound by subject boundaries and in contrast to this 'integrated' curricula where content boundaries are not clearly defined and contribute to an overarching theme. It is evident from the above there has been a long history of national and international debate in relation to what should be in a school curriculum. From the foregoing, it is evident that the curriculum debate has always had, as a major element, a recognition that there is a tension between the needs of the pupil and the needs of the curriculum. This perhaps signals the tensions that teachers have experienced with regard to meeting the needs of the individual and the needs of the curriculum.

Within the context of this tension we could also highlight Egan's (1999) thoughts on the fundamentally contradictory nature of schools and schooling. He suggests that the

problems we see in our schools are a result of the incompatibility of previously taken-for-granted aims of school and schooling - socialisation, allowing pupils to have a rational view of reality and allowing pupils to learn how to learn. Egan is keen to state that at various points in history people have insisted on the priority of one of these aims over the others. At the same time schools have been blamed for giving precedence to one ideology over another. This contradictory nature of schools and schooling and the curriculum of the school is a reality that cannot be dismissed easily.

This chapter considers the issues of:

- curricula and ideology

- development of a national curriculum

- the National Curriculum and centralised control

- the National Curriculum and the control of teachers.

1.2 Curricula and ideology

If we accept Bash *et al 's* (1985) definition of ideology,

> '... a collection of beliefs, organised in a more or less systematic way, having the function of sustaining or promoting a particular view of the world which is in harmony with the holder's social class.' (p.61)

then perhaps we can see the importance of uncovering the influence education ideology debates have had on schools. It is also important to acknowledge that the literature produced by Dewey, Hirst and Peters and Bernstein, whilst addressing education and schools, was related to their wider thoughts on society and the influence school played in society and the influence society had in and on schools.

1.2.1 School curricula

Since the mid to late 1980's teachers in schools have been aware of the concerns, voiced by central government and others, with regard to school curricula. In particular there have been some serious concerns expressed with regard to the content and method of delivery of the curricula in primary and secondary schools.

The ongoing debate about a 'core', 'common' or 'national curriculum' involved utilising these educational ideologies to reason or argue for how the curriculum should be and how it should be delivered. Historically these debates about schools and school curricula had taken place mainly within and between professional bodies and academics. Indeed it is possible to characterize the type of debate that took place by looking at how Taylor and Richards (1986) outline the debates that took place in academic circles up to the mid/late 1980's, the period immediately preceding the implementation of a National Curriculum. Taylor and Richards cite examples of those who have sought to classify educational ideology; Davies (1969) and his classification of 'conservative', 'romantic', 'revisionist' and 'democratic' ideologies and Scrimshaw (1983) with his classification of 'progressive', 'instrumentalism', 'reconstructionism', 'classical humanism' and 'liberal humanism' ideologies. But more importantly Taylor and Richards acknowledge the struggle between these and other ideologies to:

> '... influence distribution, exercise and justification of power in education. It is a struggle for the power to define education and to transmit particular beliefs and values to the young.' (p.36)

Those academics that debated differing curricula or ways of delivering the curricula did so amongst themselves. Indeed these debates generally talked about teachers and teaching and rarely talked with teachers let alone pupils. However there are some notable exceptions. One has only to recall the case of William Tyndale Primary School in Islington. At William Tyndale a group of 'radical' teachers attempted to put in place a 'progressive' pedagogy. After much media attention including derision and castigation by a conservative press the radical headteacher and teachers were brought into line (although the headteacher commented 'Schools that create adverse publicity are bad and receive bad inspection reports: those that "don't make waves" wallow on', Ellis *et al* 1976 p.141). Regardless of the validity of the argument used to put in place a progressive curriculum the control exerted by the press and others was enough to ensure that little if any power or influence was to be found within schools.

1.2.2 The development of a national curriculum

It is perhaps wise to produce a summary of some important milestones that preceded the National Curriculum. These milestones may give some idea as to *how* a national curriculum came about but perhaps more importantly they give an insight into *why* a centrally controlled national curriculum was established. The significant developments in the long road to implementation of a National Curriculum give us some clues as to the political thinking with regard to the centralised control of schools and the educational experience of the nation's young people. At times there appears, on the part of central government, a desire to influence and improve the school experience of primary and secondary pupils. In contrast to this it is apparent that central control is the *raison d'etre*

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in the period just before the implementation of the National Curriculum and in the ensuing reviews and developments of the National Curriculum.

In 1964 the Schools Council was set up to promote curriculum development. In its foreword to the *Schools Council Report* 1974-75 (1975) it stated,

> 'Its purpose is... to help teachers decide what to teach and how to teach it. ...each school should have the fullest possible measure of responsibility for its own curriculum and teaching methods based on the needs of its own pupils and evolved by its own staff.'(p.ii)

The responsibility and involvement teachers and schools had for developing their own curricula was obviously seen as vital. From these early days of the Schools Council it is obvious that schools were given much of the responsibility for identifying the needs of pupils and developing appropriate curricula for them. It is wise to contrast this 1960s Schools Council perspective on developing curricula with later perspectives on the part to be played by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) and central government.

HMI had sought to put forward a view of what should be in 'the curriculum' of maintained schools. Indeed in 1977 the 'Great Debate' brought to the fore the idea of the 'common curriculum'. The publication of the Department of Education and Science (DES) *Curriculum 11-16* was perhaps one of the first attempts at developing a centralised control of the curriculum. The Department of Education and Science became concerned about the Schools' Council and eventually it was abolished (in 1982), to be replaced by the Examinations Council and School Curriculum Development Committee.

Sir Keith Joseph's (Secretary of State for Education 1981-86) White Paper on Better Schools (DES 1985) allowed curriculum policy to be considered nationally, locally and at school level. However, by 1986 Kenneth Baker (Secretary of State for Education) was suggesting that the Conservative government was considering a centrally controlled curriculum. Indeed as Maclure (1988) notes the idea of a centrally controlled curriculum,

> '... regarded as highly controversial in the early 1980's ... figured in the Conservative election manifesto at the general election in 1987.' (p.10)

What was once seen as 'highly controversial' found its way into the Conservative manifesto for its third term in office. It obviously took two terms in office for the Conservative government to decide that the time was right for a centrally controlled national curriculum for British schools. The Conservative government obviously felt the opposition to a national curriculum would be so great that they should leave any attempt to see it on the statute books until they had an unassailable majority in parliament with which to bring it about.

The subsequent 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) made it clear that the secretary of state had legal control of the curriculum. This removed the confusion in the 1986 Education Act – this Act concerned itself with the composition of governing bodies and the role of Local Education Authorities.

1.3 National Curriculum and centralised control

The Conservative government of the 1980's wished to take more control of what was experienced by young people in schools. It was suggested by some that it was the desire

for accountability that drove the Conservative governments of the 1980's to bring about a

National Curriculum. Indeed Maclure says of the Educational Reform Act,

> 'It was the prime aim of the Act to make schools more accountable and give parents more and better information about their children's progress.'(p.11)

The idea that parents were to be better informed, and thus make informed decisions

about schools, became more evident as the implication of the education reforms became

apparent. The establishment of school league tables reinforced the idea that parents could

make informed choices based on more information. Almost prophetically Maclure went

on to say,

> 'Experience in the USA and elsewhere had shown the likelihood that the curriculum could become 'test driven' if universal external testing were introduced in a simplistic and clumsy way.' (p.11)

Maclure was prophetic, in that it has long been the concern of teachers and parents alike

that, primary schools seem too keenly focused on Key Stage (KS) 1 and 2 Standard

Assessment Tests (SATs). Secondary schools have also been preoccupied with KS 3

SATs results and the percentage of pupils achieving 5 A-C grades at GCSE. Schools have

been keen to see these results improve year on year and hence improve the schools'

positions in the school 'league tables'.

The advent of the National Curriculum and the centralised control of the school

curriculum brought about by Conservative governments of the 1980's led many to

believe that the days were numbered for those academics and local authorities seeking to

influence schools with their ideas about the curriculum.

The Conservative government's stated desire to give schools greater control over their own budgets and the manifestation of this in the Local Management of Schools (LMS) and the opportunities for schools to become Grant Maintained was perceived as something which would eventually lead to schools influencing greatly their own destiny. Over a short period of time we saw the contradiction of schools losing control of their curriculum development but seemingly achieving more control over their budgets. But perhaps more importantly it would suggest that the government was more concerned with removing control from local authorities and this would be better facilitated if the Local Education Authority had less control of the local schools' budgets. It is no secret that the Conservative government of the day was quite concerned about the influence some 'left wing' Labour councils were having on schools. It would seen reasonable to conclude that wresting control of schools away from Local Education Authorities (LEAs), especially those LEAs which were giving cause for concern, would perhaps allow these authorities to be brought into line. Of course giving parents the right to vote on whether or not schools should be Grant Maintained only served to convince these parents that they were taking part in a democratic and fair process. It was no great surprise that there were numerous examples of schools which were about to close under Local Education Authority reorganisation or schools that were previously 'Direct Grant' schools making up a significant proportion of those schools that became Grant Maintained. Yet again this highlights the tension that existed for these schools. There was a tension between being seen as 'progressive', because these schools were breaking away from the control of local education authorities but at the same time having to subscribe to the control of central government.

The introduction of specialist schools status, in the 1990's, also encouraged some schools to seek alternative methods of acquiring resources other than through the Local Education Authority. This in turn encouraged others (local business and industry) to have influence over the function of those successful in becoming specialist schools. Presenting financial bids to central government, as all schools interested in becoming specialist schools had to do, yet again encouraged these schools to see a closer attachment to central government and local business, rather than an attachment to their Local Education Authority.

The change in hue of the government, in 1997, seemed to do little to dampen the enthusiasm for centralised control of schools and even classrooms. The introduction (or imposition) of Literacy and Numeracy hours at KS2 led some in schools to believe that the government was seeking to control too rigidly the day-to-day experiences of pupils. (Of course the plans that Numeracy and Literacy strategies used at KS2 will be prescribed at KS3 also suggest that secondary schools are going to have the same level of imposition that primary schools have previously seen.) It would seem to many that it would be increasingly difficult to wrestle control away from central government.

The more recent initiative with regard to the 14-19 curriculum (DfEE 1999) and the creation of the Learning and Skills Councils has seen yet again the decreasing of an LEA's influence on both secondary schools and post-16 colleges (Marples 2000).

1.3.1 Centralised control and centrally driven policies

The inception of the National Curriculum brought about, on the part of central government, a concentration on issues such as:

- raising standards/school improvement

- effectiveness

- leadership on the part of the headteacher

These issues were sources of much debate and the focus of this debate was on the role of the newly created Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). OFSTED inspections were to replace HMI inspections of schools and would be focusing on issues of effectiveness, efficiency, leadership and standards. Whilst there have been many changes to the OFSTED inspection criteria, at the outset of OFSTED's existence the above issues were crucial for them to consider when they inspected any primary or secondary school.

1.3.2 The rhetoric of 'raising standards' and becoming 'efficient'.

It has been the stated aim of central government to 'raise standards' and make schools 'effective' and 'efficient' (Docking 2000). To do this successive governments have sought:

- to gain control of what schools do (through the National Curriculum)

- to have oversight (through OFSTED) of how schools function

- to disseminate perceived 'best practice'. (To tell teachers how to teach.)

After more than a decade when we have seen a centralized control of schools, the rhetoric of government encourages a belief that the leaders, managers and teachers in schools now find it easier to identify their primary role and function. This rhetoric

outlines the justification for the centralised policy. The justification is that schools as organisations have become:

- more efficient (giving better value for money)

- more adept at communicating mission, role and function to teachers and support staff

- keen to adhere to 'best practice' and using this 'best practice' to inform the manner in which schools communicate with their community at large including parents, the Local Authority or local businesses.

The rhetoric would have us believe that teachers:

- would have a strong sense of their primary role

- would have a sense of what is expected of them

- would have an understanding of what should be taught and also understand what 'best practice' dictates is the best method of delivering this content

- as professionals, would also be in a position to interpret (when and where they feel it is appropriate) how to deliver a particular concept, theme or lesson.

But is this the reality for teachers in England and Wales in the early years of the twenty-first century?

Perhaps the reality is characterised a little more by the consideration of readily identifiable 'competences' and a preoccupation with 'accountability'. This focusing on competences and accountability is illustrated by Hoyle's (1995a, p.6) identification of the sometimes subtle differences between 'profession' and 'professional':

Table 1. Identification of profession and professional.

From	To
Profession	Professional
Knowledge	Skill
Education	Training
Effectiveness	Efficiency
Conception	Delivery
Status	Contract
Clients	Consumers
Influence	Compliance
Responsibility	Accountability
Leadership	Management

Hoyle's identification in turn gives us some insight as to what Gunter (2001) is saying about professions and professionals.

> 'A profession is therefore an identifiable group of professionals and is connected to both the abstracting of behaviours, which is what makes one profession distinctive from or similar to another and the power systems that control membership inclusion and exclusion. Self regulation and autonomy, particularly from the state and the government of the day, is essential in enabling professionalism to be exercised without political interest and favour.' (p.142)

In the first instance, autonomy from '...the government of the day...' is impossible for those working within the confines of the National Curriculum, in particular those who are expected to lead teachers in the implementation of the carefully prescribed 'literacy hour' and 'numeracy hour'. But more importantly those expected to work within the constraints of centrally devised management performance schedules have no sense of being free from political influence.

To gain further insight into the reality for teachers and teacher middle managers it will be necessary to review the prevailing educational research literature since the late 1960's and specifically over the past 10 years. The divide, between the late 1960's and the early

twenty-first century, can be illustrated by comparing how the Plowden Report (1967) and

its concentration on 'child centredness', comprehensively opposed centrally developed

and implemented curriculum and class activities and how the centrally prescribed

'Literacy hour' and 'Numeracy hour' embraces consistency of delivery across all

classrooms.

1.4 National Curriculum – an opportunity missed?

There have been a number of national debates and reviews (that involved consulting a

large cohort of practising teachers) about what should actually be in 'the curriculum' of

British schools. 'Curriculum Matters', led by HMI were some of the debates that sought,

to some degree, to consider the views and opinions of teachers about the curriculum.

With this in mind it may be useful to consider what were the prevailing views of many

teachers just before the implementation of the National Curriculum. Some teachers and

academics were concerned about the implementation. Indeed Becher (1989) stated,

> 'At first sight, the prescription of a uniform national curriculum under the
> 1988 Act leaves little scope for curricular decision-making at the
> classroom level ... .' (p.50)

Becher's comment concisely explains the concerns for many class teachers at the time,

with regard to the perceived prescriptive nature of the National Curriculum. Classroom

teachers felt that they were losing control of what actually went on in their classrooms.

Becher went on to say that concentrating on the prescriptive nature of the National

Curriculum was ' ... unduly pessimistic ...'. However Becher's following remarks may

give us some idea of how wrong he was with this 'unduly pessimistic' statement. Becher

says in his concluding paragraph,

> '... teachers who strongly dissent from existing national or school or
> departmental policy will retain the professional scope to do things in their
> own way. The classroom is a private place, not easily invaded by opposing
> outside forces. As must always be the case in human affairs, even strongly
> coercive legislation has its limits.' (p.61)

Becher overlooked the subtle (or in some instances the not so subtle) pressures that

would be brought on teachers to subscribe to the centrally devised policy. Headteachers

fearful of attracting close scrutiny of their leadership are well placed to exert influence

through their middle managers on dissenting teachers. Subject leader middle managers in

turn would be aware of their role in ensuring that the national curriculum 'orders' for

their subject are met. These internal pressures were not the only controlling influences

that could be brought to bear. Becher had obviously not considered the influence or

power an external agency such as OFSTED could have. The '...private...' nature of the

classroom disappeared some time ago. Teachers became very aware that all of their

actions, and perhaps more importantly, their outcomes, were open to scrutiny. It was their

outcomes which were seen outside of the walls of their classroom. The part that teachers

played in the examination performance of pupils was the major element of 'outcome'

evidence that would be used to determine teacher performance.

Of course it was always possible that teachers would seek to respond to the National

Curriculum in a manner which sought to camouflage the reality of day-to-day teaching.

Osborne *et al* (1997) uncovered a typology of teacher response to the change required by

the National Curriculum in the primary school. Osborne *et al* identified four types of what they called 'mediation' in responding to this change:

- protective mediation - '... resisting the pressures to stick closely to a prescribed curriculum ...'

- innovative mediation - '... interpretation of statutory requirements ...'

- collaborative mediation - '... a survival strategy ...'

- conspiratorial mediation - ' ... resist aspects of the National Curriculum that were felt to be particularly inappropriate ...'

The sense of teachers mediating between the curriculum and pupils' experience of the curriculum gives us some idea as to how strongly many teachers feel about addressing the needs of individual pupils. Osborne *et al* allow us to see that if only there could be a mechanism to control teachers' interpretation of the National Curriculum then centralised control would be complete.

If there is an emphasis on formality, prescription and centralised control, Dinham and Scott (2002) have identified how teachers respond to this by 'retreating'. They retreat by shedding extra-curricular activities and engage with a '...narrower range of responsibilities ...'.

Teachers are quite capable of presenting to OFSTED, during a school inspection, a performance that pays more regard to the rhetoric of centralised control than to the reality of day-to-day teaching. As Chapman (2001) noted in his study into how OFSTED inspection changes practice, the major change for some teachers was the increased

planning and increased range of activities that were undertaken in preparation for an

OFSTED inspection. He quoted a teacher who said of the experience,

> 'My classroom practice changed only in that I planned every minute of
> every lesson carefully. If I had to do this all of the time I would either
> have a nervous breakdown or leave teaching.' (p.66)

This quote very clearly allows us to see that some teachers are willing to subscribe to the

rhetoric of what they should be doing instead of allowing OFSTED to see the reality of

teaching each and every day.

1.5 Controlling teachers

The foregoing discussion may lead us to conclude that the recent history of schools has

been informed by a desire to control teachers. Whilst teachers' day-to-day experience is

acted upon by the content of the National Curriculum, it is the various agents that are

used by the government to bring about this control that it is important to uncover.

Teachers are well aware of the issue of who has control of a school's curriculum. Indeed

many teachers undergoing initial teacher training have been introduced to Althusser's

(1972) perspective on the 'repressive' and 'ideological' state apparatus and Bowles and

Gintis' (1976) perspectives on 'working class' pupils' inculcation. Althusser discussed

the ideologies that have dealt with issues of conflict and control. Indeed issues about

control and conflict in schools have characterised some of the educational debate until

the present day. In a theoretical sense teachers have been made aware that they contribute

to the 'state apparatus'. Issues of conflict and control are a daily reality for teachers.

Indeed Bash *et al* (1985) make it quite clear when they say,

> 'The urban secondary school teacher who regards his/her day's work as 'going into battle' is not uncommon. The recognition of the classroom as a place of conflict typifies the traditional view of the urban school ...' (p.65)

Bash *et al* go on to say,

> '... teachers are also quite firmly controlled in schools. The hierarchy promotion pattern of teachers tends to encourage conformity (we would not say servility) over originality or a critical approach. (p.65)

Perhaps more worryingly they state succinctly,

> 'It is necessary not only to be an effective teacher but also to convince headteachers and heads of departments that this is so.' (p.65)

The juxtaposition between needing to conform (before encouraging originality or critical thought) and being seen to be effective as well as being effective is no easy task for any teacher. But these two comments of Bash *et al* would suggest that actually being effective is less important than conforming and appearing effective. This public nature of teaching is something which many teachers are aware of.

Many teachers would find it easy to identify OFSTED as agents of the state with regard to inspecting and monitoring teacher practice. Teachers would also be quite capable of identifying the headteacher's role as one that is characterised by control and an authority derived centrally, the previous influence of the LEA having all but vanished. However teachers may be unsure of a teacher middle managers' role in the leadership, management and control of individual teachers' and pupils' everyday experiences.

Eden (2001) asks the question *'Who Controls the Teachers?'* and answers it by considering the use of overt and covert control used by headteachers to control teachers. Eden also allows us to consider how the many demands placed on teachers by 'clients' and how the same teachers '... demand for professionalisation ...' are often contradictory. We would be wise to accept that control of schools and teachers is complex in nature and at times many of the taken for granted issues acting on teachers are contradictory.

Teachers in schools may well feel that their individual contributions are more about schools achieving or maintaining their league table position. Teachers are inevitably presented with a choice between supporting and motivating those pupils whose examination performance will not contribute to a schools league table position and supporting and encouraging those who may be able to contribute to league table position. This inevitably will create tensions for individual teachers and between teachers. Teachers may consequently feel that their efforts, to support and encourage pupils who will have little impact on the school league tables, are undervalued. This undervaluing may lead to disaffection.

Tomlinson (1988) calls into question the compatibility of 'the curriculum' and 'the market'. His opening paragraph may give us some idea of what was expected of the Education Reform Act and the National Curriculum:

> 'The objectives are to create a 'social market' in education, establish a national curriculum and testing system, make education more responsive to economic forces and attract more non-public funding. It is asserted that

if achieved these mechanisms would raise standards, increase consumer choice and make the whole system, including higher education, more accountable.' (p.9)

It is no surprise to see the quote conclude with the real focus of the reform. Because of the central government's suspicions about the performance of teachers, and schools, and their unwillingness to trust teachers and schools, central government instigated a comprehensive system of monitoring and surveillance, with the outcomes being made public. Allied to this was the testing of school pupils and the public reporting of the outcomes.

With 'the market' in mind Hunter (1997) discusses the 'four pillars' of 'the market experiment'. In order to 'strip the education establishment of the power it had exercised for so long and to give power to the parents' (p.34) it was necessary to:

- develop a contract – the National Curriculum

- publish and invite tenders

- see these efficient businesses reaping the rewards

- ensure schools be made fully accountable to their customers.

Finally Hunter suggests that the inspection system came about because,

' ... contractors would be trying to cut corners and might deliver shoddy goods.' (p.35)

Therefore OFSTED inspections would be used to give the public an insight into what schools were really doing and allow parents to choose the best 'business' to which they would take their custom!

It is interesting to consider how some have characterised the relationship between teachers and 'the state'. Hoyle and John (1995) have considered how ' ... surveillance of teachers' work through managerialism ...' led to teachers feeling under siege. They also highlight how they see,

> '... heads and deputies have become the hierarchical agents of both control and implementation and therefore crucial to the process of accountability.' (p.42)

Hoyle and John also show how the ' ... powerful tri-partite arrangement between the Department of Education and Science (DES), the LEAs and the teachers' associations' came to an end. They also suggest that the collusion in maintaining the 'Secret Garden' of schools had also come to an end. Hoyle and John go on to suggest that this in turn has led to a lowering of the public esteem of teachers.

1.6 Summary

It can be seen from the above that teachers and schools have had to contend with ongoing change throughout the last 15 years. Change to prepare for the implementation of National Curriculum and change because of the National Curriculum. In particular we have seen:

- a shift in control from local to central government

- implementation of a National Curriculum and subsequent reviews of the curriculum

- a focus by central government on raising standards and schools becoming more efficient

- the surveillance and monitoring of teacher and school performance.

This change has been relentless and has produced schools and teachers which are centrally controlled, inspected by an external agency and monitored and kept under surveillance by their own managers. The implication for teachers has been manifold. Teachers feel under pressure to perform efficiently and effectively. Class teachers, teacher middle managers and senior managers also know they are accountable for their actions and their pupils' test and examination performance. Teachers are also well aware of the public nature of their role and the resultant rhetoric to which they are expected to subscribe.

Chapter 2: Managers, middle managers and middle management.

2.1 Management and leadership

Over the past 15 years (and perhaps more importantly the last 5 years) the management of education establishments, and secondary schools in particular, has received much attention from both the government of the day and education researchers. In particular we have seen a range of research published on headteachers, Senior Management Teams (SMTs) and effective school management and leadership. Positivist studies, qualitative studies and critical accounts are much in evidence (Bush 1989; Bolam *et al* 1993; Wallace and Hall 1994). Until recently, relatively little research seems to have been undertaken into secondary school middle managers and middle management. Whilst conducting a search on a much used academic library catalogue facility, the search terms 'management' and 'leadership' produced significantly more book based citations than if the search term 'middle management' was used. There is a plethora of management journals and even education management journals. However, specific middle management literature is relatively limited.

The foregoing perhaps indicates the manner in which middle managers and middle management issues have been addressed by the education policy and education research communities. It would appear that policy makers in their attempts to improve schools and make schools more effective have prioritised the role of the headteacher and the issue of headteacher leadership. Whilst we saw the introduction, (admittedly with some initial problems) of the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH), the

National Professional Qualification for Subject Leaders (NPQSL) has had a less certain

start.

2.2 What is middle management?

It may be wise to define what is meant by the terms 'middle manager' and 'middle

management'. When we attempt to uncover a formal definition of 'middle manager' we

are given a clue to how troublesome the term is. Olroyd *et al* (1996) in their 'concise

dictionary for education management' state for 'middle manager ... see manager'. On

inspecting 'manager' we find four suggested types of manager '... line ... middle ...

senior ... top ...'. For middle manager we find,

> '...a term increasingly used to describe heads of faculty, departments, or
> years in secondary schools who are responsible to the Senior Management
> Team'.

It is important to note here that Olroyd *et al* concede that the term 'middle manager' is

'...increasingly...' seen in this context. Perhaps the ambiguity in the definition of what

middle management is, or what middle managers are, is the reason for the lack of

research into middle managers.

For this research project a 'middle manager' will be taken to mean any individual who is

a Head of Year, Head of House, Head of Department or Head of Faculty and who does

not belong to the school's SMT. In many schools there are two strands of middle

manager - 'pastoral' middle managers and 'academic' middle managers. In this research

project there is no distinction made between pastoral or academic middle managers. As

has previously been mentioned the term 'teacher middle manager' is used to emphasise

the duality of the role for teaching middle managers. The use of the term 'teacher middle manager' is also intended to emphasise the manner in which a teacher middle manager must seek to balance the roles of teacher and manager.

2.2.1 Middle management literature- a recent development?

It is apparent that there has recently (after the mid 1990's) been more education management literature devoted to middle managers and middle management. The previous lack of literature on middle managers and middle management came about because of researchers' preoccupation with researching senior management, headteachers and headteachers' leadership in particular. It was thought that the leadership role of headteachers in delivering centrally devised policies would make policy implementation a success. Middle managers may have been overlooked because the policy makers and researchers underestimated their contribution to the implementation of policy.

It may be useful to trace the nature of this middle management literature and when this literature was published. This may give an insight into how developments in middle management roles have been reflected in the literature. This in turn may give some insight into the perceived roles and functions of the middle managers throughout the development and implementation of the National Curriculum.

