AN EXAMINATION OF THE ISSUES FACING HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS IN NEW ZEALAND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the issues facing Heads of Departments (HoDs) in New Zealand secondary schools. The role of an HoD has changed considerably over the last one to two decades. This is evident in the complexity of the role and the subsequent tensions that now exist, that stem from the plethora of educational initiatives that have taken place since the inception of Tomorrow’s Schools (Government of New Zealand, 1988).

A small scale qualitative study is used to examine the issues facing HoDs in New Zealand secondary schools. Five individual semi structured interviews and one focus group were conducted from five urban secondary schools in New Zealand were used to collect and triangulate the data collected.

The findings of this thesis indicate that the role of an HoD has issues resulting from and pertaining to the intensification of demands within the role that have occurred since the inception of Tomorrow’s Schools (Government of New Zealand, 1988).

The issues identified by the participants were the lack of leadership training that is provided for them. As a subject based instructional leader they identified being provided with ongoing subject based professional development, however, the participants also unanimously identified the lack of leadership training despite it being an important aspect of their multi natured role. The lack of time available to complete tasks in especially in the area of compliance meant that they had difficulty in completing these tasks to a level that met their own professional standards. The time constraints facing the participating HoD also led to tension within the role as tasks they are required to complete were by their very nature in competition with one another.

Conceptualising the findings of this research project into a cohesive framework highlights the difficulties facing HoDs as a manager and leader. With what the research identifies as increasingly important and difficult role that they face as a manager and a leader, it is important that more professional development be provided that is specifically targeted at HoDs and is readily accessible to them.
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CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

Introduction

 Shortly after my entry into the teaching profession after being in the engineering industry for a period of fifteen years I sought advice from my Principal at the time. My reason for seeing him was to enquire about how to move from being an assistant teacher into the area of middle management as an HoD. My Principal's advice was to be proactive and undertake a middle management course of study through a tertiary provider.

My Principal's rationale for giving me this advice was that the role of Heads of Departments (HoD) was changing rapidly and that to keep pace and cope with these changes and new demands, a course tailored to meet these circumstances should be undertaken by existing or prospective HoD.

This advice that was given me in 1994 has always been in the forefront of my mind. As a consequence I have spent a significant amount of time and money undertaking further study to meet the demands of being a secondary school middle manager. It is, while, with a certain amount of concern for HoDs in general that I feel that the undertaking of further studies does have long term gain, it is accompanied by short term pain.

I do feel that there is a very strong case for the sharing of acquired skills and knowledge by an HoD through avenues other than those provided through ongoing formalised learning. My rationale and reasons for wanting to do this are mainly twofold, firstly it is not feasible for all people who are HoDs to pursue further studies for a whole raft of reasons, secondly the knowledge and skills gained in the job by practising HoDs should be shared to assist them all as a collective. We spend far too much time, to use a term, “reinventing the wheel.” It makes far more sense, and is a far better use of human resources if we all share our knowledge and skills. My reason for conducting this research topic is although on a small scale, to provide a forum for the sharing of knowledge and skills.

Further to this the HoD tier of management in a school operation does not have the assistance that others have, for example Principals are collectively
represented by the Secondary Principals’ Association of New Zealand (SPANZ). This is an important body of collective professional knowledge that they use to share with one another and that also represents Principals. HoD’s do not have this facility provided to the same extent, in fact they operate very much in a insular fashion, both on a micro and macro level. By this I mean HoDs do not have the luxury of being able to discuss subject based issues with someone within the boundaries of their school environment as they are usually the only one in the school who is a leader in any one particular subject.

On a macro level few associations exist specifically to provide professional leadership training for HoDs in New Zealand. There has of late been a move to provide leadership training that is an add on to subject delivered professional development through the Professional Leadership Plan (MoE, 2009). However, at this time this is not as well developed to suit the role of an HoD as that of the subject training that is provided that is ongoing and dynamic to assist with the changing management and leadership nature of their role.

The aim of this research is to assist in the raising of awareness of how HoDs go about their duties and possibly bring to light other areas of educational research deficiencies, that if in the future are addressed will further contribute to the educational community.

Rationale
Since the introduction of Tomorrow’s Schools (Government of New Zealand, 1988) and the devolution of management to a (school) site based level the previous duties of the Ministry of Education (MoE) have been handed over to schools (Caldwell and Spinks 1998).

This handing over of management and leadership has had an impact on the roles and responsibilities of the senior and more specifically the middle management tiers in secondary schools. As a direct consequence the senior management team has been charged with the overall functioning of the school and the HoD as middle managers been given the responsibility and
accountability for managing teaching and learning. This involves both leading and managing staff as well as a subject or curriculum area (Fitzgerald, Gunter & Eaton, 2006). As a result HoDs have been primarily recognised as leaders. However, as Gunter (2001) postulated from a United Kingdom based standpoint, there is very little known about how this leadership is exercised and how HoDs go about their duties as leaders in learning and what they understand their role to be. As there are parallels between the aforementioned United Kingdom and the New Zealand educational contexts, it gives rise to question: What are the issues and challenges leaders in learning face in today’s educational climate?

Secondary teachers see the position of an HoD as being extremely busy and demanding one, with a plethora of various paper work oriented tasks to complete which create various tensions (Piggot- Irvine, 2002). There is, however, very little literature in New Zealand on how HoD as managers and leaders go about their role. This includes how tensions within the role are resolved including, time available to do the job in, the rapidity of educational change, the introduction of new educational initiatives to name but a few.

This situation provides the basis for this research project which examines how existing HoDs go about their duties as a middle manager and a leader. The establishment of what existing HoDs perceive their role to be and what are the issues they face and what strategies they use to overcome these issues?