2.3 Why enquire into secondary school middle managers?

It not easy to dismiss the often reiterated theories on management that are the foundations of any management training workshop, either in education or any other

profession. No discussion of management would be complete without mentioning the key areas of management function, namely communication with and motivation of individuals and groups or teams. (Teacher morale and motivation seems to be a major issue for education commentators and teachers' professional associations especially within the context of recruitment and retention of teachers). School middle managers are best placed to directly deal with communication with and motivation of individual teachers, groups and teams. Even those involved in a cursory look at management will be aware of Maslow (1960) and his 'Hierarchy of Needs', McGregor's (1960) 'Theory X' and 'Theory Y' and Herzberg's (1966) 'Hygiene Factors'. Whilst these theories do not necessarily refer to education management they do deal with issues that that have been utilised by education managers, education management trainers and educators. These early theories have informed much of the management theory and practice of recent times. These seemingly innocuous or benign management/motivation theories need to be reflected upon and not dismissed out of hand. These theories should not be dismissed lightly, because the influence they have had on the management training experienced by senior managers, middle managers and aspiring senior and middle managers in schools has been considerable.

Perhaps we need to pay attention to what Fullan and Hargreaves (1998) say about how those who work in schools can be instrumental in changing schools,

> 'Required solutions will be both collective and individual in nature. Paradoxically, there is neither enough collegiality nor enough individuality in the growth of teachers. As we shall see, collegiality and individuality are not incompatible.' (p.2)

Teachers and teacher middle managers do indeed influence the lives of the people (pupils and teaching colleagues) they work with. Teachers must be prepared to see that they can contribute as part of the collegial action and as individuals. Fullan and Hargreaves stated that we must be prepared to challenge the taken for granted theories put forward by Maslow, McGregor and Herzberg. Fullan and Hargreaves are perhaps giving us some clue as to the complex nature of the role of teachers as individuals and as members of a team or (staff) group. We should perhaps be prepared to take a more critical look at the environment in which teacher middle managers find themselves and ask whether or not the ethos of the environment is one which sustains and facilitates high quality teaching and learning.

2.3.1 Teachers and job satisfaction

Before we consider issues such as motivation and the role of middle manager we could perhaps consider the concept of 'job satisfaction'. Spear *et al* (2000) have used a number of studies to determine those factors, which contribute to teachers' job satisfaction and headteachers' job satisfaction. Contrasting the factors for teachers and headteachers may give us some insight into what a teacher middle manager has to contend with (Table.2).

Table 2. Factors contributing to teachers' and headteachers' job satisfaction

Factors contributing to teachers' job satisfaction, in decreasing order of influence:	Factors contributing to headteachers' job satisfaction, in decreasing order of influence:
- Working with children - Good relationships with colleagues - Development of warm personal relationship with pupils - Intellectual challenge/use of subject knowledge - Autonomy/independence - Opportunities to be creative or innovative - School organisation and management - Pupils achievements and progress - Additional roles and responsibilities held - Job security - Career prospects, pay and conditions - Long holidays.	- Relationship with others, such as children, teachers, parents and governors - Autonomy - Having responsibility - Success of school - Feeling valued - Recognition - Job security - Pay and conditions - Holidays - Status.

(Spear *et al* 2000 p.30.)

We can see that both headteachers and teachers have a sense of the need to build relationships with the pupils and the colleagues they work with. However it is possible to see that teachers find it more important to have a sense of control with regard to 'Opportunities to be creative or innovative.' Both teachers and headteachers see autonomy as important. However after factor 5 in the teachers' list and after factor 2 in the headteachers' list it is possible to discern some differing priorities. Headteachers see the importance of the school being successful, placing it fourth in their list. This acknowledgement on the part of headteachers about the importance of a school being perceived as successful gives us some insight into how headteachers understand the public nature of schools and teaching. Headteachers may well be more aware of how they can be held accountable for the success or failure of their school.

With regard to teacher morale Spear *et al* go on to state:

'Teachers believe that their own morale is largely determined by their quality of life in school. They want good relationships with their pupils, good relationships with their colleagues, sound leadership from a supportive headteacher, and a manageable workload.' (p.34)

One further conclusion that Spear *et al* found is worthy of further comment,

'... more older than younger teachers consider having sufficient time for their family and private life is important to their personal morale.'

This surely has implications for those who are appointing people to middle and senior management positions. With experience comes age. The more commitments teachers have outside school, in their private and family lives, the more they will feel pulled away from these commitments when they are required to undertake school management tasks.

2.3.2 Middle managers and motivation

Evans (1999) writing about motivating teachers through recognition says,

'Since research has shown that, in general, teachers receive insufficient praise from senior colleagues it is reasonable to assume that many school leaders fail to recognize just how important a motivator it is.' (p.92)

In this context Evans (1997) in a short article about teacher morale and motivation clearly states why management theory and practice do not always coexist and why at our peril we should never forget the manifestation of management theories in a manager's practice. Evans, when discussing the important part to be played by the headteacher in motivating and influencing the morale of staff, stated quite categorically that she had found that teachers,

'...were demotivated if their work went unnoticed.'

Evans makes it quite clear that teachers would like their managers to notice not only their achievements but also their efforts. Teachers may well wish to see managers as 'supporters' and sustainers. Evans introduces the comment of one classroom teacher,

'... he has never once noticed what I've done ...'.

The '...he...' that Evans refers to is the headteacher of this class teacher. This teacher's comment is testimony as to why we need to be aware of the influence a headteacher or middle manager has on individual motivation and sense of worth. There has perhaps been a preoccupation with becoming efficient and little attention paid to allowing individual teachers to become more effective. As Riches and Morgan (1989) state,

'Of all the resources at the disposal of a person or an organisation it is only people who can grow and develop and be motivated to achieve certain desired ends.' (p.1)

Indeed even referring to humans as a compliant resource causes some to be concerned (Bennett 2001). Some see perceiving individuals as resources that can be managed according to some formula or protocol can only do harm to morale and hence teacher performance. Morgan (1989) was keen to encourage us to '... empower human resources... ' In these early days of the National Curriculum Morgan suggested that we may,

'... be moving into a phase where more empathetic, relationship-oriented approaches, based on cooperation rather than competition are often more appropriate.' (p.37)

It is clear that he was not quite right. Teachers became distracted by issues such as target setting, performance management, standards and efficiency, and at the same time lost sight of their achievements.

Perhaps, more importantly, we must realise that policy makers may not be interested in anything other than setting targets, improving standards or efficiency because they are not obliged to contend daily with those who are delivering the improvements and meeting the targets. Headteachers who are charged with implementing these improvements in standards and meeting the targets may ignore the intermediary role they play in this. If they wish to influence the standards and the meeting of the targets in the long term and not just in the short term they would be well advised to see the human element in schools. It is almost inevitable that headteachers will experience the tension between the policy and the implementation of the policy.

We are of course beginning to see how schools are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and/or retain teachers in the long term (Spear *et al* 2000). We are now beginning to see a slow down in the improving attainment of pupils as measured at KS3 (in terms of SAT Levels achieved) and at GCSE (in terms of the number of pupils achieving 5 A-C grades). Do we see that short term incentives such as bursaries for particular specialist teachers or allowing teachers to pass through the 'threshold', as not enough to sustain the improvement in the targets/standards set?

2.4 Managers and middle managers – transition from pre to post Education Reform Act

It is apparent that the role of middle manager was not always clearly perceived. In the early 1970's Marland (1971) was writing about the heads of departments in the following terms,

> 'It would be harsh to say that they have in many cases not earned their often substantial allowances, but it would be accurate to say these have been more in the nature of general merit allowances than functional payment for specific tasks' (p.2)

Marland is outlining the early 1970's perspective of how a head of department's role was perceived and how he/she was rewarded. The quote above supports the view that heads of department became heads of department because they were identified as 'good' teachers and were more concerned with ordering stock and performing simple administrative functions, along with being exemplars of good practice.

By the late 1970s Rutter (1979) *et al* in *Fifteen Thousand Hours* stated quite clearly when discussing schools with 'better pupil outcomes' that,

> 'It seemed necessary that teachers should feel that they had some part in the decision making process ...' (p.193)

Whilst Rutter was concentrating on the school lives of pupils he nevertheless thought it vital to mention the role class teachers and middle managers played in contributing to the effectiveness of the school. He went on to add,

> 'They too will be influenced by the models, expectations and feedback from senior staff and they too need to take responsibility in, to feel rewarded by and to identify with the school. (p.193)

Rutter's comments strongly support the view that teachers have always looked to senior managers to lead their interactions within the school. This rhetoric of Rutter's overlooks the teacher who derives a sense of achievement from what s/he facilitates in her/his classroom. Some teachers more readily identify with department colleagues than they do with the school and some teachers more closely identify with their subject, (and have a desire to seek expertise in this subject). Whilst Rutter is suggesting teachers want leaders who empower, encourage innovation and engender a sense of belonging, he overlooks those teachers who want managers who are committed to democracy and who address the individual needs of teachers.

It is evident that in the mid to late 1980's there was still some confusion as to the role and function of middle managers in secondary schools. In particular the preparations for the National Curriculum only added to this ambiguity. Indeed Handy and Aitken (1986) were keen to point out that one element in 'role ambiguity' is '... uncertainty about others' expectations of one's performance ...' (p.58). This perhaps underlines the need to uncover class teachers' and senior managers' perceptions and expectations of middle managers' role.

Handy and Aitken, in discussing teacher middle managers and their management roles, acknowledged that managing for many teachers was something which, because of the commitment to teaching would have to be a secondary consideration. However Handy and Aitken's statement that,

> 'There are, however, only two known ways to run an organisation without much time spent on management: by autocracy or by autonomy.' (p.36)

This has many implications for senior managers and teacher middle managers. If we are to concede that there is limited time for middle managers to actually manage because of the teaching and lesson preparation obligations, then we should perhaps accept that teacher middle managers must find the most effective method of managing. Of course teacher middle managers may develop strategies to camouflage their inability to undertake the plethora of tasks they are asked to complete. They may seek to hide from their senior managers their own ineffectiveness and inefficiency.

The late 1980's saw issues such as 'improving school performance' become an important element in the debate about schools and school management. At a time when centralised control and the emergence of a National Curriculum were dominant issues, Early and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) published research findings into department and faculty heads' 'effectiveness'. It is quite evident that school effectiveness is an issue that still dominates today. School effectiveness dominates because of the desire to raise standards of achievement. These standards of achievement are expressed by the National Curriculum 'Level' which pupils should attain at the end of each Key Stage or the number of GCSE's pupils should attain at the conclusion of Key Stage 4. (These standards are expressed as percentages for cohorts of pupils and published with reference to the school performance i.e. 56% of pupils at School X achieved 5 A*-C GCSE grades. Although 'target setting' rhetoric now suggests schools should be setting targets for each pupil in each subject area.) It is only if we accept that any debate that includes rhetoric such as target setting, and raising standards (and expresses these for cohorts of pupils)

then there must be an unceasing and continuing desire, on the part of those at the centre, for those located away from the centre to become more efficient. In other words, those located away from the centre should offer value for money.

2.4.1 School structure and middle management

The Education Reform Act 1988 (ERA) has had an impact on school management function and structure. Some (e.g. Roberts and Ritchie 1990) believed that the structure, functioning of the school and role of school managers would change because of the ERA. Indeed Roberts and Ritchie have stated how the National Curriculum would undermine the traditional hierarchical models of management within schools. In figure 1 we can see what Roberts and Ritchie cite as a typical management structure for pre-ERA schools.

```
+----------------------------------------------------------------+
|                             Head                               |
+----------------------------------------------------------------+
         ⇩                                         ⇩
+---------------------------+      +-----------------------------+
| Deputy head | Deputy head |      | Senior teachers |  Deputy  head |
| (Pastoral)  |(administration)|   |                 | (curriculum)  |
+---------------------------+      +-----------------------------+
         ⇩                                         ⇩
+---------------------------+      +-----------------------------+
| Heads of Year             |      | Heads of Department         |
+---------------------------+      +-----------------------------+
         ⇩                                         ⇩
+---------------------------+      +-----------------------------+
| Tutors                    |      | Subject teachers            |
+---------------------------+      +-----------------------------+
```
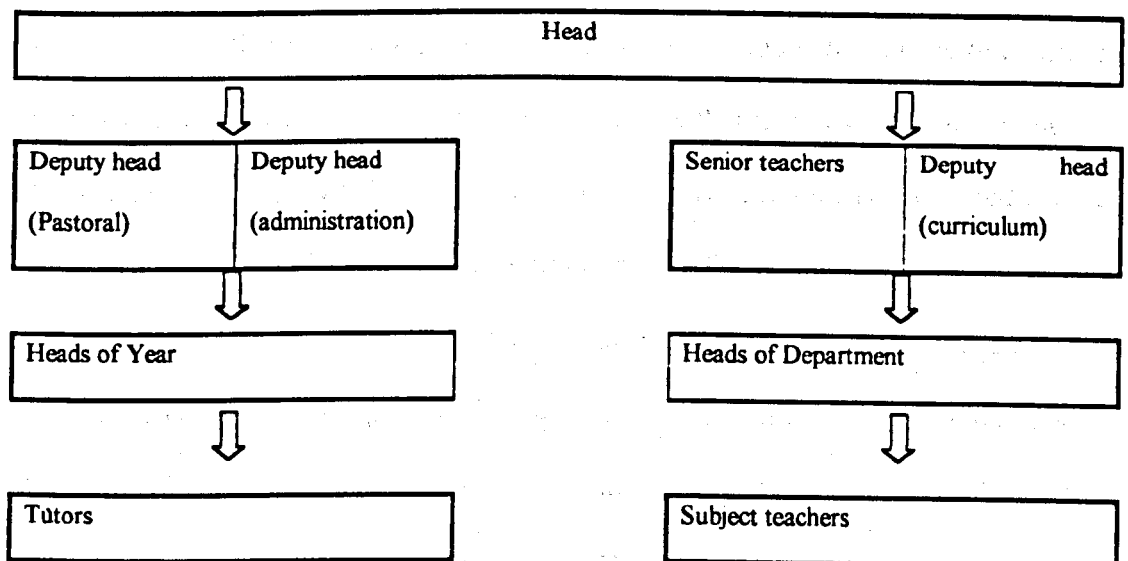
Figure 1. School management structure – pre ERA.

Roberts and Ritchie went on to give an example of what they thought would be the probable post-ERA management structure (Figure 2).
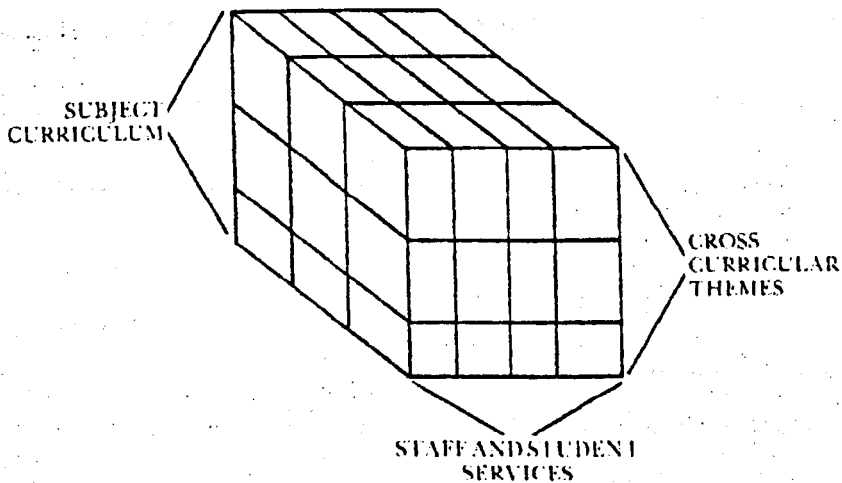
Figure 2. School management structure – Battenburg cake.

It is obvious that the interrelated nature of the Roberts and Ritchie post-ERA model for school organisation has not manifested itself in many schools. If we were to consider the dimension 'Cross Curricular Themes' we could see that this is still an important part of the debate for many schools. In this context there have been many protracted debates in schools about how Information and Communication Technology could be delivered as a cross curricular theme. More recently the issue of how 'citizenship' can be delivered across the curriculum has produced much consternation in schools. It would appear the hierarchical and compartmentalised curriculum is still in evidence. Indeed 12 years on it would be unwise to argue that, in practice, pre-ERA and post-ERA secondary schools management structures are fundamentally different. Whilst we have seen the post of 'Assistant Headteacher' being used more often for members of the senior management team of a school, this is more a title change rather than a fundamental structural change of management structures.

Blandford (1997, p.46) suggests a structure that is becoming more common in secondary schools post-ERA. This 'flat model' is perhaps becoming more common because of the need to co-ordinate across and between Key Stages. In this context it is quite usual to find the Key Stage co-ordinator role being fulfilled by those designated Assistant Headteacher.
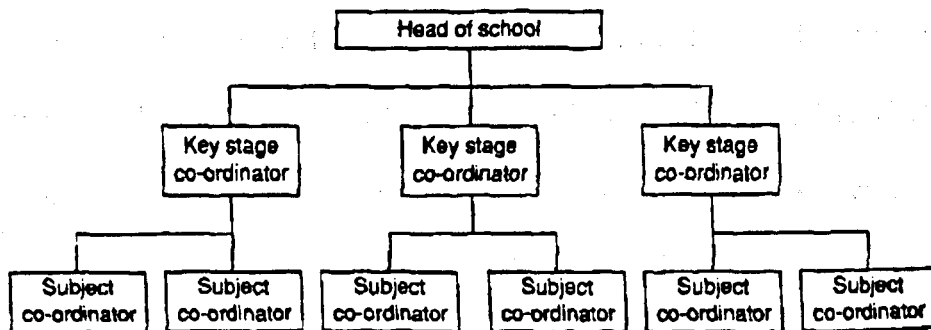
Figure 3. School management structure – flat model

2.4.2 Managers and middle managers – post Education Reform Act

Still in the mid 1990's there was a debate about what middle management actually was. Bennett (1995) says,

> 'There is, then, no clear answer to be obtained from the literature to the question of who constitute secondary school 'middle management'. (p.105)

Bennett quite clearly states that researchers may have found it difficult to agree what middle management actually is, and therefore what historically or traditionally a middle manager does. If researchers have not been able to agree who middle managers are or what they do then perhaps this would explain why it has been difficult to arrive at a focus for many middle manager research based projects. If the education research community was finding it difficult to conduct research into middle managers then it should not be

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surprising if schools were left unsure of middle managers roles. If the prevailing view, from central government, after 5 years of National Curriculum, was one of 'top-down' innovation, dissemination and implementation then we should not be surprised that many fundamental changes needed to be made to the initial National Curriculum for both core and foundation subjects.

The issue of school structure and middle managers is further confused when we consider what Bennett asked, 'Can Secondary Schools have Middle Managers?' (p.101) .Bennett suggests that the numbers of pupils in a school has an effect on management role and function (such as monitoring colleagues work). Bennett believes monitoring is in the remit of 'supervisors' and not middle managers. More importantly I believe Bennett is giving some indicators as to the 'conflict and tension' that exists between formal management function and informal management function. The formal management function of monitoring does not sit easily with the informal middle management function of taking a day-to-day interest in individual colleagues' concerns.

In the context of 'effectiveness' and middle managers as 'supervisors', 'monitors', 'managers' or 'leaders', it is perhaps useful to look at what Harris *et al* (1995) say about 'school effectiveness'. In this context Harris *et al* talk of the effective department and effective department heads. They attempt to suggest those things that the management of effective departments might entail. Harris *et al* discuss middle managers as needing to understand the importance of:

- management of change

- vision

- collegiality

- resource management

- monitoring skills.

The latter issues of resource management and monitoring are quite formal roles for any manager. However issues such as managing change (Morrison 1998), having and maintaining a vision and collegiality can be roles that have both informal and formal elements in relation to the day-to-day management of groups and individuals.

2.4.3 The late 1990's

By the late 1990's we started to see evidence of a less ambiguous consideration of the middle manager's role. Blandford (1997) devoted much time to discussing the uniqueness of the middle managers' role. In particular she discusses how school middle managers become 'player managers', having to both manage and teach a significant subject timetable. Blandford suggests this produces 'role strain' (trying to balance management time and teaching time) and must be managed carefully by the middle manager. We can also consider 'role strain' in the context of middle managers balancing leadership and management functions. As the majority of a middle manager's time is spent teaching s/he must ensure that no one element of the role is concentrated on at the expense of any other.

In March 1998 the *Times Educational Supplement* thought the whole area of middle management in schools was worthy of a report entitled *'Middle Managers An 8 Page Report'*. Makins (1998) commenced the report with the statement,

> 'It is remarkable that the school improvement movement is only just beginning to recognise the importance of the middle managers in secondary school ...' (p.2)

This opening article also reports how Anne Barnes, general secretary of the National Association for the Teaching of English says of school management,

> 'Many management strategies expounded in courses merely replace common sense with jargon. A lot of management is very simple, talking to people, consulting, identifying strategies...' (p.2)

This 'common sense' approach to management is perhaps a not too infrequent response in any discussion about management practice and theory. Barnes is perhaps giving some insight into the '...jargon...' or rhetoric to which teachers and teacher middle managers are exposed. Of course '...talking to people, consulting ...' is time consuming. As time is of the essence, managers will develop strategies that will free time to manage the issues which they will more easily be judged on.

2.5 Subject Leadership, middle management and managers

More recently there was still evidence of confusion and ambiguity existing in the discussion of middle managers. Within the context of 'subject leadership' Glover *et al* (1999) states,

> ' ... some schools and departments stressing the administrative and operational management roles of their middle management, whilst others appear to foster the leadership and developmental role of newly designated subject leaders. (p.332)

It is as if Glover has identified two ends of a continuum. At one end we see middle managers that are encouraged to see themselves as administrators developing systems for staff to work within. At the other end of the continuum we see middle managers being encouraged to identify individual teacher needs along with departmental needs and to provide leadership.

2.5.1 The significance of subject departments

It would be wise not to underestimate the importance of subject departments in secondary school teachers' lives. All teachers including senior managers and pastoral leaders will find themselves teaching and functioning within a subject department. The influence these departments have on the overall functioning of the school cannot be ignored. Busher and Harris (1999) have sought to uncover department types. They describe five types of department structure:

- 'Federal' - possessing many staff and generous resources, teaching several subjects.

- 'Confederate'- an administrative convenience of subjects allied together '... but share little in common.'

- 'Unitary'- a single subject area.

- 'Impacted'- single subject but smaller than unitary.

- 'Diffuse' subject - that may have no subject base with many staff teaching under the guidance of a co-ordinator.

Busher and Harris are implying that the power relationships between middle managers working within or responsible for these departments is important to consider if we want to understand how schools function.

Hannay and Ross (1999) go on to support this view to some degree but in the context of

the historical significance of how,

> '... the taken-for-granted middle management department structure cannot
> be underestimated as it has defined teachers' roles, interaction patterns
> ...' (p.346)

In particular we need to consider how the department structure has acted upon teacher

'interaction patterns'. If we are to accept that 'interaction patterns' are acted upon by

how a teacher perceives his or her position within a department or even how they see

their department within the school, this may be a useful insight into the life of teacher

middle managers in secondary schools. Perhaps more importantly Hannay and Ross go

on to say how restructuring of middle management organisation can affect the culture

and change process experienced by school staff. They suggest that challenging 'taken for

granted' school structures can encourage staff to 'reconcile goals'. Also engaging in a

restructuring process can encourage improved collaborative practice and 'teacher

leadership'. They conclude by saying 'we need far more research on the micro-processes

involved in secondary schools'. (p.357)

2.5.2 Formal and informal management?

The OFSTED (1998) National Standards make clear that subject leaders,

> '... provide leadership and direction for the subject and ensure that it is
> managed and organized to meet the aims and objectives of the school and
> the subject.' (p.79)

There has been much debate about the role of OFSTED in secondary schools. There is

however no denying the influence OFSTED inspections and the resulting inspection

reports have on teachers' practice (Chapman 2001), although Chapman conceded that

further research would need to be done in order to generate more 'secure

generalisations'. A contrast between Barnes' 'common sense' approach, (with its

acknowledgement of the informal elements to management) and the more formal

exposition of what makes management 'good' perhaps is also worthy of uncovering. For

example in the OFSTED (1997) criteria for 'good departments', the following are cited:

- Strong and consultative leadership ...
- Effective and equitable delegation ...
- Regular and well managed meetings ...
- Departmental development planning ...
- A comprehensive departmental handbook ...
- Systematic monitoring ...
- Optimum deployment of staff ...
- Regular monitoring of the assessment of pupils ...
- Systematic monitoring of the achievement and progress of individual pupils ...
- Identification of training needs and opportunities ... . (p.4)

It is useful to look at the language used in the criteria above. The rhetoric that sees

leadership as the first step in developing a 'good department' is perhaps no surprise. The

preoccupation with leadership has been well established. Issues such as 'delegation' and

'managed meetings' are also couched in the terms of formal management rhetoric.

However most attention must be paid to the use of words such as 'systematic', and

'optimum deployment'. Creating management systems and achieving efficiency are

obviously the underlying themes of these criteria. Finally the mention of pupils in only 2

of the 10 criteria may give us some insight into what OFSTED consider important for

heads of department to see as their primary role. This desire for managers to prioritise

many more activities before those of lesson preparation, teaching and marking of pupil

work is not reflected in the time allocation to middle managers to carry out these

management tasks. The forgoing makes explicit what OFSTED feels contributes to effective departments in schools. (These formal criteria appear to provide little opportunity for a 'common sense' approach.)

More recently there has been a small number of discrete pieces of research into education middle managers, including that undertaken by Wise and Bush (1999). They state, in the context of post-ERA schools and their management,

> '... there is little evidence of how this transformation in school management has changed the working lives of academic middle managers who often have the responsibility of translating policy intentions into classroom practice.' (p.184)

Wise and Bush are suggesting that regardless of centralised interventions in transforming school management, teacher middle managers' working lives have changed little. In particular middle managers are still responsible for making sure that school policy is implemented in the classroom. It may be wise to agree with Wise and Bush, if only in the sense that middle managers are required to make sure the centrally determined policy, the National Curriculum, is implemented for their subject in their school. In this context middle managers may be more aware of the centralised origins of the policy they are implementing. What has changed is the quantity of work teacher middle managers are expected to undertake. This centrally led policy has caused the establishment of a series of initiatives which have required middle managers to undertake the management and monitoring of many extra 'paperwork' tasks that class teachers (including themselves) must undertake. The tasks include assessment and target setting, both very much dependent on the completion of 'administration'.

It is worth noting that Wise and Bush fail to pay much regard to any informal dimension in the relationship between the middle managers and classroom teachers and senior managers. It is as if each group, class teachers, middle managers and senior managers, is functioning in isolation to each other group except for formal interactions. They seem to be suggesting that each of these fails to integrate in any informal sense with the other. But perhaps it is the 'interface' role carried out by middle managers that is underestimated by Wise and Bush. It is perhaps this 'interface' role that may lead to the most stress for these middle managers.

2.6 Dimensions of middle management

Busher and Harris (1999) discusses the '...tensions and dimensions of managing in the middle...' (p.306). The dimensions may be worth considering in the first instance. Busher and Harris state how heads of departments:

- '... translate the perspectives and policies of senior staff into the practices of individual classrooms.'
- '... encourage a group of staff to cohere and develop group identity'.
- improve '... staff and student performance.'
- act in '... a liaison or representative role. (p.307)

Busher and Harris very clearly identify how heads of department engage in translating, encouraging, improving and liasing. These are sophisticated and complex skills to integrate and balance.

Bearing in mind the demands that are placed on teacher middle managers to undertake the functions identified it is no surprise that Busher and Harris have identified how,

> '... informal and formal relationships between teachers can create disparate working cultures between and within school and departments.' (p.312)

The part to be played by middle managers in managing the culture that exists within their departments is an often forgotten reality. Indeed Busher and Harris seem to be suggesting that middle managers may need to be aware of the different department cultures that exist within a school. They take this further when they imply effective managers involve staff in decision-making:

> '... effective management requires staff at all levels to be involved in decision-making and policy formation. (p.314)

Rutter (1979), as previously mentioned, addressed this issue 20 years before. It is still evident that being involved in decision-making is crucial to school effectiveness. But it is evident that Busher and Harris see a middle manager's role as very much more complex than something which can be prescribed and described in formal terms. Busher and Harris see middle managers as those people who manage teachers' contributions to the school's aims and objectives. Middle managers are required to manage teacher contributions to the decision-making process (Everard and Morris 1998) but at the same time translate policy into practice in their departments, faculties or year groups.

In the context of teacher middle managers identifying the importance of their role in translating policy into practice Witziers *et al* (1999) discuss, in the context of Dutch schools, how teachers need to become aware of four characteristics of departmental functioning, that is:

- decision-making

- collaboration

- consensus

- leadership.

Witziers *et al* importantly found that the department's subject influenced each of the characteristics and that a subject department can 'create barriers' to whole school communication and interaction.

It might be illuminating to consider what Brown *et al* (1999) say in the context of decision-making. This might allow us to see how difficult it is for a middle manager/head of department to translate policy or develop collaboration or consensus. They identified three models of decision-making in schools:

- Type A - those schools which give opportunities for collaboration and where department priorities correlate with School Development Plan
- Type B - those schools where there are fewer opportunities for collaboration
- Type C - those schools where there is little collaboration between Heads of Departments.

If collaboration between departments is perceived as something which those at the centre see as an indicator of a 'good' school, then Type A schools could, of course, be conscious of the need to appear committed to collaboration. In this context the School Development Plan is no more than a device to ensure that departments subscribe to an internally devised plan. The antithesis of this is that Type C schools could be more honest in that they are committed to avoiding any contrived commonality or contrived collegiality (Hargreaves 1994) between subject areas and subject delivery methods. Perhaps Brown *et al* have discerned a more significant point when they say,

'... middle managers are increasingly seeking a greater say in decisions about the school. (p.328)

This '... seeking a greater say ...' is noted by Brown *et al* to be at variance from the view of some headteachers. It is possible to see how middle managers would seek involvement and in that context collegial models of management would be sought. However we could also see how headteachers might perceive that this collegial model requires an abdication of control on the part of the headteacher and this may not be desired by the headteacher.

The perceptions that senior managers and class teachers might have of subject leaders is dealt with by Glover *et al* (1999). Their conclusions may go some way to explain the importance of how the teacher middle manager's role is one which relies upon the input from senior managers in the context of training and development opportunities. Subject leaders are likely to have a range of management skills available to them if they are genuinely encouraged to develop those skills. This enthusiasm is then passed onto classroom colleagues who will be given opportunities to develop. Glover *et al* say,

'... those schools which value and develop their subject leaders ... are more likely to be those schools in which the subject staff feel that they are well led. (p.331)

This is useful to contrast with what Turner (2000) says about how heads of department are prepared and trained for middle management or subject leadership. After interviewing a group of subject leaders he concluded that,

'They appeared to use other HoDs as role models to develop their own knowledge and understanding of the role of the HoD.' (p.311)

Tuner also came to some conclusions about the usefulness of '... training courses...' as perceived by heads of departments.

> 'They were perceived as being of quite limited use in terms of their direct impact on the work of HoDs to improve teaching and learning in their department...' (p.312)

Turner is suggesting it is in schools' interests to integrate the use of external agencies and internal development opportunities to develop staff. He suggests that subject leaders derive a benefit from seeing good practice from their peers and senior managers.

It is clear from the foregoing that middle managers are expected to have a repertoire of skills to call upon. Being in the 'middle' requires teacher middle managers to have skills other than those which rely upon hierarchical position in order to manage, lead or influence. Headteachers can use their hierarchical position to insist any 'reasonable' request is carried out. Headteachers and deputy headteachers are more readily able than teacher middle managers to provide day-to-day opportunities and resources for teachers to complete tasks. Middle managers would need to seek the patronage of her/his senior managers before s/he could facilitate even a minor short time temporary change to a teacher's working day. 'Middle' managers must be cognisant of the fact that they must also manage the relationship between those they manage and those they are managed by.

Isolating one group from the other will serve no one particularly well. We must be wary of only seeming to suggest that managers, and middle managers in particular, do things 'to' people as opposed to 'with' them. There is a myth promulgated that managers have insight into and control of the intricate working of the school. This myth has been

allowed to grow because it would suggest that the school's performance and effectiveness could be improved by changing management practices - therefore lending credence to a 'top-down' approach to reform and improvement. Middle managers experience tension when, in order to secure resources and patronage, they must present themselves and those that they manage to senior managers in the best possible light, and at the same time, to secure the co-operation of those they manage, by presenting senior managers in a positive light. In this context, teacher middle managers, in presenting a case to senior managers, may resort to camouflaging the day-to-day reality of their class teacher colleagues' experiences and more importantly colleagues' comments about these experiences.

Busher and Harris (1999) may well be hinting at the need for middle managers to have a repertoire of informal skills when they say,

> '... how well middle managers act as transformational leaders and exercise inter-personal skills will affect the extent to which they build a genuine collaborative culture.' (p.312)

Middle managers who seek to build a collaborative culture will also be contributing to creating a culture where teachers feel valued. As has been previously stated those teachers who feel valued are more likely to contribute to the effectiveness of the school.

The British Educational Management and Administration (BEMAS) Research conference included a number of papers about teacher middle managers. O'Neill (2000) sought to uncover the issue of whether or not the effectiveness of a head of department was influenced by the environment in which s/he was working and in particular if

overwork was a predictor of perceived 'incompetence'. There were also a number of

papers about the ineffective training that middle managers receive (Brown *et al* 2000;

Harris *et al* 2000). The inclusion of such focused research on middle managers would

suggest that the importance of middle managers is being recognised in the educational

research community. But perhaps more importantly the debate about 'improving school

performance' is driving researchers to look more closely at the school experience of

middle managers. Indeed Hammond (1998) recognises, in his Teacher Training Agency

(TTA) sponsored work, that,

> 'As schools take in the implications of target setting and assign
> responsibilities aimed at producing the necessary improvements in
> classroom practice, the subject department has become the focus of
> attention.' (p.2)

Researchers are perhaps realising the impact an effective middle manager can have in

improving a subject area's performance and hence a school's effectiveness.

2.6.1 Teacher and teacher middle manager workload, and the counting of working hours

The teacher workload study instigated by the government and undertaken by

PricewaterhouseCoopers produced an interim report in December 2001. The rhetoric of

the report suggests that department heads only work on average 1.6 hours per week more

than class teachers (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2001). The table on the next page provides

a summary of the findings.

Table.3 Average hours worked per week for headteachers, deputy headteachers, heads of department and class teachers

Secondary Schools	Average weekly hours during term time	Total annual hours
Headteachers	60.8	2527
Deputy headteachers	58.6	2433
Heads of department	52.9	2213
Classroom teachers	51.3	2114

Of course it is not necessarily the number of hours that a teacher works that is significant. The above statistics do not measure a teacher's sense of achievement with regard to the tasks that must be completed

2.7 Summary

Before we go on to discuss the issues of professionalism, managerialism and the emotive issue of the manner in which teachers perceive themselves portrayed in the media, it may be wise to summarise the discussion so far.

- There has been a plethora of research into headteachers and headteacher leadership with little research until recent times into teacher middle managers.

- There has been an attempt on the part of central government through OFSTED to produce criteria for 'good' departments and hence 'good' leaders of subjects. These criteria tend to be formal in character.

- Recent research into middle managers has looked at the complex nature of the formal and informal roles and functions of middle managers. The conflicts, tensions and the sometimes contradictory nature of these middle management

roles characterises the debate about the many and complex roles of teacher middle managers.

- Teacher middle managers contend with balancing the rhetoric of management and leadership with the reality of being seen to manage effectively the interface between class teachers and senior managers on a day-to-day basis.

- Teacher middle managers seek to balance their time between addressing the needs of their pupils and the needs of their staff.

Teacher middle managers are encountering rhetoric that says that they, on average, work 1.6 hours more per week than class teachers. Because of the complex nature of teacher middle managers' commitments and the resultant potential for distraction and interruption (Glover and Miller 1999) it is not so much the total hours that teacher middle managers spend working which is important but what they actually do during those hours. Teacher middle managers are being presented with rhetoric from the centre that does not necessarily match their experience of the reality of day-to-day teaching.

Chapter 3: The changing face of management.

Teachers have become accustomed to the rhetoric and the reality of change. They have had to contend with a plethora of initiatives in the name of progress. They have been encouraged to adopt a 'new' way of working and at the same time to reject previously cherished orthodoxies (Bottery 2001). In particular much has been written about teachers' professionalism.

Before undertaking any debate about the changing face of management in the secondary school, a definition for 'professionality' and 'professionalism' is required. Whilst the issues are connected there is no interchangeability between the concepts. Professionality is concerned with teachers' work – what they do, why they do it and how they do it (Hoyle 1995b). There is a focus on the quality of practice, attitudes and ideology of the individual. Professionalism is concerned with codes of behaviour and focuses on a commitment to service and specialist expertise.

3.1 Professionalism, managerialism and middle managers

There has been an ongoing debate about teacher professionalism in recent years (for example Nixon *et al* 1997, Timperley and Robinson 2000). The taken for granted view of teachers as professionals ranking alongside lawyers and doctors has all but disappeared. Instead we are left with a less certain view as to how teachers are perceived in the context of professionalism. The following concepts need to be exposed before we can be clear about the status of teachers.

- What is the nature of teacher professionalism?

- What is 'managerialism'?

- What do we understand about a 'transition from professionalism to managerialism'?

- Have teachers been 'deskilled?

It is worth noting that the following may be easier to place in context if we consider how centralised control of schools, teachers and the curriculum is a common thread for those engaged in the following debates.

3.1.1 Professionalism

Gunter (2001) explains the significance of the issue of professionalism for middle managers.

> 'Research and theorizing about leadership roles in the middle and towards the top illustrate that there is a tension between the drive for internal and external performance and professional ways of understanding teaching and learning.' (p.119)

Gunter accepts the idea that there is a tension between seeing teachers as professionals concerned with teaching and learning and as individuals contributing to the effectiveness of a school's performance. It would be wise to acknowledge this tension as we look further at teacher professionalism.

Professionalism is defined by Nixon *et al* as,

> '... the enabling of learning, the accommodation of difference and the practice of agreement.' (p.5)

This collaborative view of professionalism is quite persuasive but must be contrasted with how Busher and Saran (1995) see 'Professionalism as control' (p.35). This is characterised by the manner in which teachers have had made explicit for them the expectations of them as members of a profession. Teachers at times feel that they are uncertain whether they should intervene or contribute because of the undefined or under-defined nature of their role and function (including their working hours). This is especially true for middle managers (Glover and Miller 1999).

3.1.2 Total Quality Management

Much has been written about Total Quality Management (TQM) and how it offers much for those who are committed to partnership and not conflict in management. Indeed in this respect many Secretaries of State for Education have been keen to stress the need for partnership in schools between parents, teachers and pupils (Jackson 2000). With this in mind it is perhaps useful to look at how Fleming (2000, p.5) puts the issue of Total Quality Management into context for schools.
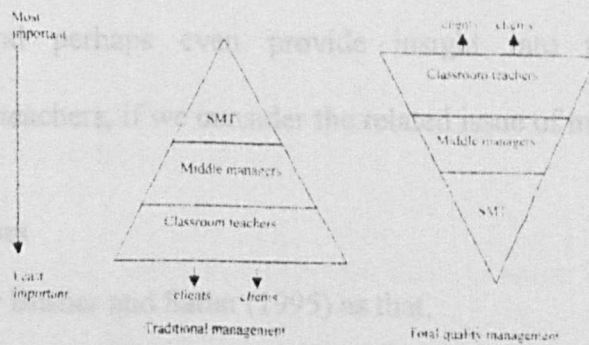

Figure 4. Total Quality Management

It is important to recognise that whatever way we look at the two models above, 'traditional' management and Total Quality Management, middle managers appear to find that they are always located at the interface between SMT and class teachers. In both models they are still required to manage the relationship between SMT and class teachers. Indeed teacher middle managers always end up in the middle!

Sallis (1996) in his book *Total Quality Management in Education* gives us some idea as to why he believes TQM may be of value to schools.

> 'Spiralling costs together with a renewed interest in public accountability have led politicians and public alike to ask hard questions of educationalists. No longer are teachers able to hide behind the language of professionalism.' (p. vii)

In this short statement we see Sallis concisely rationalising why this management tool, TQM, should be used in undoing teachers' attempts to 'hide behind the language of professionalism.' This rhetoric, which characterises teachers as willing participants in camouflaging reality gives us some idea of the degree to which teachers may feel their professionalism is being undermined. We can continue the discussion about professionalism, and perhaps even provide insight into the elusive nature of professionalism for teachers, if we consider the related issue of managerialism.

3.1.3 Managerialism

This is described by Busher and Saran (1995) as that,

> '... which offers enhanced status and financial reward to those responsible for ensuring delivery of the service against a set of externally determined criteria and in pursuit of externally generated aims and targets. Senior teachers are thus co-opted in a redefinition of professionalism that is essentially managerialist and may disseminate this definition through

processes that extend surveillance, manufactured consent and render dissent illegitimate. (p.35)

It is crucial for teachers to be aware that the previously taken for granted views of their managers is being challenged in a fundamental way. The external dimension of managerialsm is highlighted by Busher and Saran. But it may be more important to consider the issues of '... surveillance...' and '... manufactured consent...'. These are issues that suggest powerlessness on the part of those that are managed in this manner. However to '... render dissent illegitimate' is perhaps the most invidious aspect. This is perhaps suggesting that teachers who express any opinions which may be contrary to what is being imposed, will very rapidly realise that their concerns are of little interest to those who have '... externally generated the aims and targets.' The lack of influence teachers may feel they have and the sense of powerlessness for teachers could be direct outcomes from this managerialist perspective. Teachers may perceive that camouflaging views which are contrary to the prevailing rhetoric may be expedient.

Related to this concept of managerialism is what Brown *et al* (2000) discuss about the rhetoric of,

> '... distributed leadership (or shared power) among senior and middle managers in UK schools ...' (p.237)

Through their research they found evidence that there is much rhetoric and little reality about sharing power. The rhetoric which teachers are exposed to with regard to target setting or any new initiative such as Citizenship, Special School status or the

implementation of the 'Literacy Hour' is now an accepted part of teachers' working lives.

3.1.4 Leadership and the role of headteachers in managerialism.

Historically we can find situations where typologies and descriptions of headteachers have been made explicit (Wallace and Hall 1994; Ribbins 1997). The journey that schools have made, from the taken for granted or 'traditional' modes of management, to a more 'managerialist' perspective of school management, has been staged. We can perceive discrete stages such as:

- church/ LEA governance of schools

- centralised imposition of a National Curriculum

- Local Management of Schools (LMS) and the creation of Grant Maintained (GM) schools (and subsequent dismantling of GM schools)

- school improvement and the preoccupation with headteachers, leadership and school effectiveness.

Throughout all of these stages we have seen the importance of the headteacher and his/her leadership role. And, as has previously been mentioned, the powers that headteachers have been given have been used to facilitate the policies of central government. But more importantly teachers are aware that headteachers have these delegated powers. One has only to consider the manner in which headteacher unions secured more funding from central government, for 'performance management'. This funding was secured in mid-2002 after headteachers' threats of 'boycotting' the

performance management system. A letter to the *Times Educational Supplement* of 19 April 2002 may give us some insight into the issue of how class teachers perceive the influence of headteachers and their professional associations. David Hart (General Secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers) wrote under the headline *'What sell-out on performance pay?'*,

> 'There has been no shady deal and no sell out. It is also untrue that the NAHT and SHA have agreed additional criteria in order to ensure that only 80% of teacher may progress. The reality is that NAHT and SHA called the classroom teacher unions together in December in order to agree a special joint submission on funding to the School Teachers' Review Body and that the classroom teacher unions have done precious little to advance the cause of their own members.'(p.20)

This one issue gives some idea as to how headteachers are perceived by class teachers as facilitating the policies of central government.

3.2 Deskilling teachers

The two issues of the 'deskilling' of teachers and the perceptions of teachers portrayed in the media generate strong feelings for teachers. Dinham and Scott's (2000) research into teachers working in Australia, New Zealand, England and the USA found that '...the poor image of the profession ...' and '... teacher bashing...' cause teachers most dissatisfaction. Whilst these issues are not intrinsically linked, they do resonate with teachers who are concerned about their status and unsure about the way they are perceived in a society that concerns itself with public relations and public image.

There is some concern that the teaching 'profession' is being deskilled (Ozga 1995) in that teachers are seen as no more that technicians (teacher middle managers as no more

than supervisors) and the 'profession' does not have an agreed set of standards. There has long been a demand on the part of some teachers to establish a body that regulates and sets standards of practice for teachers. With the recent creation of the General Teaching Council for England it has been suggested the issue of teachers as professionals will be resolved (Welch and Mahony 2000). However, teachers might be right to be concerned about the suggestions, on the part of Estelle Morris (Secretary of State for Education and Skills), to use Classroom Assistants (under the guidance of teachers) instead of qualified teachers to supervise pupils. Teachers may well feel that if this fundamental task of pupil supervision and the professional status of *in loco parentis* can be so easily delegated then perhaps other elements of their professional status may also be delegated.

3.3 Teachers and the media

'Teacher bashing' (Dinham and Scott 2000) is perceived by teachers when they see the media daily giving them a 'bad press'. Elements in this are the media's preoccupation with teachers' holidays ('... long summer break ...' and the need to review the school year) and the view that teachers have a short working day (finish teaching at 3.30 pm). It also includes how the teachers feel that the media denigrates their efforts, undermines their achievements and castigates teachers' opinions. Some teachers also see it as an attempt to ensure that teachers do not have a say in any debate about schools and pupils' school experience. This is outlined by what Dinham and Scott say about the relationship between teachers' sense of efficacy and their effectiveness. Whilst some would suggest that '... teacher bashing...' is an emotive phrase, others would see it as something that pervades teachers' experiences. Teachers, it would appear, have a sense of feeling

devalued and undervalued (Dinham and Scott 1996). Teachers feel that the constant

change, the deskilling, low status and lack of genuine recognition from central

government of their efforts and commitment are detrimental to bringing about real

improvements in schools. The media denigration of teachers and their efforts is wearing

and de-motivating for teachers.

It might be useful to look at Blake *et al* (2000) and what they say about teachers

reflecting on their careers. They interviewed 20 teachers and headteachers in the middle

of their careers. Blake *et al* found that those interviewed believed that,

> 'Recognition is important ... recognition from children, colleagues,
> parents and school managers.' (p.15)

> '... teachers feel angry and saddened by the media attack on teachers over
> twenty years. They feel this has led to a devaluing of the public's respect
> for the profession ...'(p.16)

Teachers are well aware of the public nature of teaching and their schools. They also

acknowledge that they will be subject to some scrutiny. But as can be seen from the two

comments above, teachers derive a sense of well being when others recognise their

efforts but teachers also derive a sense of frustration from the relentless castigation they

see in the media.

The rhetoric contained in newspaper headlines gives us some idea as to the public nature

of teaching and the public role of teachers. The following headlines are taken from

newspapers which could be considered as not being preoccupied with 'teacher bashing'.

- *'Stop putting the blame on teachers'* (The Independent 13 March 2001)

- *'Teachers blame overwork for sick leave'* (The Independent 13 May 2001)

- *Schools 'resemble third world' - Staff leaving permanent jobs to do supply work* (The Guardian 1 June 2001),

- *Morris in U-turn on teacher shortage* (The Observer 2 September 2001)

- *Schools cheat to boost exam results -Parents urged to blow whistle on teachers* (The Guardian 5 June 2002)

The penultimate headline refers to an article about the present Secretary of State for Education and Skills, Estelle Morris. This Secretary of State, like her predecessors, is conscious of the public nature of teaching (she had previously been a teacher). With this in mind, it is interesting to note some of the statements made by this Secretary of State. In November 2001 in the *Introduction* to the *Social Market Foundation pamphlet* (Social Market Foundation 2001) Estelle Morris stated,

'Teachers want the time and support to do what they do best - teaching pupils. ... We may be opposed at every turn by those who fear change. But, at this time of success throughout the education system, and with every expectation of continued success into the future, we have a golden opportunity to secure major improvements in teachers' self-confidence and status.'

The comment about being 'opposed at every turn' is perhaps for wider public consumption and reinforces the view that to those who may have valid concerns about any 'change' will be sidelined and castigated further. In the *Special Report on reducing teachers' workload - progress so far*, (Department for Education and Skills, June 2002) Estelle Morris says,

'Delivering on standards and tackling teachers' workloads go hand in hand. I am determined to free teachers to teach.'

Inherent in the Morris statement is the belief that *quid pro quo* will characterise her relationship with teachers. If teacher 'Deliver on standards ...' then 'teachers' workloads ...' will be considered.

3.4 Summary

Teacher middle managers understand the public nature of teaching. They understand that their actions are open to scrutiny and interpretation internally from their own colleagues and externally from the media. Teachers are aware of the debates about teacher professionality. Some teachers are also concerned about what they see as 'teacher bashing' and a media that is unsympathetic.

Because of the complex nature of school management and because elements of management are elusive for those who are not involved in managing, teachers are not always aware of what is required in order to successfully manage a secondary school. However, the impact of managerialism in the secondary school today cannot be underestimated (Hartley 1997). The centralised control of schools and the resultant managerialism is an issue that aspiring managers must be aware of. It is possible to perceive a number of situations in which teacher middle managers or aspiring teacher middle managers may find themselves:

- teachers who aspire to middle management without realizing the impact of managerialism, will experience some dissonance when they become middle managers. In contrast to this, there will be teachers who aspire to middle

management and realise the importance of managerialism and will seek to embrace managerialism.

- teachers who aspire to senior management (and therefore must pass through middle management) are obliged to subscribe publicly to any policy that is part of the prevailing rhetoric.

- teachers who do not aspire to middle management, perceive the reality of what it means to manage in schools in the twenty-first century and feel that management, or more importantly the prevailing rhetoric of managerialism, is not for them.

Consequently those who become middle managers contribute and knowingly approve of managerialsm and the rhetoric of managerialism. They in turn perpetuate, reinforce and ultimately give legitimacy to managerialism and ultimately diminish professionality. In contrast to this we may see teacher middle managers who refuse to contribute to managerialism and the prevailing rhetoric. These managers, inevitably in these centrally focused times, experience the tensions and conflicts inherent in not subscribing to centrally devised and centrally led policies.

3.4.1 Tensions and conflicts - is this really what it means to manage in the middle?

It is all too evident from the foregoing that teacher middle managers, like all managers, need a repertoire of skills and an insight into how and when to use these skills. They must also manage on a day-to-day basis the many conflicts and tensions between the individual teachers they manage. Perhaps more importantly they need to manage the conflicts and tensions between themselves and those they manage. Finally they need to

manage the conflicts and tensions that exist between senior managers and class teacher

colleagues.

It could be concluded that schools and their senior managers ignore middle managers at

their peril. Whilst there is no denying the complexities of the teacher middle manager's

role, those involved in education in secondary schools must seek to gain further insight

into the teacher middle manager and his/her role and function.

Wright (2001) is worth quoting at length,

> '... the anti professional legislation of the last decade and a critical press
> have been significant, but not the only contributor to this process.
> Teachers are now more regulated and more accountable than they were a
> decade ago. Their hours are stipulated; what they teach is prescribed; the
> power of the teacher unions and the supportive role of LEAs have been
> reduced, thus increasing their vulnerability. Their work is regularly
> surveilled externally by OFSTED and increasingly subject to detailed
> monitoring by heads.' (p.284)

How teachers cope with this surveillance of them and their work and the increased

preoccupation with accountability is perhaps worthy of further discussion. Indeed it is

vital to contrast how teachers cope with the rhetoric promulgated from the centre with

the reality of day-to-day teaching.

Chapter 4: Middle managers and stress.

Much has been written about occupational stress in the context of the teaching profession. Between the mid 1970s and mid 1980s there was a growing interest in teacher stress (Dunham 1984; Farber 1984; McIntyre 1984; Kyriacou and Pratt 1985). Since the mid 1980s there has been a growing body of literature into teacher stress (Esteve 1989; Kyriacou 1989; Brown and Ralph 1992).

Some of the research studies undertaken into teacher stress have looked at the possible causes of stress and the possible management responses (Rogers 1992; Burstall 1996). Inevitably the studies have approached the issue of stress in the teaching profession from differing and in some cases opposing perspectives. In this respect it might be useful to compare two recent studies (Travers and Cooper 1996; Pithers and Soden 1999). A significant study into teacher stress undertaken by Travers and Cooper (1996) begins by stating that for teachers

> '...the resulting stress has been due to the changes in their role and ways of working....' (p.10).

Travers and Cooper conclude by stating that some of these stresses of day-to-day teaching are unavoidable. However they go on to state that avoiding a 'blame' culture when a teacher asks for support is vital. They finally state that 'organisational' issues must be used to tackle '... the stress that teachers are currently experiencing ... from aspects of the work environment.' (p.182) The very mention by Travers and Cooper of 'blame' culture may go some way to explain why teachers see stress in teaching as 'bad' stress, because others perceive it as weakness. These teachers, if they can, invariably

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leave teaching after a short time (less than 3 years). If these teachers don't or can't leave

teaching they will need to develop strategies to cope with the stress inherent in teaching.