This research also considers the issue of professional development for HoDs. In so far there is little opportunity for them to obtain professional training that is specific to educational leadership and management other than institutes of learning that provide post graduate studies and the occasional course provided by organisations such as professional development providers and advisors. These courses, while extremely valuable in raising the standard of educational leadership in secondary schools are not primarily a forum for the cross pollination of strategies between HoDs that they use to cope with the issues that beleaguer their role within a secondary school.
Examining the issues faced by HoDs in New Zealand secondary schools has the potential to assist the educational community in several ways. Firstly it may assist HoDs in the further understanding of their role. It may also assist in the shared understanding of strategies that contributing HoDs use to address issues they encounter in their role. This in turn may also bring to light further opportunity for research which will benefit HoDs in New Zealand secondary schools.

**Conceptualising the Research**

This research develops from my experiences as an HoD in several secondary schools for well over one and a half decades. During this time I have observed and experienced huge changes in the role of an HoD. These have been in the area of positional accountability, changes in curriculum which have subsequently resulted to changes in assessment and the introduction of appraisal to name but a few. This is supported by Fitzgerald, Gunter and Eaton (2006) who postulate that the impact of Tomorrow’s Schools (Government of New Zealand 1988) and the subsequent educational restructuring has resulted in the ongoing devolution of leadership to those who occupy the middle ground in secondary schools.

The literature acknowledges changes within the role of HoDs and highlights the move from mostly managerial based activities to an HoD being a leader (Fitzgerald, 2004). This is expressed and executed in a variety of ways according to the literature, including things like the HoD having a shared vision for the department, the setting of goals which align with academic and operational objectives set down by the Board of Trustees (BoT) and/ or school senior leaders. There is also the planning for and subsequent allocation of funds to support curriculum delivery.

In addition there is also recognition of the time needed for the execution of leadership and managerial tasks and this is recognised by the allocation of non teaching time (non contacts) to an HoD. This allocation of non teaching time is over and above that given to an assistant teacher to see out their teaching duties with. The amount of non contact time given to fulfil their leadership and managerial tasks is directly related to the amount of
Management Units (MU) allocated to an HoD. The more MUs an HoD has, the more non contact time they have to execute their management and leadership duties. This is supported by Thomas, Butt, Fielding, Foster, et al., (2004) who state that the ‘remodelling agenda’ has stimulated a division of roles and responsibilities in schools and the allocation of time for teachers to execute leadership and management based tasks.

Taking into consideration the fact that an HoD has such an important and pivotal role in the secondary schooling system there is very little in the way of professional development that is available that targets the nature of the role. Factoring in what Lingard, Hayes, Mills and Christie (2003) describe as leadership being very much directly related to improved outcomes for students, there is surprisingly very little assistance available for HoDs. Supporting this statement Fitzgerald (2000) goes on to recommend that there is a need for a closer analysis of the professional leadership needs of middle managers. This thesis will in some way go towards identifying if this situation has been improved over the decade since Fitzgerald made this statement and if so in what areas?

HoDs are appointed to the position of a middle manager/leader as either a promotion from a lower position on the organisational ladder or as a sideways movement from one HoD position to another. It could be theorised that an assistant teacher who is promoted to the position of an HoD does so as they are a good teacher and demonstrate the potential to be a good manager and leader. It could also be due to the fact that a first time HoD has undertaken some form of professional development that has relevance to their advancement into a middle leadership role.

What is missing in the New Zealand secondary system is where people who are promoted to an HoD position have some form of training or professional development that is required of them prior to, or after undertaking the role.

In England, however, there have been some moves to provide professional development for HoDs as middle managers/leaders measured against the professional standards. This, however, as Adey (2000) and Hobbs (2006)
report, has been sporadic at best. It is therefore noteworthy that there are no such provisions in New Zealand; however, HoDs can be measured against the professional standards for Management Unit holders.

The literature does make mention of middle leaders employing strategies such as delegation, distributing leadership out amongst departmental members and utilising a team approach in collective intellectual problem solving to overcome educational problems and issues (Bennett, Woods, Wise and Newton, 2007). Professional collegiality is also seen as a method or culture that underpins desirable change and is seen by Brown and Rutherford (1999) as a precondition of effective change. It can therefore be deduced that collegiality has the benefit of promoting collective learning within a departmental group (Metcalfe & Russell 1997).

Team leadership and development of a department is also seen as an important aspect of the role of an HoD as a manager and a leader. Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) theorise that team building promotes educational and operational effectiveness, which overtly or discretely should be the main aim of an HoD. Gunter (2005) expresses team building as the raising of a department to a higher level of understanding based performance through professional discourse.

The literature confirms my experiences as an HoD, however, there remain some gaps between the literature and the actuality of the role. These gaps give rise for the undertaking of a research project into the issues that middle leaders experience that arise out of the complex tensions that exist for HoD between leading and managing whilst being structurally in the middle of the organisational tier (Fitzgerald & Gunter, 2006).

**Aims and Objectives**

**Research Aims**

The research aims of this project are to examine the issues facing HoDs as subject leaders, managers and leaders.
Research Questions

1. How do HoDs as managers and leaders perceive their roles in New Zealand secondary schools considering factors such as:

2. What are the key issues facing HoDs as managers and leaders?

3. What strategies do HoDs as manager and leaders in learning employ in response to the identified issues?

Scope of this research

This research examines how HoDs as managers and leaders go about their role within the context of their individual school environments. Taking into account the research questions and the literature led to the decision to use a qualitative research methodology. This decision is examined and explained in chapter three of the thesis.

Qualitative research is contextual in its nature, with specific contexts needing to be understood so as to make sense and subsequently find meaning from the data findings. The scope of the research project is limited by the size, the chosen methodology and the context of the research project.