These teachers are very aware of the rhetoric of stress but live daily with the reality of

teaching and its complex array of conflicts, tensions and contradictions.

However as Spear *et al* (2000) state,

> The reasons given by practising teachers for leaving teaching included
> work overload, disillusionment with teaching, poor pay, stress, low
> morale, career progression, lack of respect with the community and for
> women, childcare or domestic commitments.' (p.51)

In direct contrast to the above, Pithers and Soden (1999) accept the limited usefulness of

changing management methodologies as a means of controlling organisational stress.

They however are more concerned with suggesting that the person-environment (P-E)

fit/misfit may be a much more crucial element in teacher stress. In other words Pithers

and Soden are suggesting that if teachers are having difficulty functioning in a

satisfactory manner in their environment then it is they and not the environment that must

change. But what of those teachers who have previously coped well within their

environment and then experience unacceptable stress? A significant number of teachers

suggest that it is the many changes that have been experienced in teaching that have

brought about the additional stress. Teachers who leave teaching after a relatively short

time (less than 3 years) support the view that it is in the nature of teaching to have rapid

change.

With these two contrasting views of stress in teaching it might be useful to consider

others' research. Burstall (1996) states that issues such as 'lack of time to do the job',

'national curriculum/irrelevant paperwork', 'poor status of profession', 'staff relationships', 'government interference', 'pressure of meetings' are expressed by teachers as particularly stressful experiences. It is interesting to note that a significant proportion of the issues mentioned by Burstall above are mentioned in the responses of the pilot interviewees undertaken in the initial stages of this project.

4.1 Teachers on teacher stress

It is perhaps useful to look at what experienced teachers say or write about stress within teaching. King (1993), an experienced and practising head of year, undertook a small case study in a secondary school. Whilst she conceded that the teachers in her study knew the focus of her research and this may have influenced responses, King found that themes such as 'pressure of work', 'heavy teaching load', 'multiple roles' and 'ineffective communication' were sources of stress for those middle managers interviewed (p.108). King states how teachers and teacher middle managers in particular, were '... coping ...' with stress. Teacher middle managers were using a range of skills, techniques and experience to '...cope...'. These included what she called resources:

- personal resources
- interpersonal resources
- organisational resources
- community resources

King in particular drew attention to 'organisational resources' that she defined as 'sympathetic colleagues in school with whom they could discuss problems' (p.115). King was keen to highlight that these were trusted colleagues and not line managers. The issue

of King's colleagues '...coping...' perhaps highlights the taken for granted need for teachers to 'cope'.

Perhaps we can see how this 'coping' was also an issue for those that were interviewed for the pilot research. The responses from the pilot interviews highlighted how teachers expressed, on a significant number of occasions, the degree to which they felt significant dissatisfaction with their daily work experiences. It is important to note that a significant proportion of their comments relate to interactions with other colleagues and managers in particular. Some of the pilot interviewee responses may allow us to come to the conclusion that these pilot interview teachers also felt under stress. The interviewees were all experienced teachers who were perceived as capable and effective teachers. An experienced middle manager talked of having '...lost confidence...' and having the feeling of being '...questioned every time...'. He also talked about how he felt under pressure because of management '... imposing things, guidelines and parameters...' Another experienced teacher, a second in Mathematics, commented on '...prescriptive...' practices and how these do not '... allow much flexibility ...'. An experienced head of Information Technology talked about feeling 'undervalued' and how middle managers are looking for '...somebody to whip when something goes wrong...'.

The book 'Teachers Talk about Teaching' gives us further insight into what experienced teachers have to say about stress. Ross (1995), an experienced deputy headteacher, says,

> 'What makes teaching so stressful and exhausting is not so much the actual teaching, demanding though that is ... What makes the profession so demanding is the burden of administration and paperwork required,

coupled with frequent criticism in the media by politicians and other interest groups.' (p.51-52)

In the same publication, Richardson, after 30 years teaching as a middle manager and senior manager says,

> 'There is a strong tendency for teachers to blame themselves when things do not go right ...'(p.60)

She goes on to say that teachers,

> '...would be satisfied if our students, the parents of our students, the management of our schools and the government, would say a little more often –'You're doing a good job'. They, and we, might even begin to believe it.' (p.67)

It is easy to see stress as an issue that whilst important, is not necessarily one to be overly concerned with, especially if teachers are appearing to 'cope'. However it would appear unwise to take the issue of teacher stress lightly. The *Times Educational Supplement* of 28 April 2000 published a number of teachers' letters about the previously reported suicide of a class teacher following an OFSTED report. One letter writer wrote

> ' ... I would like to apologise ... for the lack of support I have given my colleagues at times. We are not as good at recognising problems in our fellow teachers as we should.'

This highlights how important it is that we have an understanding of teachers under stress. It is vital for all involved in education from class teachers to senior managers. But, in particular, the teacher middle manager responsible for managing class teachers must be allowed time to support colleagues who are in need of support and to refer those they cannot support to others who may be able to provide support. Perhaps school middle

managers need to be equipped with the skills to identify where and how they can be effective in supporting and where they cannot.

4.2 Stress and middle managers - greater, less or just different?

We perhaps need to ask the question of whether teacher middle managers experience similar, greater, lesser or simply different stresses to those of senior managers or class teachers.

Busher and Harris (1999) also comment on the 'tensions and dilemmas ...' (p.305) facing middle managers in dealing with everyday issues. Busher and Harris were suggesting that 'tensions and dilemmas' characterise the role of middle managers and were not just some small part of the middle manager's role. So in this context what does the resolution of these 'tensions and dilemmas' cost in terms of the middle manager's time and well-being?

Glover and Miller (1999) noted, in a research project involving subject leaders, that all the subject leaders taking part specified lack of time as being something which '... inhibited their effectiveness.' Negative concepts such as feeling 'inhibited' are pervasive and ultimately distract teacher middle managers from focusing on those teachers they manage or pupils they teach.

O'Neill (2000) discusses the issue of the 'underperforming' head of department. The title of O'Neill's paper perhaps goes some way to explaining one ongoing issue for teacher

middle managers in education - *'Incompetent or just plain overworked? A sympathetic appraisal of the 'under-performing' secondary school HoD.'* O'Neill presents a case for accepting that teacher middle managers are being overloaded with tasks up to a point where they can no longer even prioritise the tasks that need to be completed. Middle managers feel unable to say no to the many requests made of them. Because teacher middle managers are in receipt of responsibility points (a significant portion of their salary is because they have a management responsibility) they feel unable to say no. Teacher middle managers may feel unable to delegate any of their tasks because they feel their class teacher colleagues are already over burdened. Teacher middle managers may well feel constricted by not being able to say no, not being able to delegate tasks and not being able to drop tasks.

We might be tempted to suggest that as middle managers have more say in the management of the school they may feel more able to contribute to the effectiveness of the school. However if a middle manager is not in agreement with those issues s/he is asked/directed to implement this may in itself lead to stress. In this context Gold and Evans (1998) state that there may be,

> '... an unresolved mismatch between a personal philosophy of education
> and the organisations educational philosophy ... '(p.50)

This is perhaps another major source of stress. Middle managers have chosen to be middle managers in order that they may influence and contribute. But Gold and Evans are suggesting that if teachers can not match their philosophy with that of the national curriculum and the other centrally developed policies then this can be source of stress,

This may also go some way to support the P-E fit or misfit view of the sources of stress

for managers.

In this context we have only to look at what Brown *et al* (1999) state. Brown *et al* were

looking at models of decision-making in secondary school.

> '... teachers are more likely to become engaged in making changes within
> their own school when more collaborative leadership models are the
> norm. (p.329)

In the same context Glover *et al* (1999) state that,

> '... schools which value and develop their subject leaders, often through
> reformed structures, are more likely to be those schools in which the
> subject staff feel that they are well led.' (p.331)

The concept of individual teachers 'feeling' well led is obviously not the same as 'being'

well led. But actually engendering positive feelings about a situation as complex as

school leadership and management is obviously of vital importance to effective leaders.

In the same context, if teacher middle managers are simply used as the management

'agents' of the headteacher or senior management team, teacher middle managers may

feel they are not being consulted about changes but are being used simply as conduits for

these changes. It could also be acknowledged that middle managers are the people to

whom teachers initially bring their concerns or 'moans' regarding changes or everyday

teaching experiences. If a middle manager feels powerless to bring about any change

even if s/he considers the teachers have legitimate concerns then this will in itself be a

source of stress and/or tension. Indeed, this can be compounded if class teacher colleagues perceive that the manager has little control over their day-to-day experiences.

Dean (1993) whilst commenting on the role of deputy headteachers states quite succinctly that they are in,

> '... a particularly stressful position in that they stand between the headteacher and the staff and are expected to mediate in situations where there is a difference. (p.238)

This is perhaps a role that is often undertaken by teacher middle managers. Middle managers often 'stand between' and/or mediate between the SMT and the class teachers in a school.

Regardless of occupation we are obliged to undergo the management, supervision or monitoring of our work. Teacher middle managers are obliged to, and hopefully, see the importance and benefit of managing others' work. However, being managed by a management culture or ethos that differs from ones' own may bring about either appropriate challenges or inappropriate stress. It is apparent that if a manager is committed to a collegial style of management and finds herself/himself working within a collegial environment there will be shared ideals. However if an autocratic manager finds himself/herself working within a collegial environment this may lead to frustration with the decision-making process.

Managers who try to harmonise their own management style to that of the environment in which the find themselves will obviously undergo some stress. The greater the difference

in management styles the greater harmonising efforts on the part of the middle manager and the greater the resultant stress (Busher and Harris 1999). Obviously the perceptions held by those that are managed of those that manage them are also vital to consider. Individuals are liable to thrive on one preferred style of management (Hitt 1990). Some like to be directed and led. Others like to be consulted and have their opinions listened to and acted upon. Presenting staff with two differing and even conflicting management styles will at the very least be confusing and disconcerting.

4.3 Stigmatised stress and a 'blame culture'

It becomes apparent when reviewing most studies of teacher stress that to some degree teachers feel stigmatised if they admit to experiencing stress or difficulties with coping with workload. Brown and Ralph (1992 and 1995) state that teachers stigmatise stress. Brown and Ralph also state that an element in this is that some teachers feel the school's needs should come before their own. Kyriacou (1989) also says how   '... the culture of the school and a reluctance to admit to colleagues that one is having difficulties...' (p.65) is a common issue for teachers. Working within a 'blame culture' can be stifling to individuals. Feelings of being 'blamed' for shortcomings instead of being assisted in overcoming these shortcomings may lead some individuals to camouflage their concerns because these 'weaknesses' may be used against them. Fear of making mistakes may stifle creativity and a desire to do things differently.

Northern (2000) gives an insight into the Norfolk Wellbeing project. This project was established by Norfolk County Council (supported and financed by the Health and Safety

Executive and the Teacher Support Network). It aims to '...create healthy institutions staffed by happy people'. Northern states '... the blame culture must be replaced by an agreement to solve problems together.' If we allow the blame culture to perpetuate it will in turn stifle those who which to take chances with new initiatives. It is only by being prepared to try out new ideas in the classroom and by giving teachers ownership of these innovative ideas that we can build on what we know is effective.

4.4 Summary

Much has been written about teachers and teacher stress. There exists a debate between those who see the nature of teaching as being inherently stressful and those who see stress arising because of a mismatch between the individual teacher and what is expected of them, the person - environment mismatch. Middle managers in particular are presented with a varied range of situations that cause them to reflect upon their personal commitment to a management style or decision-making model.

However, research into teacher stress has led some researchers to conclude that it is the manner in which teachers and teacher middle managers have themselves and their time managed and controlled, which causes them to engage or disengage and feel valued or undervalued.

A 'blame culture' which some believe prevails in schools is perceived to be inhibiting and a source of stress for both teacher and teacher middle managers.

The rhetoric of raising standards and becoming more efficient and effective is at odds with the reality teachers and teacher middle managers experience in their day-to-day working lives. In the context of being reactive, teachers, teacher middle managers and senior managers should be given the opportunity to develop strategies to deal with stress in the workplace. More importantly schools should be encouraged to adopt a proactive role in managing stress. Kyriacou (2000) has identified what schools can do to minimise stress including:

- managing demands on staff

- enhancing staff morale

- establishing a climate of support

- organising regular professional development activities

- dealing with problems

The final issue of 'dealing with problems' is not intended as a blandishment but as a commitment to be proactive as oppose to being reactive. Whilst the prevention of all stress may not be possible, proactive steps can be taken which will seek to minimise and control it. Encouraging teachers to undertake tasks that have their foundations in centrally devised rhetoric, and which distract teachers from the reality of preparing for teaching and actually teaching will serve no one well.

Chapter 5: Research Methodology.

The search for an insight into teacher middle managers' working lives, and a keenness to maintain objectivity whilst this insight was sought, was why the 'grounded theory' approach was chosen. The desire to use the principles of 'Grounded Theory' (Glaser and Strauss 1967) had to be balanced with what was felt would be a pragmatic and viable research methodology. The issue of why semi-structured interview were used, and why pilot interviews took place in Hillside High School and further interviews took place in Parkside High School and Daleside High School will be addressed after a brief consideration of the implication of using 'grounded theory' in this research study.

5.1 Grounded Theory

When first introduced to the concept of 'Grounded Theory' I became concerned with the issue of objectivity. But Eisner (1993) was persuasive when he says,

> '...ontological objectivity cannot, in principle, provide what we hope for, and that procedural objectivity offers less than we think.' (p.50)

I have previously conducted a small-scale research into teacher perceptions (Robertson 1995). This previous research project, a case study of a secondary school, used both questionnaires and interviews. At the conclusion of the study I was convinced that in order to uncover teacher perceptions the interview responses provided much more that the questionnaire responses. However more importantly I became convinced that allowing the theory to develop through the study would produce a more valid outcome.

I can see the usefulness of adopting the routine (or stages) Glaser and Strauss highlight in their 'Grounded Theory'. The four stages are:

- comparing incidents and categories

- integration of categories and properties

- researcher reduces theory and delimits the saturation of categories

- writing period with analysis to derive themes

Of course Glaser and Strauss had their critics (e.g. Brown 1973 and Bulmer 1979). Brown is particularly concerned about how Glaser and Strauss regard 'theory'. Bulmer is more concerned with how researchers will not be able to put aside their presuppositions and the knowledge they have about the issues they are researching. Indeed Altrichter and Posch (1989) in particular argue that 'hypothetico-deductive' procedure is superior in terms of procedure as opposed to the 'approach' of 'grounded theory'. It is vital for a researcher to be aware of the 'prejudices' that s/he might bring to the research study. However, as a practising teacher, I believe that being aware of the need to continually reflect on both the process and the data uncovered is crucial in creating a study that is valid and relevant. I am reassured by Phillips' (1993) comment,

> '... what is crucial for the objectivity of any enquiry – whether it is qualitative or quantitative – is the critical spirit in which it has been carried out.' (p.71)

It is inevitable that at times a researcher be unintentionally subjective but it is the recognition of this possibility which will hopefully reduce the likelihood of its occurring. Of course remaining objective is more about being critical with what I am uncovering

and how I am uncovering it. I have genuine desire like, Nias (1993), who states quite concisely,

> 'I wanted to use grounded theory, to allow my ideas to emerge from the data, but this seemed a very daunting task.' (p. 137)

In conclusion it might be useful to look at what Tranter (1986) says within the context of teachers engaging in Action Research,

> 'Rather than beginning with a theory which is then used and applied to observations of human behaviour, theory is something that emerges, that arises from data.' (p.107)

But much more importantly she acknowledges that,

> 'In order to get access to that data, the researcher must get close to the area of life under study, become a part of it and enter the sorts of interactions that her subjects encounter.'(p.107)

It was decided that for both pragmatic and procedural reasons to conduct the research in schools in which I was employed. Admittedly I had only worked in both schools a short time before I commenced each series of interviews. However I did consider that being in the schools did give me some insight into the environment that I would perhaps not have had.

5.2 Ethical issues

5.2.1 Semi-structured interviews.

As a teacher/researcher I have been committed to the highest standards of ethical conduct. It has been important to ensure that those interviewed realise that their

responses are treated in the strictest confidence. To maintain these ethical standards it has been vital to:

- change the names of all three schools involved

- create a letter code that allows me to identify the respondent but at the same time afford the respondent total confidentiality.

- change some respondent details in order that his/her identity is not discernible by those close to the institutions where the research took place.

- use a simple letter code in the transcripts, to replace places and people respondents have mentioned in the interviews.

5.2.2 Research notebook.

The research notebook was used to record incidents which were observed or in which I was a participant. No permission was sought from the participants of these events. For this no apology is made. I have instead sought to ensure that any examples of the research notebook contents that have been used have been edited to ensure it is not possible to discern those who were present or made the comments. Any research notebook extracts used have been placed in a box to highlight their source.

5.3 Semi-structured interviews

The reasons for conducting the research study using semi-structured interviews in the pilot school and Parkside High and Daleside High is discussed further below. It must be remembered that this study initially commenced with a desire to look at the formal and informal dimensions of a middle manager's role. It became evident after conducting pilot

interviews with teacher middle manager colleagues that the issue of teacher middle

managers coping with stress was the primary concern. Even at the initial pilot interview

stage of the research the impact of the 'grounded theory' methodology became

apparent. Interviewees (all experienced middle managers) were leaving me in no doubt

that they were more concerned about their day-to-day experience of teaching and

interaction with teacher colleagues. Even at this initial stage I was concerned with how

middle managers coped with the many requirements and demands of teaching and

managing. I became convinced that by interviewing more teacher middle managers it

might be possible to derive some further insight into what the 'reality' of day-to-day

teaching and managing means for a secondary school middle manager.

I also needed to resolve the following issues:

- Why use semi-structured interviews?
- Teachers are very busy people and finding time to take part in a research interview will not always be easy for them.
- Will teaching *and* researching in a school provide a valid and reliable insight?
- The logistics of arranging and conducting interviews.
- Will objectivity be elusive or obtainable?
- Will those interviewed be representative?
- Will the two schools chosen be representative?

5.3.1 Why semi-structured interviews?

The debate about qualitative and quantitative studies is one that has been rehearsed

previously (e.g. Ball 1993 and Phillips 1993). Phillips was particularly concerned with

objectivity and Ball was concerned with the part played by the researcher. However it

was felt that to uncover teacher attitudes and opinions and at the same time allow further

enquiry into any strongly held teacher beliefs it would be necessary to use semi-

structured interviews. It would not be possible to do this using a questionnaire. It was also felt it was contrary to the spirit of the study to attempt to reduce teachers' responses to sterile quantitative data. I was also committed to ensuring that those questioned had the opportunity to respond in a setting which gave respondents confidence that their comments would be treated in the strictest confidence. At the same time these teachers needed to feel able, throughout the interview, to provide expansion on any issue they made a comment about.

5.3.2 Teachers giving time to take part interviews

It must be acknowledged that I planned to interview class teachers and middle managers at the schools were I was teaching. Having conducted previous research and knowing how busy I am, I needed to accept that in order to interview very busy class teachers and teacher middle managers the arrangements for the interviewing would need to be flexible and sympathetic to their working lives. I would need to make clear to those who I approached (or who approached me) that the interviews would be as unobtrusive as possible and would take little time out of their working day. The importance of this must not be underestimated. If I was encouraging teachers to uncover some quite emotive issues for them then I would need to keep the interviews as succinct as possible but still allow them to see that I was also interested in responding to their responses.

It was decided to use a micro-cassette recorder that could be placed unobtrusively on a table in an office or quiet classroom. I did not refer to the interview question schedule

after the initial interviews (See Appendix 2). During the initial interviews I perceived that interviewees were distracted by me referring to the interview question schedule.

5.3.3 Why teach *and* research in the schools?

Because of the possibly elusive nature of what was being enquired into, it was considered vital to be able observe and interact with interviewees away from the semi-structured environment of the interviews. It was also considered valuable to be able to see, at first hand, how teachers interacted with one another, middle managers and senior managers. I also wished to be aware of the 'gossip' that pervades any staff group and any undercurrent of feeling amongst and between the staff group, departments, managers and individuals. It is only by being close to the situation that I was going to uncover any of this. But perhaps more important than any other issue is to understand how all of the above acts on, influences or is reflected in what interviewees say.

5.3.4 Logistics of meeting interviewees and conducting interviews

I established myself in each school – teaching in each school for one half term before the following steps were undertaken:

- approaching the headteacher with a request to interview teaching staff. (Although at the job interview for each temporary post I had tentatively mentioned that I was engaged in research and would welcome the opportunity to carry it out in the school. On both occasions this was met positively by the headteacher.)

- when the formal agreement from the headteacher was received a memorandum was sent to all teaching staff. (See Appendix 1)

- I approached individuals to obtain their agreement to an interview in principle and then to arrange the interview time. (Some interviews had to be rescheduled because of staff absence)

- some teachers approached me to let me know they would be happy to be interviewed. (Not all of these were interviewed)

The semi-structured nature of the interviews would allow me to seeking illumination on any issue that was mentioned during the interview.

5.3.5 Objectivity – elusive or obtainable?

I decided to conduct the interviews in two schools in which I was engaged as a class teacher. Whilst this presented issues of participant interviewer/observer it was felt useful to be able to comment on the micro-politics of the school. I did not want to be interviewing only disgruntled middle managers or teachers suspicious of an external researcher.

All of the interviews took place over three terms in the two schools. Those chosen for interview were selected using the following criteria:

- teaching experience of teacher (no one with less than 5 years experience)

- having taught in more than one school (present school plus at least one other school)

- where a class teacher was interviewed a teacher middle manager from that department was also interviewed.

5.3.6 Are the teachers interviewed representative or not?

The pilot sample that gave the impetus for the later focus of the research was chosen carefully. As will be discussed later the teacher middle managers chosen were perceived by me and other colleagues as both committed and effective teachers and managers. To try and obtain responses from different subject specialists each teacher middle manager was from separate faculties represented in the school, Mathematics, Modern Languages, Science and Technology. Interviews planned with English and Performing Arts faculty middle managers did not take place.

At Parkside High and Daleside High I initially set out to avoid interviewing a significant number of teachers who were perceived as being disillusioned with or disengaged from teaching and/or middle management (Griffith *et al* 1999). I would suggest that those interviewed were representative of teachers, teacher middle managers and senior managers in that I have avoided interviewing a significant number of teachers who are expressing entirely negative feelings about their teaching lives and experiences.

5.3.7 Are the schools chosen representative or not?

The two schools where the interviews took place were two comprehensives situated in the suburbs of a city in the northwest of England (one in the south of the city and one in the north). Each had approximately 800 pupils on roll. In each of the individual school descriptions I have sought to give an outline of the prevailing issues for the school. I have also sought to characterise the school in terms of management model and overall ethos.

Whilst some would suggest this is contentious and arguable I have nevertheless attempted to explain using both data and anecdotal evidence how I have perceived each school. I identified a small number of issues in each of the schools, which have caused a degree of dissatisfaction for those employed there. However in general both schools were generally positive places in which to work and conduct interviews. Indeed both headteachers, whilst unaware of the exact nature of my research, were positively supportive of my research. The headteachers and teachers in each school often enquired as to the progress I was making and expressed a desire to read the finished thesis!

5.4 The schools and the teachers

A small number of pilot interviews took place at Hillside High School. These pilot interviews were followed up with:

- initial interviews at a secondary school which will be referred to as Parkside High School

- further interviews took place at a secondary school which will be referred to as Daleside High School

All interviews were taped and transcribed. I also kept a research diary/notebook in which I made notes of incidents/comments that occurred during each school day. This research notebook record was at times completed at the end of each day in some quiet time I put aside and on other occasions it took place just shortly after the event/incident if I had time.

It is worth reiterating that:

- I was working as a class teacher in each school. I spent at least half a term in each school before interviews commenced and at least a term after the interviews were complete. Research diary/notebook entries were made throughout the entire time I was in each school.

- teachers in each school were aware that I was undertaking research and were invited to contribute through a memorandum sent to staff in the internal mailing system of each school.

- some teachers volunteered to be interviewed - where this was the case I have noted it in the description at the start of the interview transcript.

After completing the pilot research at Hillside High School I secured a teaching position at Parkside High and then at Daleside High

5.4.1 Research notebook/diary.

It was decided in the early stages of my research to keep a dairy of comments and observations made by staff. Because this is particularly onerous task to complete for the participant observer it was decided to limit the observations to informal interaction that I participated in or witnessed. These appeared to be the times when individuals were quite happy to comment on the day-to-day concerns of school. Teachers were on many occasions very willing to expose their thoughts, particularly if they felt that only a small number of trusted colleagues were listening.

Below can be seen extracts from the research diary/notebook.
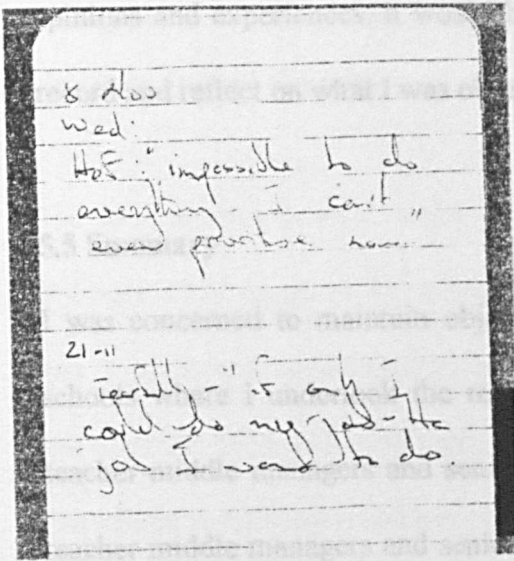
HoF: '... impossible to do everything. I can't even prioritise now ...'

Tearfully – '... if only I could do my job – the job I want to do ...'

Figure 5. Extracts from research notebook.

The strength of feeling expressed in the last extract perhaps shows why it is vital to keep a research diary/notebook. The depth of frustration expressed in this comment informs the more guarded comments made during the semi-structured interviews.

At times I was quite concerned by what I was recording in the research diary/notebook. I found myself responding quite strongly to the obviously emotive comments that were being made. As I was engaging in the analysis of the interviews at the same time as I was recording in my research diary/notebook I decided to limit my reflections to the interviews and allow the comments made away from interviews and recorded in the research diary/notebook to stand alone for the time being.

Whilst I had used a research diary/notebook in previous case study research work, I took for granted its usefulness. I came to the conclusion that whilst the interviews would give me some insight into teachers, teacher middle manager's and senior manager's attitudes,

opinions and experiences, it would be the research notebook which would allow me to record and reflect on what I was observing, hearing and experiencing.