As this research project is contributing to a master’s level thesis it is only a relatively small scale study using a small number of research participants. Care was, however, taken to obtain enough data from eight participants. Five participants were interviewed individually in a semi structured fashion and the remaining three were interviewed in a focus group situation. All the participants came from five different multicultural state secondary schools in a major New Zealand city. The schools and the participants were chosen randomly with no more than two participants being chosen from each school. It was the intention of the researcher to have five participants in the focus group, however, two late withdrawals meant that the focus group ended up with three participants. The participants were all HoDs in co educational schools of vastly varying student numbers and a wide spread of decile ratings from one to ten. The findings from the research are presented in chapter four.
**Thesis organisation**

This thesis is organised into six chapters. Chapter one is an introduction to the thesis. Chapter two reviews the literature from international and national sources. The literature examined pertains to middle leadership in secondary schools, the role of heads of departments, locating an HoD in the organisational structure, theories of collegiality and team development. The issues relating to HoDs as managers and leaders are also examined including professional strategies for effective leadership and management to deal with these issues. Chapter three describes the research process. It includes a review of the history of educational research and provides an explanation and rationale for the selection of a qualitative research methodology. An explanation is provided of the research tools used for the collection of data and how the data is then in turn analysed. Ethical research principles are also examined to ensure participant protection. Chapter Four provides the findings of the research with the data being coded into identified categories. The data collected is outlined in the chapter in an order that is congruent with the questions asked during each interview and the focus group. This is to highlight themes, illustrate the views of the participants through their quotations to show opinions that coincide, support, agree or possibly disagree with the other participants with regards to the issues faced by HoD as managers and leaders. Chapter Five analyses the findings of the research in the previous chapter against the literature in chapter two. Comparisons are made in this chapter between the findings from the research data versus the literature. This enabled the establishment of areas of agreement or alignment between the two and areas where there were contradictions and/or gaps, or new themes that were identified in the research that were not present in the literature. Chapter Six draws conclusions based on the aims of the research. The implications of the findings are discussed and recommendations for further research are made. Possible strategies that assist in the improvements of existing practices are also made.
CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature pertaining to issues facing Heads of Departments as managers and leaders in New Zealand secondary schools. The issues are examined within the context of the definition of a subject leader, accompanied by the various aspects that are encompassed within the role of a manager and a leader. The complex, dynamic and ever evolving nature of an HoD’s role is also examined. Finally an examination of where they sit structurally in the school organisational hierarchy is conducted to ascertain if there are any issues highlighted in the literature.

This examination of the literature highlights the complexity of the role of an HoD as a manager and a leader. With everincreasing demands of compliance including the ongoing introduction of new initiatives by the various major educational stakeholder groups, namely the Ministry of Education (MoE) and New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) are adding to the current levels of rapidness of change. The examination of the current issues faced by HoDs as managers and leaders would therefore have the potential to be useful to both the educational and research fields at this juncture.

Defining the role of a subject leader: a view from the literature

Leadership or leading as viewed by Lingard, et al., (2003) is not solely and necessarily linked to position. They espouse that within organisations leadership can be exercised at most levels and in most activities. They go on to say that management in contrast to leadership, relates to structures, process and how organisations meet their goals, and arguably, is more likely to be tied to a formal position. This then highlights some of the complexities inherent in the multi faceted role of a manager and a leader. On the one hand, the leader of learning is a pedagogical practitioner, a leader in pedagogical practices, processes, a leader of people and on the otherhand an administrator and manager. A key issue for an HoD is the tension between being an administrator/manager and a leader. This is articulated by Siskin (1991) as being hermaphroditic in nature; on the one hand they are a leader in teaching and learning and of their colleagues and on the other, they are an
administrator and a manager. In addition HoDs are squeezed between these two roles and face challenges involved in balancing the duality of the role of a manager and a leader (Wright, 2002).

The subject leadership aspect of an HoD is an instructional one, the main purpose being to improve teaching and learning practices. The pursuit of improvement in pedagogical practices within the area of teaching and learning by an HoD is ultimately focused on improving academic outcomes for students. The ongoing improvement of academic outcomes by students implies dynamism within the role of an HoD as a manager and a leader of people and learning. This is where the interpretation of change by the leader in learning, delegated down by the senior leadership is operationalised and actioned by the leader in learning. Glover, Gleeson, Gough and Johnson (1998) express this as being the need for more learning to occur to meet the changing face of existing roles. One example of this is the introduction of The National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) where subject leaders in learning were delegated the task of introducing and the operationalising of NCEA at the ‘chalk face’. This initiative brought with it the short term strain involved in the increase in workload during the introductory phase, and the long term implications associated with the ongoing maintenance and improvement of pedagogical practices to ensure improvement in student academic outcomes.

The managerial aspect of an HoD role is the more traditionally recognisable part of their practices. This is within the realm of the administration of departmental activities, including planning, goal setting, assessment, and in turn reporting (Fitzgerald, 2000). This part of an HoD role has arguably become the most burdensome time wise, with Piggot- Irvine (2002) describing as the amount of paperwork increasing and intensifying yearly. This is closely tied into ever increasing levels of accountability to both internal and external stakeholder groups as a policy conduit, administrator and manager (Sisken & Warren Little, 1995). Accountability exists in several forms encompassing a raft of tasks relating to both management matters and that of leading learning within the role an HoD. Broadly speaking accountability can be expressed as
the execution of policy that is formulated at levels beyond that of an HoD (Siskin & Warren Little, 1995). However as HoDs, they are the management tier that acts as a conduit, and are consequently expected to action its implementation at a teaching and learning level (Gunter, 2001).

The position of an HoD at an operational and hierarchical level is riddled with tension and beset with issues. On the one hand an HoD is a manager and a leader, which is an aspect of their role that places them at a level above that of a teacher. On the other their work at a teaching level places them structurally on the same level as their colleagues. Key tensions arise as a consequence of HoDs having to negotiate this structural anomaly and move between the demands of each role. Cardno (1995) describes one aspect of an HoDs role, as a result of Tomorrow’s Schools, as contributing to school wide decision making and monitoring departmental procedures and also teaching. Fleming (2000) asserts that this situation has as a consequence, created feelings of role ambiguity and conflict for middle managers as they are unsure of what their role actually is. This situation can be further explained as the duality of their role placing them in a position of having to move across organisational structural boundaries creating issues of confusion around where a HoD belongs in a school organisation and where the focus of their role should be?