5.5 Summary

I was concerned to maintain objectivity but could not ignore my involvement in the schools where I undertook the research. I encountered happy and contented teachers, teacher middle managers and senior managers. I also encountered disaffected teachers, teacher middle managers and senior managers. I became involved in their daily working lives and they in mine. But I sought:

- To maintain a distance from becoming embroiled in internal politics.

- To reflect upon encounters and record my concerns, worries and positive insights.

- Reflect upon the interview responses.

The following chapters of the thesis have been arranged so as to make clear:

- the reflections on pilot interviews

- the reflections on the contents of the research diary

- the reflections and analysis of the interview responses

- the development of interviewee response themes.

Chapter 6: Using Pilot interviews to reflect on the process and to develop initial themes.

The pilot interviews were conducted in a school in which I had been a teacher middle manager. I had taught in this school for 3 years. Those interviewed were peers that others and I perceived as committed and effective teachers and managers. I chose these interviewees because I knew them to be reflective and honest individuals who would give considered and honest responses to my questions.

6.1 Pilot interviews –reflecting on the process.

Pilot interviewing took place for two reasons:

- to ascertain if semi-structured interviews were appropriate to use to research into middle managers in secondary schools.

- to ascertain if the interview questions were appropriate.

Four pilot interviews were conducted. The interviews were with four middle managers:

- the head of Information Technology

- the second in Mathematics

- a Pastoral Head (head of house)

- an INSET co-ordinator.

Two further interviews were planned but did not take place because of time constraints. Those interviewed had teaching experience ranging from 5 – 26 years. It was essential that, not only was there to be a reflection on the content of the interviews, but there was also a reflection on the process gone through in facilitating these interviewee responses.

6.2 Reflections on the process and content

I was aware from the outset that to be 'objective' in my analysis of my interactions with interviewees would prove difficult. As has previously been discussed the school in which the pilot interviews were conducted was one in which I had taught for three years and in which I had a middle management role. The teachers I interviewed were colleagues who I knew well and had readily agreed to take part in the pilot interviewing. But perhaps I may needed to have considered what Woods (1986) stated quite succinctly,

> 'The interview, therefore, is not just a device for gathering information. It is a process on constructing reality to which both parties contribute and by which both are affected.' (p.91)

The interviewees and I came to the interviews with both an independent and a shared perspective on the pilot school, other schools in which we had taught and our experiences of school management and managers. Furthermore I have to accept that in interviewing teachers I was taking part in a process that was constructing a piece of data that I will analyse. Objectivity, whilst desirable, has not always been easy to obtain and maintain.

The concept of me 'fine-tuning' myself also became a reality. What I heard and observed as well as how I sought out what was available for me to observe and hear is also vital to consider. I cannot ignore that I came to this research with values and beliefs. However it was important that I did not allow these values and beliefs to come to the fore whilst interviewing. By 'fine-tuning' my interactions it was hoped to allow rich data to emerge. In the initial pilot interviews I feel I intervened too much in the interviews. The latter pilot interviews produced fewer interventions from me. Because of this, I became convinced I had gained some insight into teacher middle managers' experiences of

schools. It was only on analysing the interviews that I realised that whilst there may be some lurking insights, I had had no 'Eureka' moment. Perhaps this was more to do with the complex nature of the issues I was using the pilot interviews to enquire into. Or perhaps even those interviewed were not keen to reveal too much! I may also have to concede that by not encouraging further explanation of teacher comments I may also have missed some valuable insights. Whilst acknowledging the foregoing it became apparent that by allowing teachers to talk with few if any interventions I might have uncovered the patently obvious. Teachers wish to have their opinions valued and acknowledged. Having a researcher actually take the time to listen to their opinions and record the responses for analysis may well have reinforced the view that someone believed their opinions were important to consider.

6.2.1 Pilot interviews -reflecting on the content.

The initial analysis of the interviews brought very much to the fore how teachers viewed the personally significant and historically changing manner in which they were and are being managed.

An experienced head of year talked about 'no pressure' when being interviewed for her teaching post a number of years ago. Perhaps with a degree of reminiscence she also mentioned '... we seemed to manage each other very well ...' when she was working closely as a second in faculty with her previous head of faculty. In the latter part of the interview, when this head of year is discussing her present work situation, it becomes apparent that she feels powerless to control or to dictate much of what happens in her

school day. In particular she was quite emotional when she discussed how her manager '... forgot to do a reference ... ' for a job she was applying for. But perhaps giving greater insight is her comment about not feeling able to do anything about it.

An experienced second in Mathematics, on reviewing his teaching career was keen to point out that '... I have had one promotion in all that time ...' (21 years) implying that there has been little interest in his personal development in the last 21 years. He also went on to say 'Although it is supposed to be a profession ... I see it more of a job of work ... I think a lot of the professional responsibilities have been taken away.' The emphasis here is on ' ... taken ...', suggesting this middle manager has not sought to give away these responsibilities and sees this in a negative perspective. He also sees the 'prime objective' for senior managers should be the smooth running of the school '... not all the paper work they get involved in ... '. He seems to be suggesting that his perception of what middle managers should be concerning themselves with is not what happens in reality.

Lack of consultation or even indeed the ability to contribute to day to day activities in school decision-making leads an INSET co-ordinator to talk about '... the imposition of assessments and monitoring by the government ... ' and when talking about senior managers at Hillside he states how they have been '... imposing guidelines and parameters ...' thus implying little opportunity to be consulted about developments.

Finally, the Head of Information Technology, who has considerable experience as a middle manager, talked about how middle management '... has gone from a sort of person style of management to a very impersonal style of management ... management tends to react to pieces of paper ...'. Yet again this Head of Information Technology seems to be supporting the second in Mathematics' comments about senior managers' preoccupation with 'paper' and 'paperwork'. It is also as if the Head of Information Technology also sees ' ... management ...' as an entity with a character and purpose of its own.

It became apparent to me, from the above, that those interviewed perceived that they were not being managed well and that their immediate managers took little, if any interest, in their personal or professional development. It was also perceived by those interviewed that their immediate manager's preoccupation with formal ' ... paper management ...' tasks distracted them from what these interviewees thought was an important function of the manager, namely the personal and professional development of his or her staff. But more important than any of the actual comments is the strength of feeling with regard to how these teachers feel let down by their managers.

Even more importantly, I was beginning to get a sense of teachers having to adapt to their managers' way of functioning. All of those interviewed were perceived by me and others, including senior managers, to be capable and effective teacher middle managers, (ascertained through public and private comments). It is apparent that not all of those

find adapting to their managers' methods of work easy and are consequently experiencing some dissonance.

6.2.2 Pilot interview response themes

When we look at some of the themes that run throughout the interviewees' responses we find concepts such as, disaffection, control, imposition, accountability and targets. Interviewees were quite capable of juxtaposing these concepts with concepts such as empowerment, and professionalism. It would appear that teachers are well aware of how they would like to function but at the same time being aware of the other agendas that are acting upon them and their managers. This would suggest that the small sample of teachers taking part in the pilot interviews could readily understand the external influences on them and on their managers. I wished to enquire into this further, in situations where I had not so much shared history and shared experience with those I would be interviewing and observing.

6.3 Summary

These pilot interviews allowed me to develop:

- themes related to the responses given by these teacher middle managers.

- insight into how strongly teacher middle managers feel about issues such as professionalism, accountability and teacher control.

- a sensitivity to my own thoughts on the above issues.

As I was to be employed as a full-time teacher in two schools in order to carry out two further sets of interviews I felt it important that I focus on trying to remain objective about the emotive issues that had been identified. But I also had to concede that I have strong beliefs about what the reality is for those who are teacher middle managers.

Chapter 7 - Interviewing at Parkside High School and Daleside High School.

After the pilot interviews were complete, I undertook two further series of interviews in two secondary schools. In this chapter some relevant issues for each school have been outlined. Because of the commonality and consistency of teacher responses in interviews and the comments recorded in the research diary/notebook it has been decided that the research findings will be presented together. Later in this chapter there is a comparison of the degree of commonality in teacher, teacher middle manager and senior manager responses between each school.

7.1 Parkside High School – researcher perceptions

Parkside High School is an 11-16 comprehensive in the suburbs of a large city in the north west of England. There were approximately 800 pupils on roll and 45 fulltime teachers. The senior management team included the Headteacher, 2 Deputy Headteachers (one had just been appointed as I took up my post) and 2 Assistant Headteachers (both had just been appointed). The pastoral system in the school was organized around Pastoral Leaders (Heads of Year) and Assistant Pastoral Leaders. The curriculum system is organized around Curriculum Leaders (Heads of Faculty) and Assistant Curriculum Leaders (Heads of Subject/Subject Key Stage Co-ordinators).

Academic middle managers were allocated, on average, 2 extra free teaching periods to undertake their management tasks (each period is 45 minutes). Pastoral middle managers

were allocated, on average, 3 extra free periods to undertake their pastoral management tasks.

If the Parkside High School was to be characterised in terms of its management style the ambiguity model (Bell 1989) could be used to describe the school. Whilst some effective communication was in evidence, management of staff communication was quite poor. Anecdotal evidence suggested staff were quite concerned about the quality and frequency of information they received from senior managers. Teachers were also voicing concerns about declining pupil behaviour. There were concerns about how pupils were behaving on corridors and at lunch and break times. Teachers were also concerned about the effectiveness of the procedures for dealing with disruptive pupils. Staff mentioned, on occasions, that 'workload' was unreasonable. In the local community, Parkside High was perceived to be a successful school, with 50% of pupils achieving 5 A-C grades at GCSE in the year that I joined the school. This was a 10% decrease on the previous year. There had also been a recent history of teachers making representations to the headteacher, through Professional Associations, with regard to the behaviour of pupils and the resultant morale of staff. This was still an issue in the early days of my time at Parkside High School. The sample of staff interviewed at Parkside High consisted of: 2 senior managers, 7 middle managers and 2 class teachers.

During the early days of my time at Parkside High I had to concentrate on establishing my presence in the classroom. I also had to spend time reflecting on my practice and that of others I had encountered. This reflective practitioner approach permeated all of my

activities both within the class and outside of it. It became evident that this reflective practitioner approach is in itself time consuming and demanding, both mentally and physically.

Whilst I was a participant in the school (I was working fulltime as a class teacher) I could distance myself (but not completely remove myself) from the day-to-day politics of the management of Parkside High School.

7.2 Daleside High School – researcher perceptions

Daleside High is an 11-18 comprehensive in the suburbs of a large city in the north west of England. There were approximately 800 pupils (approximately 100 in Sixth Form) on roll and 45 fulltime teachers. The senior management team included the Headteacher, 2 Deputy Headteachers, 2 Assistant Headteachers (recently appointed). The pastoral system in the school was organized around Directors of Studies (Heads of Year). The curriculum system is organized around Heads of Department; there is no faculty structure.

Academic middle managers were allocated, on average, 1 extra free teaching period to undertake their management tasks (each period was 50 minutes). Pastoral middle managers were allocated, on average, 2 extra free teaching periods to undertake their pastoral management tasks, with at least one free teaching period each day.

If Daleside High School was to be characterised in terms of its management style we could use the bureaucratic model (Weber 1989) to describe the school. Effective

communication was in evidence, as was the preoccupation with hierarchical structures and formal leadership and the decision-making role of the headteacher and senior managers. Anecdotal evidence suggested staff were quite concerned about the bureaucratic nature of the school. Two examples cited by staff were, the need to fill in quite complicated forms to apply for INSET and the routine and form filling required to place a pupil on report. Staff also felt, that on many occasions, workload was unreasonable and not managed well by senior managers. In the local community Daleside High was perceived to be a successful school, with 45% of pupils achieving 5 A-C grades at GCSE in the year I joined the school. There had also been a recent history of staff making representations to the headteacher (through professional associations) with regard to the manner in which the headteacher and some senior managers interact with staff. This was still an issue in the early days of my time at Daleside High. The sample of staff interviewed at Daleside High consisted of: 1 senior manager, 8 middle managers and 3 class teachers.

I learnt, from my time at Parkside High, that it would be wise investing time on establishing my presence in the classroom. Yet again, from my experience of Parkside High, it was thought important to spend time reflecting on my practice and that of others I had encountered. As with my time at Parkside High, I found this reflective practitioner approach permeated all of my activities both within the classroom and outside of it, but it became evident that this approach was still demanding both mentally and physically.

As with my time at Parkside High I was a participant in the school (I was working fulltime as a class teacher) but I could distance myself (but not completely insulate myself) from the day-to-day politics of the management of Daleside High School. I actively sought not to be drawn into discussions about school politics and individuals.

Chapter 8: Research Findings

The interviews were conducted and then transcribed. Details of the analysis that was undertaken is shown below. The analysis of transcripts involved the reading and annotating of scripts using a simple coding and annotation system to identify themes that appeared worthy of further consideration. The following outlines the process completed in the analysis of interviewee responses.

- **8.1** Initial analysis conducted after Parkside High School interviews (p.108)
- **8.2** Initial analysis conducted after Daleside High School interviews (p.124)
- **8.3** Interim summary of responses to interview questions (p.133)
- **8.4** Further analysis of Parkside High School and Daleside High School interviews (p.138)
- **8.5** The interface between rhetoric and reality (p.163)
- **8.6** Comparison of interviewee responses between Parkside High School and Daleside High School (p.167)

The ongoing reflective nature of the analysis (analysing as further interviews were being conducted and transcribed) allowed me to 'fine-tune' myself to what interviewees were commenting on. But perhaps more importantly it allowed the development of a sensitivity to what was being observed and recorded in the research notebook.

8.1   Initial analysis of Parkside High teacher responses

Inevitably, whilst conducting the interviews there had been 'hunches' about what themes may be developing with regard to teachers' responses. After each Parkside High

interview had been transcribed it was initially annotated in the transcript margins, highlighting the issues which were seen as worthwhile for further analysis. The themes that were identified as the initial reading of the transcripts took place can be seen in the following two transcripts of the interviews conducted with EN and HS. The annotation shows how themes where identified and how the responses were initially coded. Of course, some of the issues were perceived as emotive and subjective. These in turn were the issues that caused most interest, in that they shed light on the reality of day-to-day teaching that teachers experienced. In some cases the implications are not immediately evident when they are considered in isolation. It was only when the transcripts were considered in their entirety that the significance of some of the comments was realised.

The following transcripts are representative of the interviews that were conducted in Parkside High School. These two interviews show the degree of commonality that existed between most interviewees at Parkside High. Not all interviewees mentioned all of the issues that have been developed into themes for the initial analysis. However these two interviews show the degree interviewees in both schools were implicitly or explicitly describing similar experiences, feelings, concerns and aspirations. The notes in the margins highlight where the initial series of themes originated from. This initial analysis occurred in two stages:

- initial reading of transcripts and theme identification (discussed on page 121)

- analysis and generation of further themes (discussed on page 122)

As has been discussed previously, I was in a position to know what were the main issues for private discussion (gossip) amongst staff. I would also know what teachers were saying in their more unguarded moments (when we were talking over coffee in departmental staff rooms or engaging in the light hearted exchanges that often characterise the interactions teachers have throughout the course of their working day). I was particularly keen to ensure that the initial reading of the transcripts did not produce too many themes because I was also attempting to allow themes to emerge from my research notebook/diary entries. The later analysis came about from a synthesis of my observations, 'hunches', diary entries and transcript analysis.

EN has been teaching for 27 years. EN is presently head of Business Studies.

Int: What is the thing that gives you most sense of achievement in teaching?

Public

EN: Exam results....

Pupils

Int: Seeing the pupils doing well?

EN: As well as their potential or better...

Int: Anything else?

Relationship with pupils

EN: Interaction with the kids ... response from the kids ...you know ... positive response either enjoying doing the subject ...or enjoying the results of achievement within the subject.

Int: So it is very much pupil centred achievement as opposed to management

Int: What gives you most sense of frustration?

coping powerlessness

EN: Admin ... it just seems to be a daily grind ...if it's not one piece of paper it's another ... that interferes and takes from the very precious an valuable time that you should be spending preparing lessons and marking kids work.... *discern priorities.*

Int: The people who manage you, what do you think gives them most sense of achievement?

areas of expectations

EN: I suppose a well organized department, a department that runs smoothly, a department in which there is cooperation a sense of good morale ... good feeling of comradeship and also a feeling of being led from the top ... there are directives that are fair and worth pursuing....

Int: Do you have any sense of your senior managers' frustrations?

EN: Oh yes all the time.... *personality.*

Int: Any particular ones?

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EN: ... Again admin. seems to be the big bugbear.

Int: In terms of milestones in your career could you point out important points?

EN: Well having started out as the head in a one teacher school ... I started my career that way and lasted about two weeks ... I changed from primary to secondary ... most of my experience was at primary level until I came to this country ... then they wouldn't accept my qualification as a primary teacher despite all that experience ...and a I was thrown into the deep end teaching a subject I had never taught before ... so that was a milestone ... coping with a brand new subject ... a new culture ... a new system of education etc... I originally started as an English teacher because my degree was in English and I subsequently decided after taking time off to rear a young family ... that I didn't really want to teach English anymore in terms of workload and in terms job opportunity ... I took a course which qualified me as a Business Studies teacher and then went on to teach IT ... I was a year here ... and I was one of the first to teach word processing or to use computers in the school apart from the then Computer Studies department ... I came to this school 15 years ago...I was appointed to head of department the year after I came ... and after that my career has gone down hill steadily ... surely as each subsequent Head takes over ... to the point where my current head called me into his office 2 months ago and said I wasn't earning the money that I was being paid ... and what was I going to do to make up for the difference ... and ...how did he put it ...and to be transparent in the eyes of the rest of the staff ...well I thought if you get here at 7.00 in the morning and leave here at 6.00 in the evening everyday of the week ... I don't think there is any sense of being other than very transparent that you are a worker and that you take your job seriously...so he asked what else was I going to do ... I said I would like to think about it

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group that will look at problems in the classroom and so on ...it boils down to them saying let the form tutor deal with it ...the poor old heads of year are absolutely groaning with responsibility and can't cope with it so we will solve the problem by shoving it all down the line to the form tutor ... the reason I grumble and groan about it so much is because I have seen strong leadership in the school... I seen really top class heads of year who have come and gone ...one who is still here ... now you get no support from anyone ... you're told get on with it ...it's your problem ... either you're not managing you class properly...you're not organized .. .you've got problems with your teaching method ... it's this that or the other problem ...it's never their problem ...its never the kids problem ... — not taking on responsibility for school wide concerns.

Int: Many thanks...

EN: Well I hope some of it will be useful to you.

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In the initial reading through of EN's transcript I found that she was concerned greatly with how teaching had changed in the years that she had been teaching. EN stated that she arrived in school '... at 7.00 in the morning ...' and left school '... at 6.00 in the evening everyday of the week...'. Whilst this fact would appear unimportant, it demonstrated that EN found it necessary to give 11 hours each day to complete the tasks that needed to be done. (I can support the validity of EN's statement from my own observations of EN and other anecdotal evidence.) EN was perceived by me and others to be an energetic, committed and effective teacher. In her interview responses EN also focuses on:

- the personality of the headteacher (it is also apparent that she does not find the headteacher particularly helpful in the manner that he deals with her.)
- lack of support from line and senior managers
- her workload
- lack of control in day-to-day teaching experiences
- being distracted from what she sees as a priority – teaching
- the public nature of teaching
- the manner in which individual teachers are blamed for school wide problems.

The whole interview was characterised by feelings of powerlessness on the part of EN and that her day-to-day experiences were controlled by those other than herself. EN's comments give us some indication as to the underlying issues for teacher middle managers. Her frustrations with how the '... daily grind...' of ' ...admin...' '... interferes...' with what she calls the '... precious and valuable time ...'. She understands very well the need to subscribe to the rhetoric that says completing administrative tasks is a priority over preparing and marking pupils' work. EN feels pressured into making sure that the '... admin... is completed before anything else – she realises in the short-term that it is the '... admin...' on which she will be judged. But EN also knows that in the

long-term she will also be judged on her pupils' results. The dilemma EN is presented with is choosing between the rhetoric and the reality.

The following transcript shows the degree to which this dilemma, of coping with reality and rhetoric, is an issue for another very experienced middle manager.

HS has been teaching for 27 years. HS is Head of Expressive Arts.

Int: Can you give me some idea of important milestones in your teaching career.

HS: That's difficult ...its 23 years since I came here as second in music ... and then that evolved into going as Head of RE ... because that was part of training...and I also landed up doing RE with Community Service then, when TVEI came in ...I became co-ordinator for that ... that was a big budget and got projects going for 5 years... I really enjoyed that linking with industry and such like ... that takes me up to fairly recently ... and they decided for economic reasons to reshape everything and I got a job I didn't want which was Head of Music, Art and Drama ... and Art and Drama didn't want to have a faculty ... so great big political problems arose at that time. I was told this job was available and the job I was in was disestablished so it was obvious that I had to take this job to keep my salary ... and I have resented that ever sense ... so this year a change of faculty again so I get responsibility for PE as well ...Art is very much autonomous and still resents the fact they are part of the faculty... PE going on as they are...the only area that I can see it having any significance is in this performance management ...I don't fully understand yet. I keep asking people what does this involve people doing ... according to management I have either got 2 or 3 people ... there are 2 in music and there are 3 Heads of Department so I don't know how performance management will come out yet ...so those are the big event ... apart the external things I have done on my own like the MA I did and the MA I did with the Open University.

Int: What has or does give you most sense of achievement?

HS: ... I think the extra curricular activities... when I've got a crowd of young musicians who perform something on public stage and its really good and possibly the best was

only this year when 84 young people from year 7-year 11 who performed in EuroDisney and they were all there in uniform and they did brilliantly ... we do a trip every year ...we've been to Germany, Holland, France etc. ...

In the teaching situation ...it's where the musicians who make up to 7-10% of the school ... were they succeed. With the general young people ...achievement there is when as a class they perform something...it not always a regular event ... they all like music on their terms... but actually National Curriculum music it becomes something thirty don't like. I think in no other subject where the actual essence of the subject is vital to their lives ... is related to their world....

Int: What gives you the most sense of frustration?

HS: ...To much to do and to little time to it...and I tend to be reactive rather than proactive ... when I'm in lesson even I'm thinking of other things I've got to be doing. Currently I'm juggling with Yr 9 marking, I've got the Christmas carol concert and I've got two millennium concerts, ... rehearsing after school every night except Friday and so my day is incredibly long ... and when I go home currently I'm marking 4 sets of Year 9 ...100 odd papers ... and you have to carry on despite ...the Millennium is a massive concert ... and the tremendous last night after the end of the day... to see the performances of small groups of kids...

Int: What about the people you manage, what do you think gives them a sense of achievement or frustration?

HS: I'll just talk about music here ... to see the kids perform to a good standard....

(Interruption)

extra curricular success

When we do a (musical) ever year... they feel as if we have achieved something this year.
The frustration angle is the equipment ...currently because of damage we don't have a
keyboard suite ... that is being replaced ... the head has agreed to it is going to leased
over a three year period ... we have got possibly half a groups but that causes more
problems if you have that out ...we have to be flexible with the syllabus all the time so it
enables us to ... we have never had enough equipment for 2 classes we tend to rotate our
activities... that is very frustrating.

Day to day again teaching

Int: What about the people who manage you, what do they find frustrating?

"two faced"

HS: ...They think I am wonderful and delightful when we are doing the big concerts and
things ... and I think also what we do in the lesson...but what I think gives them
frustration is my poor response to administration ...something I tend to make last on my
list of things to be done ... now and again he will come along a say ...what about this?
And it hasn't been done. Having said that I talked with the Head recently... stressed out
of my head ...not sleeping for days and days and days... and told him I was just reacting
to things... he said you will have to do what I do ...some of the thing don't get done ... so
I took that on board ... so the admin creates most frustration for them and for me. *collision ! !!*

compromise

not coping

Int: Can you see things changing?

HS: Well I have seen it get worse in recent times and I can see it only getting worse...
the only remedy I think is to give you more time ... a wonderful remedy would be to
have some person who is designated as a clerical assistant ... if I had somebody ½ day a
week ... that would take way a million things..... *in a definite tasks*

workload

(Interruption from another teacher.)

another distraction.

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Int: So you have seen it all build up?

HS: Behind it all I see myself saying ...I've only got 8 terms to go... its incredible to think that is the only light at the end of the tunnel... and the I'm leaving 5 years early ... I don't whether to say its my age, or the change in administration ...

Int: Many thanks for your help - I really do appreciate you giving up your time.

how to cope

too much to cope with

It can be seen that HS is a committed and energetic teacher despite teaching for 27 years.

In his responses he commented on:

- a sense of achievement with pupils doing extra-curricular activities
- the internal politics of Parkside High
- his sense of a lack of control, including being forced to take on job he didn't want after reorganisation of the school structure
- failure to understand his role as a leader in new initiatives (senior managers couldn't clarify his position)
- his workload and the long hours required to complete teaching and management tasks.
- His inability to prioritise tasks because of number of tasks to be completed.
- how he copes with workload and demands made of him.

We see HS having to contend with '... admin...' which '...creates frustration for them and for me...'. HS understands that his senior managers are frustrated by administration. But he also understands that the prevailing rhetoric says that a manager's administrative role takes precedent over all other roles. Like EN he is placed in a dilemma with regard to choosing between undertaking his teaching role well and neglecting his management function or neglecting his teaching role and engaging with his management role. HS's response to this dilemma is to cope in the short-term and leave teaching '5 years early' because he sees this as '... the only light at the end of the tunnel'. HS is aware of the rhetoric about how he should be able to balance his teaching and management roles. The reality for HS is his inability to cope on a day-to-day basis with all of the tasks he is expected to undertake. He is also quite reticent about letting his managers know the degree to which he is failing to cope.

8.1.1 Themes identified after reading Parkside High transcripts.

After reading the Parkside High transcripts (including the two transcripts above) it became evident a number of themes were developing in the teachers' responses.

- **Reluctant teachers.** Teachers take up middle manager posts in schools where the management ethos is contrary to their own beliefs about what teaching and managing teachers should entail. It is obvious at times that teachers resent the fact that they are employed in a role that fills them with little sense of achievement or satisfaction. This invariably is suggested by teachers when they talk about how much teaching has changed throughout their career.

- **Reluctant managers.** It is also possible to acknowledge that teacher middle managers may find themselves as managers without realizing what managing actually involves. Or indeed they may realize what managing is, but fail to realize the time constraints that will be placed upon them as class teachers and teacher middle managers. It is also evident that there are tensions for teacher middle managers to resolve. These tensions centre on balancing time spent 'managing' and time spent teaching. We perhaps need to accept that teacher middle managers feel overburdened with the demands made of them simply because of the number of demands made of them is too great.

- **Teacher personality.** It is important to concede that teachers have a number of different motivations for choosing teaching as a career. Individual personality is one component of the decision to choose teaching as a career. Teachers and teacher middle managers are keen to identify aspects of a headteacher's

personality – teachers reference the personality of the headteacher to how s/he interacts or manages staff.

It became apparent that staff perceived the frustrations of the job to centre on the amount of ' ... paperwork...' that needed to be completed and the ' ... workload...'. There was also significant number of occasions where teachers expressed feelings of frustration with regard to how little control they had over their day-to-day working lives. This lack of control was evident in all interviews of both teacher middle managers and class teachers. Teachers were also suggesting how they were at times only just 'coping' with the demands made upon them. It was also evident that some teachers were also experiencing an inability to cope with what was being asked of them.

8.1.2 Analysis of interviews

An analysis of the first interviews began soon after they had all been completed. This initial analysis involved identifying a number of key themes.

- **Teachers failing to cope** *per se*. Teachers related this to the degree of change over a short time and how managers failed to respond to this in a positive way.

- **Teachers failing to cope with workload**. Teachers comment on the fact that tasks are intrinsically valuable but collectively unachievable. Whilst so many teachers expressed concerns about workload very few rejected the tasks they were being asked to do because they were intrinsically worthless - although some did seem a little concerned about the degree to which some '... paperwork ...' tasks were repeated.

- **Feelings of powerlessness.** Teachers feel that they have little control over their working environment or day - to - day experiences.

- **Teacher middle managers feeling as if they had little if any control of classroom experience.** Characterised by interruptions and the manner in which teacher find themselves distracted from their teaching.

- **Teacher middle managers asking ... Do others think that I cope?** Teachers are aware of the public nature of teaching. They are preoccupied with the idea of whether managers perceive them to be performing well.

- Teachers talk about **boredom** with class teaching but can't admit it to their managers. This occurred in some of the diary entries whilst the analysis was being undertaken

- **Senior Managers 'dictate'** what is the acceptable time contribution by individual teachers. Teachers and more importantly teacher middle managers feel unable to say 'no' to requests and certainly cannot control frequency and length of meetings.

- **Teachers try to discern** what is important. They feel as if leadership is lacking in what they should concentrate on. Teachers find this constant prioritising very stressful.

- **Teachers perceiving that the headteacher's personality impinges upon the day-to-day experiences of teachers.** The headteacher's personality is subtly referred to in most interviews. S/he is considered to be the final arbiter of a teacher's day-to-day experience.

- Teachers are frustrated by the headteacher's and other senior managers' personalities. Teachers are aware of the leadership role, power and influence of the headteacher.

8.2 Initial analysis of Daleside High teacher responses

It was evident that I could not ignore what I had already encountered with regard to my analysis of the Parkside High interviews. It became apparent that a number of the themes that had been identified after the Parkside High School interviews were being replicated in the Daleside High School teacher comments. The following concepts are reflected in the annotation and the previously identified issues at Parkside High School are also in evidence.

- **Time constraints and workload.** Teachers and teacher middle managers perceive unreasonable deadlines and too much to do in too little time.

- **Lack of control.** Teachers comment on pupil indiscipline and lack of interest or effort by pupils.

- **Inconsistent management.** Teacher middle managers comment on how personality of managers affects how they interact with staff. Teachers feeling senior managers can act inappropriately and 'get away with it'.

- **Teachers do not feel valued.** Teachers perceive a lack of acknowledgement of their efforts and achievements. Teacher middle managers see that senior managers can be dismissive of concerns.

- **Teachers unable to tell line manager of concerns.** Teachers and teacher middle managers fear line managers will be unsympathetic/disparaging/dismissive if concerns are brought to their attention.

- **Bureaucratic systems.** To bring about change teachers must move through a series of protracted bureaucratic stages (form filling). Having meetings even when there is nothing to discuss - timetabled meetings must take place. Completing proformas and other tasks solely as administrative tasks in order to satisfy senior managers' monitoring/surveillance.

- **Teachers feeling professional judgement being compromised.** Teachers feel they are being encouraged to focus on those pupils who can achieve 'good' GCSE grades or SAT Levels and pay little attention to those pupils who will not achieve these grades.

- **Teacher middle managers** feel like 'piggy in the middle'. They feel as if they are caught between class teachers and senior managers.

To put the foregoing into context it might be wise to look at the two interview transcripts of the interviews conducted with NI and SA. These Daleside High teacher middle managers' comments provide evidence for most of the issues addressed above.

NI has been teaching 22 years. NI is currently head of Humanities at Daleside High.

Int: Could you tell me a little about your career and any important milestones in you teaching career.

NI: I started teaching 1980. I worked in St. M for 5 years, and then in 1985 moved to St. A as Head of Geography. I arrived here in 1996. I came here as Head of Humanities.

Int: What gives you most sense of achievement?

NI: I think when students either obtain or surpass the exam grades expected it's a big motivation for me – I like to see them make academic success. And I also like it when you feel they have enjoyed the lesson-you feel you got something out of it and you capture their interests- that gives me a lot of satisfaction.

If I have tried systems and the systems are working then that gives me a sense of achievement- like recording exam results-attainment and stuff like that- so if it works I am happy with that and people feel comfortable.

Int: What about the people you manage?

NI: If for example they are happy with things that I have introduced then I think they feel they are achieving something. But perhaps the main sense of achievement for people in the department tends come from their actual class room situation rather than what I can do for them.

Int: What gives you a sense of frustration?

NI: Frustration as a manager – it is sometimes very hard to – your kind of piggy in the middle in the position I am in … between the chalk face & senior management. I think the senior management sometimes make the job a lot harder than it needs to be. I feel they are sometimes a bit to bureaucratic, a bit too everything must be done by the book and that tends to slow certain things down or even stop you doing certain things that would have been beneficial. It is too much hassle to try to get them instigated, to go through all the rigmarole.

As a teacher I think discipline standards are certainly falling – it is a lot harder now to instil discipline into pupils and I think that they are no longer frightened or in awe of teachers. I have been teaching 22 years so I feel that … I know that when I first started out and taught in some

rough schools - you felt that they had strong discipline that they do not have nowadays. They are not in order, they come it at Year 7 with no fear of secondary school. I think it then becomes harder to instil discipline into them. Once you are on top of discipline you should be able to teach your subject well. It is harder to get pupils to tow the line – it is a constant battle.

For the people I manage it can be similar things. We will try and instigate certain things-they will come to me- I have to go to senior management and then it sometimes becomes a stumbling block. And they are held back. This has been a stumbling block within this place-there seems to be to many rules and regulations to trip you up and then put you off doing certain things.

Int: What do you think frustrates senior managers?

NI: It depends which member of the senior management team you are talking about. Certain ones, everything has to done by the book-and if it isn't sometimes they will respond in a way that is inappropriate for a senior member of staff but shows they are obviously frustrated because you haven't done things by the book. Other senior managers are a bit frustrated by the response to certain initiatives by departments and sometimes it's the head of departments fault or members of the department letting the head of department down. And certain deadlines don't get met or things don't filled in the way they should be done-that can lead to frustration. I feel like a ping-pong ball sometimes.

Int: What do you thing gives them a sense of achievement?

NI: When exam results go well. Again it depends on the, member of the senior management team ... but some of them are quite happy when you do come to them and they can help you ... and they feel as they have helped and you can see they get a sense of achievement from that. Again that is inconsistent for certain members of senior management here. Sometimes they are over the top in helping you. Other times they say you should know how to do this and get it sorted. You are bit unsure really. They are so inconsistent.

Int: Many thanks for giving up some of your lunch time.

NI comments about:

- senior managers' inconsistency and how this leads to uncertainty about how he approaches his senior managers
- pupil indiscipline
- the bureaucratic nature of Daleside High's management ethos and how this can stifle innovation on the part of class teachers and middle managers
- being caught in the middle between senior managers and class teachers. He particularly is concerned that he is a ' ... ping-pong ball ...' being hit back and forward between anyone who wishes to hit him. This reiterates the concerns about feelings of powerlessness and lack of control.
- he also addresses the issue of blame - using the word '...fault...' and ' ... letting the head of department down ...'. NI is obviously conscious of how things are perceived by those on the senior manager team.

It is very important to highlight what NI says about the ' ... rigmarole...' to go through in order to make progress. He says this in the context of how senior managers are overly bureaucratic insisting in ' ... doing everything by the book ...'. Perhaps this is evidence of senior managers being guided or even constricted by rhetoric from the centre. From the transcript it is clear NI has a sense of frustration with his senior managers. NI experiences the tension between senior managers' insistence on bureaucracy and class teachers' frustrations with wanting to achieve but being held back by bureaucracy. More importantly NI is camouflaging his department colleagues' frustrations with the schools senior managers preoccupation with ' ... rules and regulation...'.

NI may also be engaging in some collusion with his department colleagues with regard to ' ... members of the department letting the head of department down.' It is clear that NI is not communicating this to senior managers – he is either hiding the fact from his senior managers or presenting mitigation to senior managers for why deadlines are not being

met. His final comment in this context, '... I feel like a ping pong ball sometimes ...' describes the manner in which he is constantly moving back and forward between senior managers and class teacher colleagues engaging in mitigation and mediation.

In the above there is a suggestion of collusion on the part of NI. However, it is perhaps interesting to note in the following transcript how there is no ambiguity with regard to the degree of collusion SA engages in. His support of pupils being prepared for Key stage 3 SATS supports this occurrence of collusion. It must be reiterated that NI and SA are teacher middle managers in Daleside High and as previously acknowledged the school is characterised by bureaucracy at both school and department level.

SA has been teaching 7 years . SA is 2nd in Mathematics

Int: Could you give me some idea of your career ... important milestones?

SA: I have been taught now for nearly seven years. I came from SD ... its very similar to this. That is where I did teaching practice and got a job there. I trained at XXX.

I am second in maths. ... well I also have been a head of year. Then I applied for the second in maths. I would rather concentrate on the domains of maths, that is something I know about ... That is the thing, I find managing that scenario, you have no control, because it is basically limitless. And people would come in and say could you do that for me, I felt there was no control and I felt want to do something more and I focused on maths.

Int: What gives you most sense of achievement?

SA: Just getting the results basically ... and especially if you take a group from the beginning and they are negative and you turn them round and you establish a decent rapport with them ... and you can get results, that really gives me a sense of satisfaction. When you see them on the street ... and they ask how you are doing ... that makes me really proud to be a teacher.

Int: What gives you a sense of frustration?

SA: All the little bits of things that we've got to do, like paperwork, photocopying, things like chasing money from kids. And like this is where you don't see the impact on your teaching. All the little things, admin things. I feel other people should be doing that kind of work and I concentrate on teaching.

Int: As a middle manager what gives you a sense of achievement?

SA: We have very challenging targets ... for example we have this new numeracy strategy. I am leading that and putting that in place, making sure its up and running and we get good results. That is something I am looking forward to.

At the minute it is just in house, we are looking at in maths. departments. This has been in place for ... officially this is our first, but unofficially our second year. We start with 10 minutes of mental work, and once we have done that using visual things, games, things like that, get them to stand up and explain things. It doesn't have to be related to the lesson, it's just a mental work out. Once we

have done that we move onto the main theme of the lesson. You've got to share the objectives with the kids ... that really is good. Towards the end then we do a plenary session.

People have taken to it ... at first people were dubious about it, timing it properly and so on. I have developed resources for that, flash cards etc.

Int: What about the people you manage, what give them a sense of achievement?

SA: I think we are all aiming for the same things, good results at the end of the day. If they can manage their classrooms better, than at the end of the day that will make them happy. My role as second in department is to support them in working hard with kids, with resources, exercise books.

Int: What gives you a sense of frustration?

SA: A lack of time. I think there are lots of areas where I could maybe work to develop resources. And I find I cant do it ... I think at the moment we are in a situation were we have to cover ... I am conscious I should be there teaching the kids, not swanning off every two minutes doing cover, because my lessons suffer. The benefit will not be there and I will be judged on that ... we got this performance management. I would rather teach and manage where I can, although its difficult with the way the timetable is.

I think these things are commonly shared with my boss, he feels the same basically. He can't afford to take time out and yet do things. And obviously you have marking to do, preparation to do. In terms of workload.... I have just been preparing past papers for revision for Yr 9... we've exam when we come back, and then we have Yr 10 exams.

Int: Senior managers, what gives a sense of achievement or frustration?

SA: I think as a department we are performing quite well ... they may chose to argue that case. But the local authority has been in to say we are doing a good job ... we are up there we the rest of schools if not better ... what we produce in terms of value added seems to giving the kids a lot more value than some other school do or some other departments are doing. When they compare us without looking at value added we are seen sometimes not to be performing. It looks at what kids came in with and what they leave with and PANDA scores, compare schools, look at the number of free meals kids get which is really not realistic. It is one of those issues were there is no

easy solution. I believe private schools are meant to be seen to be better performing than others so

we have got to have standards of measure which justify their existence.

Brighter kids are losing out, we have got to improve level 5s for example at Key Stage 3 and we are

concentrating this time around on just those kids that are bordering that. So people who are level 6

or potential level 7 we are not having a rigid framework for them to go up. It is a shame, we are

neglecting them. We are just concerned about middle band, just getting them up there because it is

going to look good.

Int: Thank you for that.

SA comments on:

- the distractions from his primary roles of teaching and supporting other Mathematics teachers.
- the encouragement he receives to engage in professional compromise – concentrating on some Key Stage 3 SAT pupils to the detriment of others.
- the public nature of teaching and accountability

SA is aware of how the success of pupils will be viewed by those within the school and those external to it. He is prepared to engage in conduct that gives support to pupils related to how much those pupils will have an impact on Key Stage 3 Mathematics results. SA and other department colleagues are being encouraged (the use of the word '... we ...' provides evidence of an unwritten department policy) to concentrate '... this time around on those kids that are bordering...' Key Stage SAT Level 5. SA is well aware of the centrally inspired rhetoric of improving SATs results. The reality for him is to collude with department colleagues to develop and implement strategies that will bring

about this improvement – even if it means other pupils do not receive the support they require.

8.3 Summary of responses to interview questions

The following is summary of the questions asked and the teacher response to the questions. A more detailed analysis is given later.

Question 1. What have been the important milestones in your teaching career?

It is evident from teachers' response to this question that teachers chose to talk about the things that had given them a sense of personal achievement. Individuals gave quite detailed accounts about the many things they have enjoyed in their teaching careers. These have ranged from teaching abroad in quite challenging settings to leading extra-curricular activities. Teachers obviously derive considerable pleasure and a sense of achievement from interacting with and assisting young people to learn in other than formal classroom situations. It is perhaps for this reason that many interviewees seem so frustrated with the requirement to undertake distracting administrative activities - activities which take them away from what they were interested in and trained to do during initial teacher training. It is no accident that the earliest days in a teacher career appear to be happiest and most fulfilling.

Teachers seem to derive great pleasure from being able to create local solutions to local problems. Teachers thrive on a sense of efficacy and control. It is also possible to see that teachers appear committed to giving freely of their time when they perceive it to be

worthwhile. This willingness to give time (considerable time when you consider how much time people give when they take pupils on trips away from school) must be contrasted with teachers' concerns about giving time to do tasks they perceive to be of little value. Many teachers are not against giving much unpaid time but they are concerned about giving time to activities they see as producing little added value to pupils' lives (Dinham and Scott 2002).

In general teachers look back on their early career with some sense of contentment. This may be brought about through false memory, remembering the good and forgetting the bad. However we cannot ignore the evidence that many teachers look back positively on their early careers.

Teachers and teacher middle managers are also skilled at determining what management style they prefer and how they like their managers to interact with them. They are keen to see the relationship between senior managers and teacher middle managers as one that is characterised by collaboration and shared ownership of developments. They are keen to reject those managers who seek to impose or demand. Teacher middle managers are cognisant of senior managers needing to appear committed to centrally devised policies. These teacher middle managers are clearly frustrated that they are required to manage their department team's responses to the administration tasks these policies create.

Question 2. What gives you most sense of achievement in teaching?

A significant number of respondents mention the formal academic achievement of their pupils. They talk about how well the pupils do in GCSE examinations. In particular they mention instances where pupils have achieved the highest grades. Teacher middle managers are quite keen to share their department's ability to achieve good A*-C percentages at GCSE. Perhaps this is because they are aware that this is how they, as middle managers, are judged by senior managers. Some allude to the fact that they derive a sense of achievement when management systems they have put in place appear to produce good GCSE results or Key Stage 3 outcomes.

Teacher middle managers are also keen to point out their relationship with their staff - how they are able to assist their staff to become effective. These responses suggest that teachers have not lost touch with what is expected of them in terms of contributing to a subject department's and a school's success.

Whilst some teachers did talk about forging good relationship with pupils it was almost always contrasted with them realising they had to produce evidence of their successful interaction with pupils (good exam results). Teachers are aware of the hierarchy of what is important in schools. They perceive that test and examination result outcomes are at the top of this hierarchy.

Question 3. What gives you the most sense of frustration in your teaching?

The use of the word frustration allowed teachers to focus on the day-to-day concerns they have. Teachers in their response to this question implied that they knew what were the current perceptions of themselves and their fellow colleagues. Without exception every interviewee mentioned ' ...time ...' in this context. It was also interesting to see how many teachers mentioned pupils as a source of frustration. These comments ranged from those comments about ' ... indiscipline ... ' to comments about pupils not working to achieve their full 'potential'. A significant number of teacher middle managers take this question as an opportunity to talk about how difficult it is to derive a sense of achievement because:

- of the personality of their senior managers
- it was difficult to meet the needs of their class colleagues
- school bureaucracy stifled achievement
- they felt a lack of control or influence
- they were preoccupied balancing demands made of them
- they had to balance the demand of senior managers and class teacher colleagues
- of lack of time
- of the number of tasks and a resultant inability to prioritise these tasks.

It is apparent that teacher middle managers find it easy to describe those things that prevent them from deriving a sense of achievement. Teacher middle managers seem so distracted by the many tasks that must be completed that they seem to have become swamped by the tasks. They imply that they are completing many of their tasks grudgingly. Middle managers also seem to be engaged in camouflaging their inability to complete the many tasks that are demanded of them.

8.3.1 Middle managers' comments about their class teacher colleagues

When asking managers about their staff's sense of achievement and frustration it was interesting to note that a significant number were a little unsure about what their staff felt. There was even a sense of embarrassment that these middle managers did not know what their staff felt. These middle manager responses may suggest a number of things:

- a middle manager who knows his/her colleagues well and knows what gives them a sense of achievement and frustration
- a middle manager who doesn't talk to his/her colleagues and is not picking up their concerns
- a middle manager who doesn't see it as important to know his/her colleagues
- a middle manager who doesn't have the time to get to know his/her colleagues.

8.3.2 Middle managers' comments about senior managers

It is easy to see that teacher middle managers are particularly aware of the importance of having a senior manager's or headteacher's support. They reference much of their comments to the demands and personality of the headteacher. Teacher middle managers are also very aware of their part in the management structure of the school. But they seem aware of their position only with respect to bureaucracy and form filling. Very few mention a sense of being part of the decision-making process within their school.

8.3.3 Senior managers' comments about middle managers.

Whilst I only interviewed 3 senior managers they all were quite consistent in being able to see that middle managers were accountable to them. They also had a 'strategic vision' and implied that middle managers would also have a sense of this strategic vision. Senior managers also acknowledge that teachers and teacher middle managers do not always

understand that senior managers are not there to solve their problems but to help them solve their own problems.

8.3.4 Interview interruptions.

As discussed earlier, Glover and Miller (1999) mentioned how much interruptions characterise the day of teachers. This is illustrated well in how those interviewed could not even be assured of 20-30 minutes of undisturbed time in the school day to talk with the researcher. Approximately 50% of all interviews had at least one interruption from either a pupil or a teacher. Even an interview that took place at 7.30am had two interruptions from a teacher who required the head of department's assistance.

8.4 Further analysis and identification of A's, B's and C's

After conducting the analysis of Daleside High School interviews it became apparent that it would be possible to generate some coding of responses that would facilitate the analysis of each transcription.

The transcripts of the interviews conducted with all 23 teachers were further analysed. The final breakdown of those interviewed is as follows:

- 3 Senior Managers

- 15 Middle Managers

- 5 Class Teachers

It became quite apparent that there were a number of issues that teachers consistently mentioned with regard to their working lives. Whilst not all teachers, in all interviews,

mentioned these issues it became apparent that they were recurring themes throughout the interviewees. To create some sense of order it became necessary to create a simple representation and *aide memoire* based on *A, B* and *C.* The concepts identified are given below, along with the code that was used to mark the transcripts in parenthesis. (The manner in which the transcripts were annotated with this coding can be seen in Appendix 3.)

8.4.1 Development of the A's, the B's and the C's

Pervading this thesis has been the concept of how teachers contend with a centrally devised rhetoric and how this rhetoric percolates into a teacher middle manager's day-to-day experience of schools and teaching. In contrast to this is the reality that teachers have presented to them daily. This reality is characterised by lessons that need to be prepared, classes that need to be taught, pupils who need to be managed and listened to and homework that needs to be marked and assessed. A teachers' need to derive some sense of managing this workload is influenced by the centrally devised rhetoric.

The A's:

Teachers seek:

- Others' *acknowledgement* of their efforts. This is closely allied to the acknowledgement of pupils *(AckP)* or senior managers or other colleagues *(AckS).*

- *Approval* for their achievements *(App).* This can be from either senior managers or other colleagues.

These two issues are important for most interviewees. Whilst it isn't immediately obvious that teachers are looking for someone to acknowledge their efforts and achievements it is more than implied by many of the comments that they make. The importance of acknowledgement and approval is supported by what CN says about the praise received from senior managers, '... praise ... I don't think there enough of it in this school at all ...'.

The B's:

Teachers seek:
- a *balance* between the many tasks to be completed in *school (BalS)*

- a *balance* between school and *home life (BalH)*.

Teachers consistently state that it is important to have a balance *in* the workplace and *between* the workplace and home. CN, an experienced head of Art, makes the comment '... teaching is an incidental part of my day ...' This is an indictment on how much teachers have failed to maintain a balance between their many management and administrative tasks and their teaching. Teachers are concerned that they cannot give enough time to their primary role of teaching (and the interrelated issues of marking and preparation.) Teachers are also concerned that they do not have a balance between what they are required to do in at school and what they are required to do away from school. They are concerned about how their work impinges on their family lives.

The C's:
(N.B. The C's were identified before the identification of the A's and B's.)

Teachers:

- seek *certainty* in their teaching lives *(Cert)*

- seek some degree of *control* over their teaching/school experiences *(Cont)*
- recognise the need to *compromise (Comp)*
- develop *coping strategies (Cope)*
- *camouflage* difficulties with or inability to undertake tasks *(Cam)*.

The issue of teachers desiring *certainty* and *control* but resigning themselves to *compromise* and *coping* became the initial focus of this subsequent analysis. It was also possible to identify where teachers and teacher middle managers *camouflaged* their real experiences of teaching in response to the prevailing rhetoric of teaching. The issue of *collusion* only became apparent when it was identified that teachers and teacher middle managers were aware of the prevailing rhetoric and were camouflaging their 'real' response to it. This inevitably led to the conclusion that teachers and teacher middle managers may have been colluding with colleagues to ensure the reality did not become public for those who may be involved in making judgements about these teachers, teacher middle managers and department teams.

It became apparent that issues of certainty, control, compromise, coping, camouflage and collusion are perceived as points on a continuum. Whilst we can think of the above as *issues*, for teacher middle managers in the two schools in which the research was conducted they are reality. Teachers and teacher middle managers experience the reality of seeking certainty and control, engaging in compromise, coping and camouflage and undertaking collusion in response to the rhetoric from the centre.

Control and certainty

Much has been written about teachers and others' desire for control over their working lives. (Kyriacou and Sutcliffe 1978; Payne and Fletcher 1983). It must be noted that a significant number of the teachers interviewed for this study related this desire to their perceptions of their own professionalism.

Compromise.

Teachers accept the need to compromise. Financial constraints have required teachers to teach in unsuitable environments and with inappropriate resources. Teachers have compromised in terms of how many pupils they are willing to teach in a classroom. Teachers have seen the need to compromise on the issue of how much control they have over the curriculum they teach.

Coping.

It is no new revelation that teachers have sought to develop coping strategies in order to manage their day-to-day teaching and management experiences. Teachers have also sought to develop long-term coping strategies and these have been documented previously (Cole and Walker 1989; Kyriacou 1989; Nelson-Jones 1989) At times teachers accept that the need to 'cope' is all that can be asked of them. But when this is a persistent and frequent state stress inevitably increases. Griffith *et al* (1999) perhaps help us to understand more precisely what teachers use as coping strategies: 'behavioural disengagement', 'suppression of competing activities' and 'social support'. It became

apparent that teachers have a tendency to camouflage, their 'just coping' or failure to cope, from their colleagues and in particular from their line managers.

Camouflage.

It is evident from analysing the interviewee transcripts and research notebook entries that the most concerning aspect of this continuum is the concept of teachers feeling the need to camouflage their true beliefs and feelings. They perceive that the hierarchical structure in schools does not encourage or facilitate the uncovering of feelings of 'just coping' or 'not able to do the job'. In many ways this failure to address with managers, feelings of stress and not being able to cope, only perpetuates the present situation. Teachers failing to make it known how they are really coping makes them unwitting confederates with those whose interests are served by 'pretending' a school is efficient and effective.

8.4.2 Interviewees commenting on acknowledgement, approval and balance

The following extracts from interviews and research diary/notebook give some further insight into what teachers say about the issues of acknowledgement, approval, and balance. It is no new insight that teachers along with others are concerned about these issues. However it is quite striking how all those interviewed are very conscious of the need to have the patronage of the headteacher and/or senior managers and/or middle managers. This desire for support and encouragement from headteachers or senior managers is a common thread that runs throughout all of the interviews.

CN (a successful head of Art), within the context of senior managers acknowledging staff efforts, says with little ambiguity,

'I try and praise my staff because I don't think there is enough of it in this school ... at all ... and I try and give C encouragement because she is a very good teacher ...'

CN underlines the problem she is encountering by a pause followed by '... at all ...'. CN manages a very successful department and obviously still finds the issue of acknowledging staff efforts and successes as being vital. She then goes on to explain how fundamentally flawed she feels her senior managers are because they can't say '... thank you ...'.

CN comments,
'... you know yourself if somebody says thank you ...you go home thinking ...not so bad this job ...'

CN begins to shed light on another issue about how senior managers appear to be unaware of the day-to-day pressures on teachers. CN says in response to the question 'What gives you a sense of frustration?'