HoDs currently find themselves in a mainly dual faceted role of leading/managing a department and leading learning. Both aspects of this dual natured role are the responsibility of the middle manager with what Fitzgerald (2004) describes as the people who occupy the middle ground in the school hierarchy. Fitzgerald (2004) goes on to say that this leadership role is complex, messy and highly ambiguous. This highlights the difficulties that make up the dual role of a leader in learning, especially the issues around the competing nature of duties within the position. This competing occurs between the elements of administration/management and leading within the time available to complete them. There is also the competing nature of priorities at any given time, where the leader in learning is always juggling the various aspects of their role in a high velocity task driven environment.
Within the competing nature of the duties of a middle manager as a leader in learning also lies the complex issue of two directional accountability. As Bennett, Crawford and Cartwright (2003) explain it, HoDs are accountable upwards to the senior leadership team, and downwards to departmental members. Upward accountability can be classified as functional, where instructions that are issued by the senior leadership team are operationalised by the middle manager. Downwards accountability can be classified as leadership and managerial where the leader in learning is strategic in their role and consequently leads and manages their departmental members (Fitzgerald, Gunter & Eaton, 2006).

Amongst the many and varied roles that make up the multifaceted nature of being an HoD is the aspect of managing policy that is formulated at higher levels, but is actioned at the middle management level (Blandford, 1997). Siskin and Warren Little (1995) describe a function of middle leaders as being a policy conduit between the senior leaders and that of the classroom teachers. This situation highlights a key issue of tension for middle managers as they are neither one nor the other. They are, as this research will highlight compressed between the two aforementioned functional tiers in a school organisation and are there to ensure that the aims, goals and targets formulated by the senior leadership team are successfully operationalised.

Another aspect of the role of a middle manager as an HoD is what Cranston, Ehrich and Rosenfeld (2008) describes as having the skills, abilities and attributes that are crucial in carrying out the role of a middle manager. It can be argued that in order for a middle manager to have the skills and abilities to cope with the dynamic role of a middle manager they should have the attributes and abilities to unify and rationalise practices through systematic and planned co-operation and co-ordination (Feist, 2008). These aspects underpin this research project which examines HoDs perceptions of their role as managers and leaders in the current educational climate.
Locating the purpose of a subject leader in the school organisation: - leader of learning or manager?

In an attempt to rationalise the purpose and complex role of an HoD as a leader of learning alongside their organisational position as a middle manager, it is necessary to examine where they sit in the organisational framework and consequently their role within that position.

The ultimate purpose of leading learning by an HoD is to promote and optimise student academic outcomes. Lingard et al. (2003) describe this as the maximisation of student’s academic and social outcomes through the improvement of classroom practices. It can be theorised that the leader of learning should be actively engaged in strategies to improve classroom pedagogy (Lingard, et al., 2003). However, the methods that leaders of learning use to achieve this can be varied due to a raft of issues or reasons. They include the use of improved technologies, improving physical resources and increasing the variety of pedagogical practices by teachers with a view to maximising academic outcomes. The encouragement of team members in pursuing ongoing professional development on a subject level and beyond into the realm of leadership and management can lead to an improved level of personal and organisational effectiveness (Bottery, 2004). Selection of strategies to optimise student academic outcomes by leaders in learning are, by hierarchical position, the responsibility of the leaders in learning, however, how they determine these, will vary due to the issues and challenges that influence their particular circumstances (Bennett et al., 2007).

HoDs as leaders in learning on a structural and role level find themselves in an organisational tier that is in between the teachers and the senior leadership team. This position of tension is postulated by Fitzgerald, Gunter & Eaton (2006) as being an ambiguous one, which also brings about its own particular set of issues for a leader of learning. This is evident where the position of HoD as seen by the senior leadership team is one of managerial control rather than the improvement of student learning (Gunter et al., 2003). This could be deemed as a cause of role tension due to what Cranston, Ehrich & Rosenfeld (2008) describe as complexity and being subjectively
interpreted for leaders in learning within their role as leaders in the process of improving teaching and learning.

The role of HoDs as middle managers and the positional status they hold within the school organisation are intertwined; they inherently encompass an organisational position with an expected set of behaviours that relate to this position (Robertson, 2005). This has now become a multi faceted and complex array of professional demands involving skills, knowledge and behaviours. This is supported and articulated by Fitzgerald (2000), who describes the leader's role as being responsible for: team leading, planning, coordinating, appraising, evaluating, listening, delegating and coaching. Smith (2005) postulates that the role is dual in nature encompassing; teaching and managing/ administration.

**Team Leadership and Development**

The notions of leadership that an HoD exerts in the role as a manager and a leader is contextual and personal. Subject leaders are professionals and on the whole see themselves as subject administrators looking after human and subject resources rather than being a team leader (Glover et al., 1998; Glover et al., 1999; Glover & Miller 1999; Metcalfe & Russell, 1997).

The idea that an HoD is the leader of a subject area exists in a state of tension with the ideals of professional collegiality. This arises through the idea that the subject leader is the lead professional in the team and as a result is the sole role model for pedagogic practices within the department. Bennett (1995), however, does support the notion that the HoD as a leader in learning as well as a manager, cannot and does not always have to be the best teacher in a department, but they do, however, need to model good practice. This would indicate that all members of a team would have something to contribute to team development, whether they are a more accomplished practitioner than the HoD or not.

The leadership of a team and the consequential development of a subject team is an aspect of the role of an HoD. It is, however, not solely their domain; through the collegial development of human relationships team
leadership, building and development can be distributed across an entire
department (Sammons et al., 1997). Metcalfe and Russell (1997) assert that
colleaguality in the area of team leadership and development promotes
collective learning which Harvey (1997) postulates as arising from team
membership trust and a common purpose represented in unified action.

The tapping into departmental members experience and expertise with a view
to promoting team building also has the effect of reducing the perceived
hierarchical nature of organisational structure within the team function.
Collegiality and the shared responsibility of team development assists in the
flattening out of organisational structures with all team members having the
ability to have equal input into team development. This level of collegiality
leading to collaborative learning promotes a group level of responsibility to
team building which Bennett et al (2007) postulates as having the effect of
improving practice.