'... and then there is the day-to-day running ... again management who do not appreciate the fact that they will shove in a form period when you have lessons planned ... and you have to fight to get it back ... you can't do your job and all the paperwork ...'

CN is suggesting that senior manager plans make no allowance for planned teaching activities.

TS (Technology teacher) is talking about senior managers and how they,

'...treat you like a number ... or ... by the book ...and they don't really think, well who am I speaking to ... not being treated like an individual ... they expect us to treat children as individuals ... but we don't always get treated like that ... .'

TS is reflecting on how she is made to feel. TS also notes that she is being treated in a manner in which she is expected not to treat pupils. The power and influence senior

managers have in the working lives of teachers is perhaps highlighted by this point. Teachers know what is expected of them, but they feel that they have no recourse when they are not treated equitably. This perhaps suggests why teachers will find it so difficult to address with their line manager any feelings of not coping.

LN felt particularly frustrated about how senior managers did not visit her classroom to see what she was doing,

> '... you don't see any senior management down ... you don't get any help ...'.

She was quite clear in her assertion,

> '... we don't get any praise ...',

The '... we ...' implies that others experienced this lack of interest also. LN is keen to establish her position because she allies herself with her colleagues' experience of the same problem. LN sees the presence of seniors managers in and around classrooms and the schools corridors as making her feel more positive but it also gives her some sense of being supported.

WH was considerably frustrated with how he felt his senior managers give no acknowledgement to staff for their efforts in making sure the school remained successful and popular,

> '... whether we all get the pat on the back for it is another question ...'

All of the aforementioned comments suggest that teachers are very aware of their senior managers' lack of understanding with regard to what is required to make the life of busy

teachers tolerable. But still teachers are keen to receive their managers' praise and approval. Of course some senior managers are supportive and understand (or have not forgotten) what it means to be involved in the day-to-day teaching of young people. But the rarity of this senior management understanding is noticeable and worthy of mentioning because of its rarity. As RL (head of RE) says,

' ... I went to senior management and they are supportive ...'.

RL went in desperation not really knowing if she would receive support. However, RL is also keen to mention the issue of workload and trying to balance home and work life.

' ... you put things back and back and back ... or you home life suffers ... because ... it can cause conflict ...'

RL has been honest enough to admit that home life has suffered to the point where school work has caused conflict at home because of how little time she was spending with her family. RL, being prepared to allow her home life to suffer, explains the degree to which teachers are prepared to go to complete their many tasks.

YN's (head of year) comment about 'Sabbath Time' neatly encompasses what many teachers allude to with regard to needing a headteacher's approval or acknowledgement of the need to balance work and home life.

'... it's the fact you don't always get time to step out and step back ... the boss refers to it as Sabbath Time ...'

This quote succinctly shows to what degree teachers depend upon receiving the headteacher's tacit permission to have time off or a break from school work.

Teachers are even encouraged by the comments that pupils (who have left school - but return to see teachers) make.

> 'I like it when the kids come back to school after they've left and to see what we've taught them has actually meant something ...'

> 'It's when someone comes back ...and they say ... if we had listened.'

It is almost as if teachers are caught between needing the permission of the headteacher to relax and take time away from school work, including the headteacher's public expression of approval for a job well done and the pupils' acknowledgement that the teachers have served them well. This may encourage the conclusion that these teachers feel it necessary constantly to reference their sense of achievement to the acknowledgement and approval of others. Or is praise in such short supply for teachers that any evidence of acknowledgement and approval is sought after and remembered?

8.4.3 Interviewees commenting on certainty and control

Teachers seeking to balance tasks in school and seeing the need to complete tasks at home can also be looked at in the context of teachers' desire for some sense of certainty and control in their working lives. In particular, we need to be concerned about how teacher middle managers feel that their duel responsibility to their pupils and their colleagues is difficult to manage and balance. For teacher middle managers their interview responses about certainty and control fall into three contexts:

- classroom teaching experiences
- lesson preparation
- management role.

Classroom teaching experiences

There are many interview responses that refer to a teacher's desire for certainty and control. At its simplest, teachers wish to teach a lesson or series of lessons as they have planned, and not be distracted from undertaking their teaching role. As TS says,

> '...when a lesson goes at it should ... as it was planned ... and pupils actually cooperate and I don't spend all lesson saying sit down, shut up ... get on with you work ...'

Whilst TS recognises that part of her role is to maintain order and demonstrate good classroom management, she nevertheless finds this role a source of stress. TS is a very experienced and effective class teacher. Whilst at Daleside High TS's class discipline was observed to be of the highest standard. However TS still finds it frustrating carrying out this most fundamental of teacher tasks. At times it was evident that interviewees were expressing feelings of complete exasperation with maintaining order in their classrooms. The following teacher middle managers commented on the difficulties of maintaining good discipline in class, such as CN who talks about those pupils who ' ... don't do as you tell them to immediately or even after three times of asking.' CN is expressing feeling of exasperation with her inability to even maintain the most basic of standards. YK (a SENCO) talks about the frustration of her ' ... underachiever boys. If only they would keep their gobs shut and listen.' Both these respondents are very effective and experienced teacher middle managers. These two comments explain the daily trials and tribulations of most teachers and teacher middle managers. The wearing nature of maintaining order may leave little reserves of energy for teacher middle managers to undertake the many other tasks they are expected to complete.

Lesson preparation

Some teacher middle managers discern the distractions they are expected to contend with.

EN (Head of Business Studies) sees '...paper...' or administration as interfering in the primary task of teaching and preparation,

> '... if it's not one piece of paper its another that interferes and takes from the very precious and valuable time that you should be spending preparing lessons...'

But perhaps the issues of teachers feeling out of control is best highlighted by what KY (Head of Science) says,

> '... you come into school in the morning and you've planned you are going to do A, B, C and D ... you come in and something has happened and you never get to A.'

This suggests that perhaps teachers fail to prepare as well as they should and instead rely upon always having a contingency to fall back on. This summarises the essence of what most teacher were saying with regard to the inability to plan, knowing their plans would be upset by unforeseen incidents and a plethora of distractions. Teachers' sense of a lack of efficacy and working at the whim of circumstance is evident in many interviews. KY, an experienced middle manager states,

> '... the number of times I've said in the last three years that teaching is an incidental part of my day ...'

KY is Head of Science at Parkside Hight and CN is Head of Art at Daleside High and yet both use the term '...incidental part of my day ...'. CN's next comment perhaps

highlights how the many demands made on her time cause her to loose touch with her primary role - teaching.

> '... there was a stage when we were doing year nine reports were I thought
> ... oh no, I've got to teach now ....it shouldn't be like that ...'

For a teacher of CN's experience to forget that she was meant to be a teacher before she is anything else goes some way to demonstrate a situation which is concerning in the extreme. It would appear that teacher middle managers are spending such a small proportion of their time teaching and preparing lessons that they sometimes lose sight of their teaching role.

Both KY and CN are very concerned about how teaching is no longer the primary role for a teacher middle manager. As middle managers they are also concerned about the management of teachers who are seeing teaching as becoming an '...incidental...' part of their day. We see teachers frustrated because they feel fundamentally influenced by their headteacher, controlled by the distractions of the teaching day and distracted by ' ... paperwork ...'. It should be no surprise that teachers are feeling as if their workload is not only unreasonable but so ill defined as to be detrimental to effective teaching.

Teacher middle managers are the 'conduits' through which pass the many requests for '...paperwork...' completion by class teachers. Teacher middle managers, because of the aforementioned conduit role and because of their proximity to the class teacher colleagues, are well placed to monitor teaching, class teacher completion of lesson preparation and marking of pupils work. Teacher middle managers are either seeing that

lesson preparation and marking of pupil work is not being done effectively or they are turning a blind eye to the situation.

Teacher middle managers and their management role

In a wider context, teacher middle managers are looking for a greater degree of control and certainty with regard to their other management roles. As a middle manager HS (Head of Expressive Arts) is concerned about his lack of understanding of the part he is to have in performance management,

> '...performance management ...I don't fully understand yet, I keep asking people what does this involve ...according to management I have either got 2 or 3 people ...'

The most worrying issue here is that HS, a very experienced middle manager, finds it necessary to '... keep asking ...' for further guidance. This means either his senior managers don't know or can't explain his role. In either case, this centrally driven policy is something which teacher middle managers should be confident about implementing. Of course if teacher middle managers are not confident about implementing this policy it has little chance of success.

The foregoing does not necessarily provide a new insight into a teacher's concerns but confirms other findings with regard to teachers seeking a sense of control and certainty, and accepting the need to compromise and cope. However, if we accept the forgoing as characterising the working lives of teachers we have much to be concerned about. How are schools functioning if teachers are seeing teaching as an '... incidental ...' part of their day?

As RE (Head of Technology) says,

> '... with the greater analysis and generation of statistics ... I think if we
> are not awfully careful we are going to end up being ruled by statistics
> rather than what we think is right in terms of what children should and
> shouldn't learn...'

RE is concerned about how statistics are controlling what is going on in school. He is

concerned that the needs of the pupils are being overlooked. He is acknowledging the

professional role he believes teachers should have in deciding *what* and *how* pupils

should learn.

Teachers are also keen to have some degree of consistency in their dealings with senior

managers. NI (head of Humanities) states,

> 'Again that is inconsistent for certain members of senior management
> here. Sometimes they are over the top in helping you. Other times they say
> you should know how to do this and get it sorted. You are a bit unsure
> really. They are so inconsistent.'

A teacher's day is characterised by uncertainty, inconsistency and constantly having to

deal with contingencies. How are they to have any sense or opportunity of planning

strategically?

It is perhaps worth contrasting the above statements with what a senior manager, has to

say about strategic planning. NN (Deputy Headteacher) is quite succinct in her

observation that,

> '...I like to work in a way that is informed by planning and by strategy and
> the biggest sense of frustration for me in the job that I do is when people
> don't use those tools...'

NN is unaware that her teacher middle managers are also interested in achieving this strategic planning but are thwarted from achieving it on a day-to-day basis.

8.4.4 Research notes and interviewees on compromise and coping

Inherent in the forgoing is how teachers learn to compromise and cope with their daily experiences. Teachers undertake training in their own time and sometimes at their own expense and undertake jobs and tasks for which they have little or no training. Teachers accept workloads that invade their home lives to an unacceptable degree. Teachers engage in form filling and paperwork completion that they find of little or no use in their primary role of teaching and lesson preparation.

To illustrate the depth of the problem it may be useful to look at some research notebook entries. All of the following comments have been made by experienced middle managers when discussing their day-to-day teaching experiences.

> 'I would have given up a day's pay not to come in today.'
> (Second in Technology)

This exasperated teacher middle manager had on other occasions expressed concerns about how busy she was and how little time she had to complete tasks.

But her comment is not as concerning as the next comment.

> I go home feeling a failure ...'
> (Head of Food Technology)

Here we see a teacher in the depths of despair getting to the end of the day and feeling as if she has achieved nothing and failed to make any contribution. When this teacher was asked if she had spoken to the head of faculty she made light of her initial comment. I believe she was trying to cover up the depths of her concerns. She was perhaps aware that she had allowed her guard to drop. Of course she could have been nothing other than embarrassed. However I am convinced that the initial comment was heartfelt.

YK talks about taking up her Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) post without any training and having to wait for 12 months before any was forthcoming,

> '... I got the post ... worked for twelve months without anything ... because they had not put any provision for me ...12 months after that though I went and did a SENCO course.'

YK, who is an experienced and very capable teacher, decided to put up with waiting a year before she received any training. She coped and compromised for one year and inevitably camouflaged any difficulties that she might have had. The influence a SENCO has in the lives of the most vulnerable and challenging pupils cannot be underestimated but still a school is encouraged to create the post and provide no training. This particular teacher also expressed the opinion that the subject role she had was of more interest to her, and in which she felt most comfortable, compared to her SENCO role. It should not be surprising that senior managers will feel that teachers will undertake any task asked of them.

After a particularly hectic lesson another teacher was heard to say:

> 'That's like teaching in a bear pit.'
> (Science teacher)

This illustrates a teacher who, whilst making the comment with a smile, is also conscious of the demanding nature of teaching uncooperative pupils.

> 'It is impossible to do everything – I can't even prioritise now.'
> (Head of Music)

This Head of Music is experiencing a sense of paralysis and the feeling of having so much to do that he doesn't know where to start. This is not necessarily an issue of not having too little time - it is more to do with having had so many tasks highlighted as priorities that he cannot choose. Initiative overload compounded with administrative overload have brought this teacher middle manager to a standstill. The following comment by a head of Business Studies is made within the context of her management role:

> 'The sooner I can get out the better ...I can't do the job the way they want.' (Head of Business Studies)

This Head of Business Studies is evidently aware of the rhetoric by which she should be guided - '... the way they want ...'. In this comment this teacher middle manager is not talking about teaching. On previous occasions she had stated that teaching was the thing that gave her most sense of achievement. This middle manager is obviously experiencing a degree of dissonance and this in turn is causing her to question how much longer she may stay in teaching.

A '... love ...' of teaching is contrasted with the distraction of administration in the following comment. This Head of Science is expressing his exasperation with how paper work takes him away from his teaching:

> 'I love teaching but I'm not doing very much teaching ... its all paper, paper, paper.' (Head of Science)

Experienced teachers are aware of the many strategies that pupils will use to avoid work or deflect teachers from the task in hand. However reflective teachers are also aware of how pupils can provide insight into the prevailing ethos in a school. It is my contention that the following comment made by a 'top set' GCSE Yr 11 pupil provides some insight into what he was experiencing. This comment was made to me, and a small group of other pupils who were engaged on a coursework task that. I enjoyed a very positive relationship with this group and the comment was made in good humour.

> 'Sir, why don't you do what every other teacher does ... nothing ... leave us to it.'
> (Yr. 11 pupil)

The final diary entry records a head of faculty's comment about a 'meeting' he had just had with his headteacher.

> 'This place is just chaos ... the Head and I were just shouting to each other across the corridor scrum ...' (Head of Technology)

The depth of feeling expressed in these comments is perhaps very concerning for those who are seeking to uncover the reasons for teacher dissatisfaction. These experienced teacher middle managers are perceived to be successful by those they manage (and they manage departments which achieve above average results at GCSE) and yet they hold very negative views of their teaching experience.

Teacher middle managers are willing to accept the need to compromise and 'just' cope on a daily basis. They are willing to put up with ' ... chaos ... '. Teachers and teacher middle managers cope by having meetings with senior managers across a noisy corridor. There is also a sense of compromise in how teacher middle managers seek to put their management role before their teaching role. RL talks about '... I am so busy managing and doing my extra responsibilities that my teaching suffers ...' so she copes by compromising with her teaching so that her administrative role may be fulfilled.

The two following comments from SA and SL leave us in no doubt about the degree of compromise that is required and accepted by teacher and teacher middle managers.
SA is aware of how ' ... I should be there teaching the kids, not swanning off every two minutes doing cover, because my lessons suffer.' The distraction of covering for absent colleagues is part and parcel of a middle managers role.

SL (Art teacher) has also had to compromise with regard to how she no longer spends most of her time teaching the subject for which she was trained. SL explains how, over a period of three years, the subject for which she was trained and for which she was initially employed eventually became 25% of her timetable commitment. SL says '... and then in my third year 25% of my timetable was pure Art ...'. Is it any wonder teacher and teacher middle managers become frustrated with their day-to-day experiences of teaching? I believe it is when we look at the ensuing issue of camouflage that we must truly be concerned.

8.4.5 Research notes and interviewees on Camouflage

Before we uncover some instances of where teachers may be giving some insight into how they go about camouflaging it maybe useful to uncover some examples of where teachers have expressed their understanding of the public nature of their function. This public nature can be:

- public within the boundaries of the school. Open to scrutiny by peers and senior and middle managers. Teachers are conscious that their interactions with pupils within classrooms, in corridors and in playgrounds are public interactions and open the positive or negative judgment.

- public within the local community. Parents and others are privy to information about school and subject performance with regard to Key Stage 3 and GCSE results. Publication of OFSTED report.

- public within the national context. Performance of school with regard to other similar schools.

Teachers such as LN are only too aware of the wider public perception of teachers. She talks about how,

> '... other people perceive teachers. And the concept that we finish at 3.30, that we are lazy buggers ...'.

Within the school there is also a public dimension as explained by NE (Deputy Headteacher) when talking about heads of department,

> ' ... the success of their department is obviously what is paramount ...'

> '... if you are leading a department you are in charge of it, if the department is successful you are seen to be successful ...'

These last two comments perhaps give us some idea of the expectations teacher middle managers have passed onto them by their senior managers. It should be no surprise that teacher middle managers do not wish their shortcomings to become known.

On the initial reading of transcripts of the interviews conducted with teachers and teacher middle managers, evidence of teachers camouflaging proves, to some extent, elusive. It is only when we reflect upon the tone and content of the interviews that we begin to see a ready source of data to support this. Teachers are daily camouflaging:

- their inability to cope or with the demands that are made of them
- their unwillingness to engage with the many initiatives they are expected to implement
- their fundamental concerns with regard to the tasks they are required to undertake.

Teachers and teacher middle managers are camouflaging the reality of coping with the issues above. At the same time teachers are seeking to maintain a facade of compliance or even commitment to the many tasks they are asked to undertake. It is, I believe, misleading to imagine that it is the inability to cope which is the main instigator of teacher camouflage. Teachers are more likely to hide their concerns about the roles and tasks they are asked to perform. Teacher middle managers are reticent about sharing with their senior managers feelings of disengagement or lack of commitment to their own school's aims, objectives and ethos. Teacher middle managers seem more intent on hiding their strongly held concerns and those of their class teacher colleagues.

Interview responses that support the existence of this camouflaging include:

RE talking about how he experienced a group of staff,

> '... virtually working to rule because of the stress and pressure, amount of paper work that's being or perceived is being dumped on them over and above what is acceptable.'

RE has not informed has senior managers of the problems he is having with his department colleagues. He feels unable to share, with his senior managers, the problems he is having managing his department personnel.

In contrast to this, members of this department group felt unable to approach their line manager (RE) about the expectations that were being placed on them. At the same time one teacher from this department made the following comment to me.

> ' ... could you help me with this ... RE (head of department) is busy ... I don't like to ask him ...'

She is obviously attempting to cope on her own but at the same time giving the head of department space to deal with his other problems.

The department staff saw strength in numbers and agreed amongst themselves that they would in effect 'work to rule'. Whilst they felt unable to tell anyone they were doing this, the middle manager responsible for managing them was only too aware. He in turn couldn't share it with his senior managers because he felt he would be made to look ineffective and a poor leader or manager. This came about because staff felt undervalued and put upon but more significantly they felt as individuals unable to approach a senior manager for fear of jeopardising their career or becoming the object of scrutiny

themselves. In affect they camouflaged their inability to cope until their pressure became too great.

This is not unlike HS who was concerned about '... not sleeping for days and days...'. He eventually went to a senior manager for support. He had put off approaching his line manager until the stress became significant. However it is in the nature of teachers (or in their own interests) to hide the fact that they are camouflaging their inability to cope. But there are nevertheless subtle references to camouflaging in interview responses, such as how KY says,

> 'I suppose I am lucky that I could give any lesson off the top of my head ... I mean after 33 years ...'

KY is implying that he cuts back on his lesson planning to undertake all the other tasks he must complete. He is relying on his experience to get him through.

RE states

> 'I suppose the happiest time was at LM and that was because of the extra-curricular activities I could get involved in because of the lack of pressure to produce and drive the department forward ...'

This middle manager is no longer involved in extra-curricular activities. He camouflages his inability to do the job by cutting back on many of the other elements of teaching that he particularly enjoyed.

EN puts in 11-hour days, understanding the rhetoric of the professional that says the job must get done at any cost.

> ' ... well I thought if you get here at 7 in the morning and leave here at 6 in the evening everyday of the week ...'

KY must be engaging in camouflage as he admits,

> '... the number of times I have said in the last three years that teaching is
> an incidental part of my day ...'

This requires us to ask the question - how can a head of science be so distracted from his
teaching and yet still manage to remain a head of science? LN states,

> ' ... not having time to prepare, not having time to mark, not having time
> to speak to the kids ...' .

If this is the case LN must be covering up her inability to undertake these essential
elements of teaching. YN, in the context of being able to '... step out and step back ...'
says how,

> '... it would be wonderful if someone in the great scheme of things could
> see the value of that and could finance education in such a way that staff
> had split throughout the week ... say a whole day ... not given time to do
> another 10 million things but given time to do what you do better ...'

This is surely an indictment as to how, over time, teachers have put up with the many
initiatives have come about and have felt unable to do anything about their
implementation. Teacher have been encouraged to implement, being more concerned
about making sure the initiative appears successful instead of making sure it is
successful.

8.5 Teacher middle managers at the interface between rhetoric and reality

After considering the foregoing evidence of the issues it may be useful to look a summary of the conflicts teachers may be involved in resolving in their day-to-day experiences of teaching. It is perhaps only by contrasting these concepts with the reality and rhetoric of a teacher's day-to-day experiences that we may be aware of how challenging it is for teachers to hear the rhetoric, know the reality but still strive for what they believe to be right.

Table 4. Teacher middle managers at the interface between rhetoric and reality.

Teacher's:	Reality experienced:	Rhetoric perceived:
Seeking **acknowledgement** from pupils or managers.	• Little acknowledgement on part of Senior Managers • League tables • Targets	• Commitment of teachers is valued.
Seeking **approval**	• Inconsistent or almost non-existent praise from senior managers. • Pupils providing approval when they return to school after sitting exams.	• National award ceremonies • Threshold • Performance management

Teacher':	Reality experienced:	Rhetoric perceived:
Desire for **balance** between school tasks.	• Demands of class teaching • Demands of individual pupil needs. • Demands of lesson prep etc. • Demands of administration • Demands from middle manager. • Demands from senior managers • Managerialism	• Differentiation • School ethos
Desire for **balance** between home and school demands.	• Need to work long hours in school to complete tasks. • Need to take work home	• Professionalism • Can't place time limit on teacher hours (Sec. State for Education – Estelle Morris 2002)

Teachers:	Reality experienced:	Rhetoric perceived:
Desire for **certainty**	• Senior managers who fail to communicate vision. • Changing priorities.	• 'education, education, education ...' Prime Minister Tony Blair. • School effectiveness
Desire for **control**	• National Curriculum control of curriculum • Headteacher control of staff	
Need to **compromise**	• Expectations • Targets for KS3 and GCSE	• Standards • Target setting
Coping strategies	• Workload • Target deadlines • Lack of training • Inappropriate training • Busy teacher middle managers not able to support class teachers.	• Motivated teachers • Classroom assistants!
Attempts to **camouflage**	• Internal inspections - surveillance of performance • OFSTED - external inspection of performance • Performance management	• OFSTED inspections • Effectiveness • Standards

It is teacher middle managers contending daily with resolving the conflicts that exist at the interface between reality and rhetoric that has become the focus of this research. But perhaps more importantly it is where teachers are stifling their unhappiness and camouflaging their inability to cope with the demands made of them that is most concerning. It is apparent that teacher middle managers in particular leave it until they have been quite seriously affected by the day-to-day experience of teaching and managing before they address these concerns with their line manager.

I would argue that the evidence from the foregoing lends credence to the idea that class teachers and teacher middle managers are colluding in making sure that no one becomes aware of the degree to which they are failing to live up to the prevailing rhetoric. This collusion is what perhaps explains why a significant number of teachers leave the

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profession early on in their careers and why so many experience significant stress in their working lives.

It is evident that YN is concerned about how teachers are losing sight of their primary role,

> ' ... because the pressure we are under ... constantly bows us down ... sometimes we forget why we are doing it.'

He goes on to say,

> ' ... I realized by just scratching away at the surface that the reason why there where a whole variety of different things happening was that different layers had come on top of each other and no one had the time or the insight to sit back and say anything ...'

It is evident that sometimes the camouflaging is accidental and does not form part of a conspiracy. But because individuals feel as if they will be perceived as not managing they then go on to collude intentionally.

8.5.1 Teachers not feeling able to say no

We are perhaps given some clue in the following interviewee comments, as to why teachers find it difficult to say no to requests to take on extra tasks. It became evident that a significant number of those interviewed found it very difficult to say no. Indeed LN says

> '... you're made to feel unprofessional if you don't do these things...'

Teachers are encouraged to see themselves as people who shouldn't say no. However they are not unaware of the contradiction that is sometimes in evidence. Teachers

understand that they are told, or it is suggested to them, that as professionals they should

engage with what ever is requested of them. And at the same time they are given little say

in what their role should entail. As DN (Second in Mathematics) says

> 'although it is supposed to be a profession ... I see it more and more as a
> job of work ... I think a lot of the professional responsibilities have been
> taken away.'

Some even perceive the rhetoric that exists and accept that it is best not to question

anything because their professionalism will be questioned. So the reality is, rather than

engage with senior managers over issues of concern, they just carry out the diktats of

their senior managers. Teacher are well aware that they will be accused of being

unprofessional, of not being committed or not having the best interests of the pupils in

mind if they fail to complete a task or fill in a piece of paper. Indeed we have only to

look at how historically teachers have been expected to undertake many roles for which

they have not been trained. NE talks about being the '... Head of Modern Languages and

Careers.' These are two completely unrelated departments, but there was an expectation

that he would take on this dual role. In this context, ON is particularly concerned about

how,

> ' ... in my teaching job I'm given more and more to do ... I work all day
> at school ...I've virtually never had four frees in a week ever ... since I
> have been here ... and when I go home ... most nights I get home about 6
> or half-past 5, have something to eat and start work at about quarter to 7
> and I finish a nine O'clock ...'

ON finds it impossible to say no to the many tasks she is given. She is having to contend

with giving up free lessons (planned non-contact time) in order to cover for absent

colleagues.

8.6   Comparing interview responses between Parkside High and Daleside High

teachers, teacher middle managers and senior managers.

Whilst there was much commonality between school interviewees it is also interesting to

highlight those issues where they may be some differences.

Table 5.   Comparing interview responses made by teachers at
Parkside High and Daleside High.

Response to	Parkside High School	Daleside High School
Important milestones	• Pupil achievements • Results	• Pupil achievements • Results
Sense of achievement	• Class teaching	• Class teaching
Sense of frustration	• Time • Workload • Lack of acknowledgement from senior managers	• Time to do job • Manner in which teachers treated • Lack of praise from senior managers

It can be seen above that there was much commonality between the responses given in

each school.   It is apparent however that those at Daleside High were a little more

discontent with the manner in which their managers recognised their and others efforts.

Table 6.   Comparing interview responses made by teacher middle managers at Parkside High
and Daleside High.

Response to	Parkside High School	Daleside High School
Important milestones	• Previous teaching activities (including extra-curricular activities)	• Previous teaching activities (including extra-curricular activities)
Sense of achievement	• Results • Success of individual pupils • Success of department in relation to other departments	• Relationship with pupils • Results
Sense of frustration	• Lack of time • Demands of day • Workload • Dismissive managers	• Not enough time • Lack of understanding from senior managers • Dismissive managers • Inconsistent managers

It is evident from the above that both sets of teacher middle managers are concerned about the pressures they are under. They are also quite concerned about the balancing act that they must perform between managing class teachers and senior manager interactions.

Table 7. Comparing interview responses made by senior managers at Parkside High and Daleside High.

Response to	Parkside High School	Daleside High School
Important milestones	• Promotion • Impact they have made on previous school and pupils.	• Promotion • Career progression
Sense of achievement	• Assistance they give	• Middle managers who understand their role • Public nature of department's success. • Influence over middle managers.
Sense of frustration	• Teachers they can't help • Middle managers who don't plan 'strategically'.	• Those who don't seek help. • Pressure to achieve results.

We must be cautious about comparing these two sets of responses because there were only 3 senior managers involved and only one from Daleside High. However it is evident that they have a strong sense of what they expect from their teacher middle managers in terms of strategic planning and department success. It is also interesting to note that senior managers do tend to talk in terms of how they can influence teachers and middle managers' working lives. Senior managers have little sense of a lack of control in their day-to-day experiences. This is in direct contrast with teacher middle managers who are consistently keen to articulate their lack of control.

It is also interesting to note that senior managers do not see workload as a major issue for them. Senior managers also seem to have a very good sense of what everyone else should be doing or what is expected of others. Senior managers perhaps appear unaware of the reality of being a teacher or teacher middle manager.

8.6.1 Further analysis of the issue of collusion

On re-analysis of the interview transcripts it is easy to see how teacher middle managers and class teacher collude in ensuring that senior managers do not have insight into the reality of their working day and how teachers and teacher middle managers are failing to live up to the centrally devised rhetoric.

When we reconsider the depth of feeling expressed in comments made in interviews and in the research diary we may detect instances of teachers and teacher middle managers colluding in covering up the degree to which teacher and middle managers are failing to be as effective as they are proclaiming to be in public. Two criteria could be used to ascertain if an interview responses provides evidence of collusion:

- does the interviewee demonstrate awareness of the prevailing rhetoric and a willingness to hide his/her inability to subscribe to it?

- have the interview response issues been raised formally with the headteacher (and or governing body).(The very nature of collusion will lead those involved to seek to hide its existence.)

The following may well provide some evidence of collusion between middle managers and their colleagues. Let us first consider what YD, an experienced middle manager, says about Head of Faculty meetings,

> '... rather than it becoming a discussion group shall we say in which decision are made...it is often just a information based meeting whereby no real decisions are made ... people are told what to and it seems to me as if ... there is no clear structure as to what people want ... they just keep responding on a crisis management type situation.'

He has witnessed the largest cohort of experienced and influential people in the school (9 teachers including heads of faculty and senior teachers) attend a series of meetings which are no more that information giving forums. It would appear that here is no strategic management or decision-making function for these meetings. Teacher middle managers are taking no part in the decision-making process of the school. They seem willing to abdicate their part in the decision-making role of the school. This group of teachers is colluding in being '... told what to do ...'. Of course it is always possible that these teacher middle managers are so bowed down with a workload that has driven them to submission. If this experienced and senior group of teachers is not challenging the patently ineffective then we should not be surprised if individual teacher and teacher middle managers have difficulty in making public their concerns.

In a more individual context RL (head of department) is so busy being an '...administrator...' that she allows her teaching to suffer. She is unwilling to admit that the '...extra responsibilities...' she has are distracting her from her primary function.

> 'I sometimes think I am so busy managing and doing my extra responsibilities that my teaching suffers ... I am very aware of it ... and I

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> am trying to manage that ... moving away from teaching and becoming an
> administrator rather than a teacher ...'

Her following statement obviously suggests that this has not been a short-term issue.

> '...I felt even worse last year ... than I do this year ...'

HS, a head of faculty, is failing to teach effectively because he is distracted by the many
other responsibilities he has.

> '...when I'm in lesson even I'm thinking of other things I've got to be
> doing. Currently I'm juggling with Yr 9 marking, I've got Christmas carol
> concert and I've got two millennium concerts ...'

YN in discussing concerns he has about how the class colleagues he manages cope with

the new initiatives that are to be implemented by his staff group. He seems to suggesting

that he has watched this situation unfold on previous occasions but is obviously unable to

bring these concerns to the SMT.

> '... In general terms ... the constant stream of new initiatives ... they can
> just about get their head around one ... just about able to percolate that
> down ... just about beginning to bed it in and something else comes along
> ... which either replaces or competes with what is already in place ...'

As previously mentioned, the following short but incisive quote will, I am sure, concern

greatly any governing body or parent who sees it. SA (a second in department) is

discussing the manner in which his department has decided to focus on '...middle

band...' pupils to ensure that they achieve at least a grade C at GCSE because this will

have an effect on the subject's and school's A-C league table percentage. The department

head is tacitly recommending the policy of devoting more teacher effort to one set of

pupils because they will have a publicly perceived impact on the school league table

position. The department members are obviously colluding in this:

'...we are just concerned with middle band ... to get them up there ... because it is going to look good ...'

Teachers are supporting this because they find that they cannot concentrate appropriate time and effort to all pupils and instead are persuaded of an expedient response. Some times it is expedient to collude as opposed to subscribe to an honest revelation of the truth.

8.6.2 Senior managers

It is worth looking at senior manager quotes at length because they reveal a great deal about their awareness of the rhetoric that prevails. In RR's first quote he is commenting how, as a member of the SMT, he receives formal requests for support (because a number of staff have submitted behaviour referrals on a pupil). RR accepts that teachers become frustrated when nothing can be done, (he even concedes as a teacher he became 'frustrated'), with regard to permanently removing disruptive pupils. RR seems to provide evidence of someone who is colluding in maintaining the rhetoric even though he knows the frustration of the reality.

'I think at times people get frustrated because this problem is going to be taken off their hands...you can't always do it that way...take him away and talk to him...that may be appropriate sometimes... but you can't take him out of the lesson every lesson...these are classroom management things.... I suspect that is probably one of the things...I know it was when I was a classroom teacher.'

It is important to note the number of times RR says ' ... you can't ...'. This underlines his acknowledgement of the rhetoric he subscribes to. This also acknowledges that there

is another perspective - the reality for the teacher who demands support. It is also worth noting how RR is distancing himself from the reality of class teaching by how he says ' ... when I was a classroom teacher.' The clash between rhetoric and reality is something that is reality for RR. RR goes on to comment,

> '...but I think we are pilloried for everything in society ... I am getting political now...Thatcher's government said there is no society ... they drove it that way and teachers got it for kids messing about on the streets ... they made league tables. So schools started to exclude kids...and they said you can't do that and they closed special schools. It was an unrealistic attitude. Social inclusion centres...I think and I hope that will be a great relieve to people... Because if you get one or two...it won't be hundreds in there ...6, 7 or 8 in there ... who are causing the most frustration about the place ... then hopefully it will help... I keep saying it's not a 'sin bin ...'

RR's comments about '... unrealistic attitude ...' and ' ... causing the most frustration ...' suggests he is capable of analysing the reality of the situation for teachers. However his final retort about how '... I keep saying it's not a sin bin ...' yet again underlines his distancing of himself from his class teacher colleagues experiences and reinforcing his support of the rhetoric of social inclusion centres.

Below NN clearly highlights how a senior manager may have no understanding of the day-to-day reality her teacher middle manager and class teacher colleagues encounter.

> '... how can I explain it to you...I like to work in a way that is informed by planning and by strategy and the biggest sense of frustration for me in the job that I do is when people don't use those tools ...but lurch from thing to another...don't plan ... don't think about how they will implement...and importantly don't evaluate what they have done...they just move...I'll be dead straight with you...I think it was a bit of a shock when I asked people to evaluate that whole school review day... I don't think they had ever done anything like that before think they had ever done anything like that before...you need to know what people think

> because that must inform the plans you make and the strategies that you put in place...'

NN introduces us to the idea that she likes her work to be informed '... by planning and by strategy ...' which are concepts with which most teachers could identify. But she also reveals that senior managers asking teachers to '...evaluate the whole school review day ...' creates extra tasks for teachers and adds to their workload. Consequently these teachers end up so preoccupied that it should be no surprise if they only have time to '... lurch from one thing to another ...'. This tension between the rhetoric of 'good practice' and what works in reality is never far away.

The following comment from NE leaves us in no doubt as to where he believes a middle manager's loyalties should lie. NE makes it clear that partnership is not a priority for him, but a middle manager's '... accountability ...' is. This has consequences for the manager and his/her management of class colleagues. Middle managers who know that accountability is more important than partnership are more likely to be aware of the monitoring and surveillance that is taking place. The middle manager will obviously be careful to make sure that any shortcomings are not made public to NE.

> '...the relationship between middle management and senior managers is a pretty complex one ... but I feel that it operates very successfully in the most of the areas where I am currently working ... when a middle manager comes in here and sits down of their own choice, talking through their agenda rather than they come because I have sent for them ...because that linking role is correctly perceived ....
> For example the Head of Maths ... his principal loyalty to, and his closest relationship with, should be the senior manager to whom he is accountable ...'

It is also worth noting NE's description of a middle manager '...talking through their agenda ...'. If middle managers do have an agenda of their own to what degree is it trusted, praised and given legitimacy? I suspect that NE is providing evidence of his willingness to subscribe to a rhetoric that says senior managers need to listen and enter into a partnership with their middle managers. But he seems unable to see how the burden of accountability and the reality of managing a significant management and teaching workload undermines a teacher middle manager's ability to engage with the rhetoric.

If we accept that middle managers do not wish to subscribe publicly to anything other that the prevailing rhetoric and class teachers are unwilling to make known their concerns about workload and feelings of not coping then both groups are unintentionally colluding in their own predicament. Teacher middle managers are filtering the concerns of their class teacher colleagues and by subscribing to the rhetoric of target setting, performance management and school effectiveness are supporting a school system that is intrinsically flawed and unsustainable.

To illustrate the degree to which rhetoric and collusion between teachers, teacher middle managers and senior managers is intrinsic to school function we have only to look at the following typical exchanges. I witnessed both of these exchanges.

Context: *Interim Yr 9 assessments had just been completed by individual subject teachers. Subject teachers had been asked to assess pupils' work and record this as a National Curriculum level.*

Head of Department: 'Please can you look at those assessments you did on the Yr 9 pupils in class 9A ... they need to be higher than last years.'

Teacher: 'But they are not higher.'

Head of Department: Please could you change them?

Teacher: 'But you are only storing up problems for next year'

Head of Department: I know, I know but what can I do?
I got grief last year because the assessments were not above the previous years.

<div align="right">1</div>

Context: *Year 8 reports had just been completed and passed to form tutors for collating. Because of the absence of a member of staff the head of department for one subject area had created a generic report for all pupils (in this absent teacher's class) detailing the work they had covered since the term had commenced. The EFFORT and ATTAINMENT 'tick' boxes had not been completed because the head of department felt he was unable to comment on individual pupils because he hadn't taught them.*

The form tutor was instructed by a senior manager to insert the ticks in the tick box section. When the form tutor expressed concerns about his ability to do this (he had never taught the group) he was told '... well at least they are done ...'.

<div align="right">2</div>

The manner in which the Head of Department and senior manager felt able to make these comments in a public arena (with myself and others listening) perhaps underlines the taken for granted nature of collusion for teachers and their managers. In the latter case these pupils received a subject report completed by two teachers who hadn't taught them. The concerns expressed by the form tutor were negated by the senior manager's plea that '... well at least they are done ...'. Intrinsic in this exchange is shared knowledge about the influence/authority of the senior manager over the form teacher. Whilst the senior manager was guilty of unethical conduct, the senior manager was attempting to

camouflage the fact that reports were not done. At the same time, the senior manager was camouflaging the fact that when the reports were done they had been completed by teachers who couldn't possibly complete them accurately. The form teacher and the senior manager colluded in making sure these reports appear to have been completed appropriately but the senior manager facilitated the legitimising of this degree of collusion. This perhaps confirms that senior managers are so preoccupied with centrally devised rhetoric that they are willing to engage in collusion with class teacher colleagues to ensure the rhetoric is promulgated.

Chapter 9: Conclusions

9.1 Rhetoric, reality, camouflaging and collusion

9.1.1 The public nature of teaching.

From the foregoing it is possible to conclude that teachers are well aware of the public nature of teaching. Teachers see teaching as a public activity in the sense that:

- teachers' activities are kept in the public domain by the government's use of OFSTED to inspect schools and the subsequent public reporting of the findings

- league tables are published for the public consumption of parents and others.

- schools conduct their own internal inspections which involves senior and middle managers in monitoring and surveilling their colleagues

- pupils scrutinise their teachers and their teaching.

This public nature of teaching is a daily reality for teachers, teacher middle managers and senior managers.

9.1.2 Teachers and camouflaging

If we take camouflage to mean, '...a device or expedient designed to conceal or deceive...' then perhaps we can accept that teachers and teacher middle managers are attempting to deceive anyone interested in gaining insight into the reality of teaching. It is important to focus on the expediency element of camouflaging. If class teachers could be open and honest with their teacher middle managers and teacher middle managers could be open and honest with their senior managers they almost certainly would be. But they find it more expedient not to be.

It was possible to get a sense of teachers' attempts to camouflage because of the way in which teachers and teacher middle managers seemed to be less than open about the degree to which they are failing to cope with the many demands that are made upon them. Rather than conceal outright this inability to manage or cope they:

- seek to work late into the night (EN's 11 hour days in school)

- come into school early

- engage in subterfuge in the completion of administrative tasks (reports completed by teachers who didn't teach class)

- use lesson time to do other things rather than teach their classes (CN's '...teaching is an incidental part of my day...')

- fail to prepare lessons or keep up with marking (RL's '...I am so busy managing and doing my extra responsibilities that my teaching suffers...').

It is evident that these teachers feel that they can not trust their senior managers to have some sense of empathy with their day-to-day experience of teaching. Perhaps these teachers are unwilling to allow their senior managers to see the reality of teaching. They consequently camouflage the reality from their senior managers. They in effect collude with one another.

9.1.3 Middle managers and camouflaging

A teacher middle manager has two audiences watching her/his performance; senior managers and her/his class teacher colleagues. Teacher middle managers understand the prevailing rhetoric and invariably perceive that their senior managers are performing effectively with reference to this rhetoric. The evidence of the interview responses would suggest that middle managers do not wish to appear unable to cope or unable to commit to the rhetoric. It is also in a teacher middle manager's interest to appear to be effective, efficient and in control of her/his department or faculty (the patronage of the headteacher is required to acquire promotion or career development). Teacher middle managers do not wish to appear to be ineffective in leading their department/faculty/pastoral colleagues.

In the two schools where interviews took place, class teachers, teacher middle managers and senior managers are aware of the rhetoric emanating from the centre about school improvement, performance management and the other centrally led policies that impact on secondary schools. Teachers are also aware of:

- the surveillance and monitoring that takes place in schools.
- the role of managers in this surveilling and monitoring
- a 'managerialist' culture that is characterised by internal and external 'accountability' and 'control'.

The reality is that teachers feel they have little control over their day-to-day teaching experience. Teachers undertake a plethora of administrative tasks allied to centrally led

policies. The workload inherent in the completion of these tasks makes it vital that teachers seek to develop coping and camouflaging strategies that attempt to hide from their managers the degree to which they are prevented or distracted from undertaking their primary function – teaching. The adoption of these strategies undermine teachers' sense of professionalism. Middle managers (subject leaders in particular), collude with their class teacher colleagues to ensure that the reality of a teachers day-to-day experience is camouflaged.

If we encourage individual teachers and teacher middle managers to see the value of compromise and the necessity to cope we should not be surprised if they camouflage their problems. We should not be surprised if they collude with one another to hide the real extent of how the system has universally failed to meet the needs of individual pupils. If we encourage teachers to talk in generalities and reduce success to the percentage of A*-C grades at GCSE or percentage of Year 9 student achieving Level 5+ then we should not be surprised teachers lose sight of the needs of individual pupils. Teachers should not be expected to deal with the tension between addressing the individual needs of the pupil at the same time as knowing that his/her performance will be judged publicly with reference to how well his/her class or school performs in league tables.

9.1.4 Collusion, the public nature of teaching and the need to sign reports with blue ink

Collusion by its very nature is the antithesis of the public nature of teaching. It is at odds with the perceived position of teachers which is always to be under scrutiny. The following, witnessed towards the end of my time at Daleside High School, may give some idea of the degree to which schools are obsessed by rhetoric rather than dealing with everyday reality.

> Context: *Teachers at Daleside High had just completed a series of Annual Student Reports in which they used a series of codes to represent comments chosen from a comment bank of statements. These codes are entered into a computer, the report generated and passed to the teacher for checking and signing. During a teaching staff briefing a deputy headteacher instructed teachers to:*
>
> '... please sign the reports in blue ink. We do not want it to look as if the reports are photocopied ...'

The implication is that teachers are so conscious of parents' opinions about computer generated reports and the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) that they must make it look as if reports are generated in a manner in which they are not. Teachers are so unsure of their relationship with parents they cannot convince them that schools are using new technology to create annual reports.

Senior managers are requesting that teachers collude with them in convincing parents that these reports are not photocopied, (why that matters I don't know) and perhaps even convincing parents that they are just ordinary reports that have been typed. A school should be careful about how it manages its relationship with parents. But surely it is a

step too far when schools allow paranoia about what parents might suspect teachers are doing with reports to cause senior managers to recommend to teachers the colour of the ink that they must use to sign reports.

This thesis has sought to show the degree to which teachers know the rhetoric inherent in schools and teaching. Teachers are aware of the reality of teaching and of the toll that this reality is taking on the balance between their home and school lives and on their general wellbeing. Teacher middle managers are very aware of the role they have in managing the interface between the needs of class teachers and the demands made by senior managers. More importantly teacher middle managers are regularly confronted with the result of the reality of the day-to-day teaching experience. They are confronted by class teachers who are:

- compromising in order to maintain some degree of balance in their lives

- barely coping with the workload they have

- camouflaging their inability to cope with the demands made of them.

Teacher middle managers find the role they are expected to fulfil and the functions they are expected to undertake are at times contradictory and a source of great tension.Teacher middle managers are daily finding themselves contending with the rhetoric promulgated by central government and publicly subscribed to by headteachers and senior managers. These middle managers are required to ensure that their class teacher colleagues adhere to this rhetoric. They are aware that this rhetoric guides OFSTED inspections and against which they and their departmental and pastoral

colleagues will be judged. Teacher middle managers contend daily with class teacher colleagues who are attempting to camouflage their inability to cope.

9.1.5 A way forward

Further research is perhaps required into the degree to which teacher 'camouflaging' and 'collusion' strategies permeate secondary schools. In this context it may be wise to recognise that there is a culture of 'blame' characterising many schools. This culture of 'blame' could be contrasted with a culture where teachers, teacher middle managers and senior managers can discuss the reality of the teacher's experience and not the rhetoric promulgated from the centre. Perhaps it might be useful to create, within schools, forums that exist solely to give teachers the opportunity to share what is preventing them from engaging as professionals.

The policy makers may need to discover (or rediscover) how important it is to trust the teachers in our schools. The policy makers should be encouraged to facilitate a mechanism that allows teachers to inform policy. Policy must be informed by what works in reality and not what is subscribed to by those who engage with the rhetoric.

Becoming preoccupied with headteachers' leadership role and encouraging the view that headteacher leadership will transform schools into institutions characterised by high standards, effectiveness and efficiency has served no one well. Headteachers have too much power and some use it to dismiss dissent. The managerialist perspective taken by some headteachers encourages individual teachers and teacher middle managers to

retreat into compromise, 'coping', camouflage and collusion. These teachers and teacher middle managers invariably collude in ensuring that no one becomes aware of the degree to which they are failing to, in reality, meet the rhetorical standards.

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Appendices

Appendix 1.

To: All teaching staff
From: Rod Robertson
Date:
Re: Research project – secondary school middle managers.

Over the past 3 years I have been working on a doctoral thesis on **secondary school middle managers**. MXXXXXXXX has kindly agreed that I may ask colleagues at XXXXXXX if they would like to contribute to this research project.

I hope to conduct interviews with a number of colleagues who have varied experiences of teaching in secondary schools. I would like to interview 'main scale' teachers, those receiving 'management allowances' and those on the 'leadership scale'. **It is envisaged that I will need to interview 12-14 individual teachers at XXXXXX. The interviews will be short and will allow me to find out a little about individual teaching careers including past and present management aspirations.** I have conducted interviews with colleagues in other schools as part of this project – no one has found the experience onerous or time consuming!

I am committed to the highest standards of ethical research practice. Anyone who wishes to contribute will be assured of total confidentiality. When the thesis is complete individual responses will be presented along with those of other colleagues – therefore any response will not be attributed to any individual or school. I will make a copy of the thesis available to those schools that have contributed to the research project.

I have taught in secondary schools since 1988. I have been a Design and Technology Key Stage Coordinator, Head of Department and I was until Summer 2000 a Head of Faculty. I have undertaken a number of research projects as part of previous M.Ed. and M.A. studies. I understand how very busy everyone is – but I really would welcome your assistance with this research project.

<div align="right">**Appendix 2.**</div>

Semi-structured interview question schedule

Question 1 is always asked.
Some or all of the remaining question/prompts are omitted depending on the response to question 1.

1. What have been the important milestones in your teaching career?

2. What gives you most sense of achievement in teaching?

a. What gives you most sense of achievement in managing? (For Middle and Senior Managers)
b. People you manage- what do you think gives them a sense of achievement
c. People who manage you- what gives them a sense of achievement

3. What gives you the most sense of frustration in you teaching?

a. People you manage-their frustrations
b. People who manage you-their frustrations

RE has been a teacher for 22 years. RE is presently a Head of Technology and IT Coordinator.

Int: Could you highlight some of the milestones in your teaching career?

Cont (Interruption from member of staff carrying display board through office where interview is taking place.)

RE: In terms of my teaching career?

Int: Yea ... promotions etc.

RE: Milestones in my career ... god that's a difficult one... well yea. I obtained my first promotion in 1979 to head of metalwork at the time... which was within 2 years of starting teaching which I was quite surprised about at the time.......because that wasn't

Cont the done thing. Some of it was because I was in the right place at the right time. The heads of department in the school were all approaching retirement and did. There was a series of internal promotions...which I benefited from. I think it helped the amount of

Ral extracurricular activities that I did at the time......I don't think it was much to with my

C. x particular skill at teaching engineering metalwork. I grew into the unofficial second in *(con)* department even though there were 3 of us paid on 2's at the time and a Scale 4 Head of Department. I kind of came unofficial second in department just because I was prepared to help out and you know like you do. Very quickly the rest of the staff, the head

Com included, started to delegate some Head of Department jobs to especially when M was absent. I got another break while I was there. M was appointed authority advisor for CDT. Then I was made acting head of faculty for two terms in his absence. On the back of that I got my first external promotion to a school in S where I went to be Head of Technology but didn't include IT. Did pretty well there, the school was reasonably

successful at the time it was a TVEI authority…that would be 84 or 85. As a result we were asked to trial APU tests for technology which were the precursors to the SATS in Technology as a result of that and doing a reasonably good job of that we were also asked to trial the initial SAT the practical test, that would be 94. Basically on the back of that and improving that departments results and improving the standing within the school and authority I moved on here. I came to Parkside on a D *(allowance)* …I suppose you could argue I gained another internal promotion here so there must be some respect for what I am doing.

Int: What gives most sense of achievement in all of that?

RE: Retirement … I think my time in S because the kids were definitely disadvantaged. A lot of them were from L H housing estate which is supposed one of the worst crime rates in the country. They were difficult children to deal with….and yet we were still gaining 50-55% A-C in the department…it wasn't far off that in the school. One of the neighbouring schools was down at 20% A-C … so I would say that that time there … the children could be difficult …but they were not cocky or arrogant…they were very biddable and malleable … appreciative of what you did for them. I suppose the happiest time was at LM and that was because of the extra curricular activities I could get involved in because of the … lack of pressure to produce and drive the department forward…we took the kids to America, Holland walking, canoeing, table tennis, kids playing for Wales and England at their age group

Int: What gives you a sense of frustration?

RE: The lack of control … J has done what she was asked to do, what she was appointed to. She's done that to the best of her ability. We are now being told, despite the fact she

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did that, we've got to ignore that, and go back to Key Stage 2 results which are notoriously unreliable .

Int: In terms of the people you manage what are the frustrations for them?

RE: I think resources are pretty big frustration or lack of them. I think they are equally frustrated with the attitude of the children sometimes. I think they find the management of this school frustrating. They probably find me pretty frustrating, as the instrument of that management system. I think I know the frustration ... I'm assuming that since I am reasonably forthright and blunt with them that they will reciprocate. But I think in some peoples cases, particularly F for example ... she's not a communicator at the best of times.

Int: What do you think are the sources of your managers' frustrations?

RE: Me ... I suppose they are caught between the devil and the deep blue sea aren't they. They've got a series of diktats from the DFEE or wherever to execute....and their attempting to do it the best of their ability. And then at the other side of things they are getting staff turning round and virtually working to rule because of the stress and pressure, amount of paperwork that's being or perceived is being dumped on them over and above what is acceptable.

I think most of the departments get a sense of achievement particularly the exam results. But having said that, clearly there are two areas of the department that are under-performing and are holding the overall performance statistics back quite considerably really. If this wasn't the case we would be the best performing faculty in the school.

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Int: Do you think this sense of achievement or sense of frustration has always been the same.

RE: I think it is increasing with the greater analysis and generation of statistics. I think if we are not awfully careful we going to end up being ruled by statistics rather than what we think is right in terms of what children should and shouldn't learn. It's not fun any longer. Now we are working to National Curriculum and they've got to know XYZ… it is so prescriptive it does seem very limiting. It seems somehow that the measurement, particularly the reporting back of the performance, to both child and parent can have negative effect particularly when they are below the magical C grade. It has done with some of my current Yr 11 groups. You can see that they have articulated the fact… what is the point in working hard to get their potential grade of F or E … that is what is happening with children in that bracket.

Int: Do you see things changing?

RE: We tend to map America … minus 10 years. This will continue for a while and as America have realized this is not the be all and end all. They I believe have started to back away from a National Curriculum and too much statistical analysis. I am sure we will follow them.

Int: Thanks very much indeed for all your help.