The intellectual involvement of team members in team development as a form
of stimulation will also as Leithwood and Janzi (1999) theorise, increase
organisational effectiveness. The use of team development as a focus on
solving subject/ departmental based issues will optimise departmental
collective capacity and promote a shared understanding of issues amongst
departmental team members.

The further development of a departmental team at a higher level can be the
engagement of a group discussion or discourse around the ontological and
epistemological beliefs of the team members. This will promote as Gunter
(2005) postulates, a common conceptualisation and awareness of various
members beliefs systems to improve practice through the humanistic
gathering of experiences. Bennett (1995) theorises that as subject leaders
HoDs lead and manage their departments in a fashion that is congruent with
their subject epistemology.

This leading of a team in a style that is congruent with the subject
epistemology could promote a collegial feel to a team with the members being
on the same intellectual wave length. However, this may have the effect of
limiting team functionality and performance if the team leader is subject style, thinking anchored. This may have the consequential effect of narrowing the HoDs approach to team development. A team leader’s awareness of this would be necessary so in order to take appropriate steps to reduce or eliminate this possible scenario. The optimisation of team development is underpinned by the team leader leading by example (Sammons et al., 1997). This would indicate that the HoD as a manager and a leader in learning could also have to be the leader in acquiring knowledge that is pertinent to leading learning and team building. This could have the effect of supporting collegiality within a team if it is seen that the leader in learning is active in acquiring knowledge and reducing the leader’s limitations by seeking further knowledge. This could have the effect of promoting a culture of professional growth within an HoD’s department (Blasé & Blasé, 2000).

Harvey (1997) states that collegiality also can also underpin a collective shared purpose of action within a department. Harvey goes on to say that where collegiality is absent teams may find that they are just a group going about a minimal set of responsibilities. This scenario depicts the lack of a collegially formulated shared vision where the department head runs the risk of not optimising potential within the department member’s ranks and not lead the shared improvement of pedagogical practices and management systems within the department. Brown and Rutherford (1998, 1999) see collegiality as a condition for effective change and improvement in the functionality of a subject based department. This research project will examine the practices of HoDs to ascertain if they see collegiality as being a method of underpinning effective change and the subsequent opportunity for departmental improvement.

**Key issues facing subject leaders**

Role conflict for an HoD that derives from role ambiguity is an ever present issue and a challenge for them as managers and leaders. This arises out of their dual identities where they are neither wholly a member of the senior management team nor are they solely a teacher. Yet HoDs are expected to
make serious and influential decisions in both areas on an almost continual basis (Bennett, Crawford & Cartwright, 2003).

The issues and challenges involving the making of decisions with regards to and involving contesting duties that an HoD as a manager and a leader must face and make, leads to the role being an hermaphroditic one (Siskin, 1991). This issue arises in the area of the leader in learning being expected to be a pedagogical leader and a coach to teachers, whilst also being a manager who is also in turn managed. This dichotomy of circumstances is stated as role conflict by Blanford (1997) who goes on to further state that this hybrid role is a daily practice for middle managers.

The competition between the various tasks that a leader in learning encounters in this time of ever increasing accountability versus the inadequate amount of time available to complete them in is an issue. This issue is termed by Piggot- Irvine (2002) as role intensification. This intensification has occurred where increased workload has taken place in both the pedagogical and managerial aspects of a middle manager's duties creating tension related complexities between them. In one instance this has occurred in the rapidity of reforms, including the implementation of Performance Management Systems (PMS) in 1997 Ministry of Education, 1999) and The National Certificate Educational Achievement (NCEA) in 2001 (Ministry of Education, 1998), to name but a few. Ingvarson, Kleinhenz, Beavis, Barwick et al., (2005) postulate that these initiatives have affected middle managers the most. This would concur with Milne (1995), who theorises that increased workload can also be attributed to multiple new, and steep learning curves being encountered like the inception of the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) and the subsequent assessment alignment process.

**Workload and compliance issues**

The multifaceted role of an HoD as a leader in learning brings with it issues of workload. The delegation of duties from the senior management tier down to the HoD level has resulted in overloading placing middle managers under heavy pressure (Piggot- Irvine, 2002). There may also be issues relating for
leaders in learning having to delegate duties so they can cope with the increasing levels of workload. This could occur where HoDs delegate certain tasks down to their department members that are deemed to be an aspect of their role as a leader in learning for which they receive a management allowance. Gunter(2005), however, postulates the process of professional development through delegation as being an aspiring leader in learning being taught by an effective leader in learning.

In addition to the increase in workload as identified by Piggot- Irvine (2002), has come, work intensification. This is where an HoD faces delegation from the senior leadership level in the form of compliance related duties, including but not limited to: appraisal, budgeting, curriculum and assessment whilst still fulfilling the role of leader in learning (Fitzgerald, 2000). This work intensification has become much more apparent for leaders in learning since the introduction of Performance Management Systems (PMS) in the late 1990’s and the inception of NCEA in early 2000 (Ingvarson, et al., 2005). This situation has been further exacerbated by the introduction of the new, New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) which has impacted on leaders in learning as they are the primary organisational tier change agent that is responsible for its implementation and ongoing operation at the classroom level.

This ongoing work intensification has also not been offset by a time allowance being given to middle managers that equates to the increase in workload with the literature going as far as to say that HoDs as managers and leaders feel dumped upon (Brown & Rutherford, 1998). This has also been exacerbated by the fact that no duties are ever taken away from an HoD to offset this condition of work intensification. This all adds to a feeling of frustration due to the excessive and ever increasing demands placed on HoDs as managers and leaders (Ingvarson, et al., 2005). This research project will examine the aforementioned role intensification issue facing HoDs and will attempt to establish and/ or ascertain if this is more prevalent in certain aspects of their role versus others.
**Issues for HoDs involving collegiality**

Collegiality is a notion involving positive relationships between team members where mutual respect and collegial professional interaction could possibly contribute to a flattening out effect of the organisational bureaucratic hierarchy. Whilst this may bring about improvement in team functionality, it is a possible source of various tensions for an HoD. This is where HoDs are in the unusual position of being both teacher, manager and leader of teachers. HoDs work within the team, for the team and lead the team. The rationalising of this multifaceted positional situation has the potential to be problematic in various ways. On one hand the leader in learning has to ensure that policy delegated to be operationalised occurs, which can lead to situations of tension. On the other hand they are also there to function as a teacher and lead learning in the classroom. This has the effect of them constantly switching positional roles. This is an occurrence which promotes the ongoing development of organisational dilemmas. HoDs are not in a static positional role consequently there is a need for versatility in the way they conduct themselves. This can occur where an HoD may at times assume the role of a team player when teaching or contributing at a teaching level. However, at other times their role as a team player may require leading from the front whilst at other times leading from within.

**Possible strategies for HoDs addressing issues involved in managing and leading**

Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) postulate that intellectual stimulation is a feature of increasing organisational effectiveness. This could be where HoDs as managers and leaders harnesses the capabilities of department members by using systems of inclusiveness in the decision making processes. This in turn optimises collective capacity and promotes intellectual stimulation amongst departmental members. This harnessing of departmental intellectual capacity can also be brought to bear on the addressing of issues and the solving of problems or challenges.

The use of the appraisal system by HoDs is one method of leading, this is where the leader of learning in their role as an appraiser, can coach or assist
the appraisee in improving or lifting their performance (Middlewood 1997). Gunter (2005) describes this as socially responsible leadership which is to secure improved performance and subsequently improve student outcomes. With the intention of the appraisal system being the improvement of teacher performance through appraiser guidance, observation, appraisee based critical self reflection and professional development (Gunter, 2005). Middlewood (1997) postulates that through teacher performance improvement, organisational performance will also improve. This then highlights the importance of the role of an HoD as a leader in using the appraisal system as a powerful tool to assist in the realisation of organisational/departmental goals that underpin improvement.

Middlewood (1997) sees organisational improvement occurring through “hard practical action” (p. 178) is where the cohesive use of appraisal policy, organisational goal setting on a macro and micro level which in turn stimulates performance improving action.

A further strategy to promote addressing possible issues and challenges pertaining to leading learning is to engage in group discourse around the issue of the ontological and epistemological belief systems of the group members. This is to promote a common team based conceptualisation and awareness amongst participants as postulated by Gunter (2005) as the humanistic gathering and using of experiences to improve practice.

A holistic attempt to improve student successes through the leading of pedagogical development could also encapsulate meeting the needs of diversity. Diversity can encapsulate and is not mutually exclusive to culture, ethnicity and religious beliefs. Darling-Hammond (1997) articulates this as HoDs as leaders needing to have an awareness of social justice. The promotion of social justice will be an issue that offers challenges to an HoD in today’s educational environment. This issue arises out of the fact that in the current learning environment learners will be much more diverse in schools. Meeting the needs of this diversity will involve the use of suitable strategies by HoDs to lead learning. Bartlett Merton (2000) sees this as where an organisation promotes individual behaviours and actions that create an
environment that leverages diversity that include differences in culture, work style, thinking, age, race, gender and sexual orientation. He goes on to say that the utilisation of differing opinions are needed to formulate new solutions, create new ideas and add value.

**Conclusion**

It can be theorised that an HoD in order to be a manager and a leader needs to be aware and make use of a wide range of strategies and practices. All of these have one common purpose, which is to promote improved departmental performance which in turn will improve student outcomes. There are, however, issues and challenges in management and leadership that HoDs as middle managers need to address in the execution of their role.

The literature pertaining to HoDs highlights a range of difficulties relating to their roles as managers and subject leaders. These include the complexities around conceptualising the role and the tensions between subject and management demands. HoDs also face a range of issues relating to workload and compliance, role conflicts and collegiality.

The literature does state that HoDs use a range of strategies to survive including the use of a shared/team based intellectual approach to the solving of problems and the improvement of departmental practices. The appraisal system is also identified in the literature as a method available to HoDs to promote the raising or lifting of teacher performance which raises departmental performance and ultimately leads to the improvement of student outcomes.

The research findings in chapter four and five will examine the methods or strategies identified in the literature that the theorists postulate that assist in the addressing of issues will also be examined against the actual practices that HoDs use to deal with their specific issues. This will highlight possible congruencies, contradictions, gaps and or new innovative strategies used by HoDs compared to those that are proposed in the literature.
CHAPTER THREE- METHODOLOGY

Research Project Methodological Approach

This chapter outlines the methodological approach to the research project. It outlines the research methodology, presents a qualitative framework for the study, discusses the research methods and the research process including data analysis. It also considers issues relating to reliability, validity and ethics.

Research Paradigms

To find the methodology that best served this educational problem, an examination of existing paradigms was warranted. The process of educational research must be congruent with an appropriate research paradigm. The word paradigm is derived from the Greek verb for “exhibiting side by side” (Bryman, 2004). The term paradigm infers a system or thought process in educational research. A comparison of paradigms highlights the differences between the main methodologies in the following ways. Positivism based research methodologies are scientifically oriented, using precise, quantifiable data. Anti-positivist research methodologies are a non-precise methodology in so far they involve any data being collected having to be interpreted by the researcher (Bryman, 2004). Positivism’s concern for control and, thereby it’s appeal to the passivity of behaviourism and for instrumental reason is a serious danger to the more open-ended, creative, humanitarian aspects of social behaviour (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007). Bryman (2004) articulates the definition of a qualitative methodology as one where a research strategy that usually emphasises words rather than numerical quantification in its collection and analysis of data.

Qualitative Research Methodology

As the aim of this research project was to examine HoDs and how they go about their role and the challenges they face. The use of a qualitative methodology in this instance was congruent with the aims and objectives of the research project and is supported by Bryman (2004), who postulates that many qualitative researchers express a commitment to viewing events and the social world through the eyes of people that they study. This then would
have the benefit of bringing to light how existing practitioners go about executing these duties within the existing context of an HoD.

It could, however, be argued that each HoD’s practices would be situational and contextual to themselves. Bryman (2004) supports this, however, believes this to be an important opportunity for genuinely revealing the perspectives of people that the researcher studies. In order to gather rich, in depth data, a qualitative method was appropriate in order to closely examine their individual situations (Coleman & Biggs, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Research that takes on this approach is qualitative in its methodology (Bryman, 2004). This is where the understanding of the role of a leader in learning would be determined by the participant’s interpretation of their role. This is also supported by Beck (1979) who theorises that this is where social scientists understand, explain and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants. Beck (1979) goes on to explain that the participants define the social reality. This is where leaders in learning would have their own ideas and practices that support the way they execute their duties in this area.

With the focus of this research project being an examination of the role, practices and issues faced by HoDs as managers and leaders and the subsequent interpretation of these experiences, it is therefore by its nature an interpretive one. Interpretivists are researchers who try to make sense of the world. Their sense making activities occur within the framework of their reality, or life world which is a result of the experiences they have collected (Weber, 2004). The research findings consequently will be an outcome of the researcher’s lived experiences. The data collected and the subsequent findings can be compared by colleagues with the claims made by the researcher being deemed as plausible or reasonable and subsequently defensible (Weber, 2004).

The tensions that exist between breadth and depth of data collected would be best served by gathering information from a relatively small group of people which, however, has significant depth. The data collected from this research
project could assist in the further understanding of the role of HoDs as leaders in learning, which could lead to the improved formulation of informed decisions that have come out of the research (Bush & Bell 2002). Glaser & Strauss (1967) state that when managers are in the process of determining methods to deal with problems as leaders in learning, the formulation of “conceptual frameworks” could occur when seeking solutions (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, cited in Bush and Bell, 2002, pp. 5-6).

**Research methods**

There is no single blueprint for planning research and it has been written that, research design is governed by the notion of ‘fitness for purpose’ (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). This has given rise to careful consideration and the selection of a qualitative methodology, and the subsequent selection and formulation of research tools for the gathering and analysing of the data.

Within a qualitative methodology the objective of the project is to acquire great depth from only a small group of participants or in other words from a narrow field. Thus the use of a small scale qualitative research methodology has to consider the tensions between breadth and depth in the collection of data.

As a result the researcher decided to draw upon one group of five HoDs from different schools to be interviewed in a semi structured individual fashion and five HoDs from the same schools as a focus group. This allowed for triangulation or corroboration as two different methods of gathering data were used, which Cohen et al., (2007) describe as the gathering of the same information from multiple sources. This is congruent with what Deacon, Bryman & Fenton (1998) describes as the cross checking of findings from qualitative research methods which results in mutual reinforcement of findings from data collected.

This allowed for the information to be examined and interpreted for corroborating or contrasting phenomena (Mason, 1994). Beck (1979) explains this as the role of the researcher is to act as a social scientist to understand, explain and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants; the participants themselves define their social reality.
Triangulation of information also occurs through the researcher consulting and asking questions of their research project supervisor. This allowed for the questioning and checking of the interpretation and the appropriate application of acquired knowledge between the researcher as a student and the supervisor as their teacher.

As the research project was limited to the participating HoDs who in turn belonged to specific secondary schools, credibility and transferability could be construed as limited to and or applicable to the participant’s environments and their accumulative experiences. However, as HoDs they were participants and players in a wider environment that encompassed the nation where HoDs as managers and leaders in learning have to conform to the National Administration Guidelines (NAGS). As a result of this adherence to these national governance requirements, there were possible and plausible situations, trends and findings applicable beyond the participant’s individual localised experiences (Weber, 2004).

Research tools

As the purpose of the research project was to establish the issues that HoDs face as managers and leaders and what strategies they employ to deal with these issues the data collection methods had to be congruent with the aim.

To facilitate this aim the sample group of HoDs was divided into two groups. One group of five separate HoDs were used to gather data from the semi structured interviews. The other group of three participants were used as a focus group.

Participant Selection

The participant selection process when planned had to take into consideration several factors. These were, obtaining data from enough HoDs to allow for sufficient breadth and depth of data collection, whilst maintaining project manageability. There was also the issue of triangulation and/or corroboration, where the validation of data collected would be through asking the same research questions from multiple sources (Cohen et al., 2007). As well as five HoDs being interviewed individually in a semi structured fashion a
group of three HoDs were assembled as a focused group. The use of two differing data collection tools assisted in the delivery of a more robust and rigorous research methodology than just the use of a single method (Cohen et al., 2007). The variation of dynamic between one participant being asked the research questions versus a group of people brought diversity to the way questions were answered, as the answers given by one participant were either supported extrapolated on, or disputed by other participants (Bryman, 2004).

The process of selecting the HoDs to participate in the research project was done in the following way: A group of five secondary schools were selected by having the school’s names drawn out of hat that encompassed all of the secondary schools from Manukau in the south of Auckland and Albany in the north of Auckland. The participating two HoDs from each school were then randomly selected by two departments being drawn out of a hat and the corresponding HoDs being identified. The Principals and HoDs were then contacted requesting permission to conduct the research in their schools and in the case of the HoDs their subsequent participation.

The selected research participants were a ratio of six females to four males, however, two of the four males pulled out of the focus group interview at the last minute and consequently did not attend as planned. The selected participants were from a range of decile one to decile 10 rated schools. There was also a wide range of participant experience in their respective roles as an HoD. All however, had been appointed to the role of a leader of learner since the inception of Tomorrows Schools (Government of New Zealand 1988), or in other words, the self managing schools model.

_Semi Structured Interviews_

An interview has been defined as a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research relevant information, and focused by him/ her on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation (Cannell & Kahn 1968). The participants in the semi structured interviews prior to the commencement of the interview had the process explained to them. The use of prompts were
used to guide the process with each participant being encouraged to contribute relevant, meaningful information in a free and honest fashion, see appendix D.

The use of semi-structured interviews was to obtain current, relevant, meaningful and pertinent data whilst invoking a critical analysis by leaders in learning on how they go about this aspect of their role as middle managers in the secondary school system. As Robertson (2005) postulates, this allowed for the practitioners to explore their knowledge, skills experiences, attitudes, beliefs and values that underpinned their practice.

The use of semi-structured interviews allowed for the expression of various views on how a leader of learning could or did go about their duties that make up the role. As the educational problem was set in a scene that is contextual by nature, there were common themes and issues identified that were encapsulated within the role that HoD in various schools were subjected to. These various problems though were particular to them, with Gadamer (1975) extrapolating on this further by postulating that qualitative approaches involve the fusion of horizons between participants. The search for answers, occurred through the bringing together of existing HoD’s as participants, which fused together their experiences and horizons. This approach sought to promote a social understanding of how HoDs function as leaders in learning through talk and interaction (Bryman 2004). It also had the affect of highlighting commonalities in how HoDs went about the various aspects of their role as a manager and a leader. The process also brought to light areas of agreement, and disagreement between participants that benefited from close group scrutiny.

**Focus group**

A focus group is a collection of people who have experienced similar circumstances, share common interests and/or have the same profession. Focus groups are a form of group interview, though not in the sense of a backwards and forwards flow of information between interviewer and the group. Rather the reliance is on the interaction within the group who discuss a topic supplied by the researcher (Morgan, 1998).
The practicalities of putting together a focus group were more problematic than that of semi structured interviews. This was due to the fact that several busy people had to be brought together at the same time that was at a difficult time of the year. There was also the issue of getting hold of people to speak to them directly and the consequential difficulties that arose from not being able to.

The intention of the researcher was to have five participants at the focus group, however, there were two participants who did not attend on the day. Both gave notice at the eleventh hour of their inability to attend.

Prior to the focus group being held an informal chat over afternoon tea took place so people could relax have an informal chat and get to know one another.

At the start of the focus group a few simple rules were outlined so the data could be accurately transcribed. The participants introduced themselves and stated their position within their school. The participants were also reassured of their rights and the protection of their individual and schools identity. The focus group interview went very well with the participants engaging in a thorough, dynamic discussion around the points outlined in the research questions.

*Interview structured content*

The interviews were scheduled around the availability of the contributing participants and were approximately one hour in duration. The interviewees were asked three main questions that were categorised as: How do current HoD perceive their roles? What are the key issues they face? And, what strategies do they employ in response to these identified issues? Each category was discussed encompassing relevant elements that linked back to the literature including, team leadership, attributes of an HoD, workload they experience, compliance, appraisal and any other area they wished to comment on. Each interview was recorded and in turn transcribed. The participants were then given the opportunity to scrutinise the results for accuracy. Some participants took the opportunity to have some very minor
alterations made to their transcripts; however, for the most part the transcripts required no alterations and the participants were satisfied with the recorded results.

Data analysis
The actual process was undertaken with all of the transcripts being laid out in order and being attached to several desks in a room that was secured for the duration of the process.

A process was then undertaken of sifting and sorting the data, where the researcher moved up and down the transcripts and reviewed them several times in an iterative fashion to allow for the generation of coding categories and themes. This exercise of sifting and sorting allowed for a refining process to take place which in turn resulted in all relevant data being categorised (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

Validity of the research
The establishing of the validity of the data collected in qualitative research in the words of Maxwell (1992) suggests that ‘understanding’ is more suitable term than validity. This is where the account of the data by the researcher is honest and not distorted. This is supported by Lincoln and Guba (1985) who use the term of ‘trustworthiness’ to describe how good a qualitative study is. The use of HoDs in today’s self managing school’s model, to collect data from and establish the issues they face as HoDs is congruent with the theorist’s notions of trustworthiness of the data collected with the validity coming from an honest interpretation of the data within the context of the research project.

Triangulating data is what Deacon, Bryman and Fenton (1998) refers to as the use of more than one source to cross check findings in qualitative research. The use of two methods of data collection by the researcher has produced what Cohen et al., (2007) describe as a combined level of triangulation. This is occurred through the acquiring of data for analysis from individuals and a group as an interactive. This contributed to the triangulation of the data collected through corroboration and subsequently provided a greater level of
confidence in the data collected and the findings that arose out of the data collected.

The research methodology also encapsulated triangulation in the form of supervisory scrutiny and checks at all stages of the research project as it was being developed and produced. This assisted in the correct use of methods and processes used in the collection and analyses of the data used in the research project.

The research participants were also involved in the validation process as they were each provided a copy of their interview transcripts to check for accuracy. This allowed for the corroboration of the recorded interviews by the participants being involved in the checking of their own interview transcripts.

The codes that were developed to categorise and classify the collected data are outlined in the table below:

Table 3.1: Data analysis codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category A - How do HoDs perceive their role?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub Category 1): Educational knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Category 2): Leadership knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Category 3): Managerial knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category B - What are the issues facing HoDs?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub Category 1): Educational issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Category 2): Leadership issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Category 3): Educational issues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Category C - Strategies employed by HoDs in response to the identified issues. |
Ethical Issues

There is a wide body of literature on research processes that discusses the importance of considering the ethical issues in studies that involve human subjects (Merriam, 1998).

As a researcher I have an obligation to put safeguards into place that ensure the protection of the participants and prevent any harm coming to them. These safeguards were as follows and began with the acquisition of informed consent, the accurate conveyance of the research project topic and the assurance of participant’s anonymity (see appendix B). This is an important consideration as New Zealand is a relatively small country and the protection of participants from recognition or identification by their colleagues was important (Tolich, 2001).

The process to ensure that this occurred was to gain consent from the schools’ Principals requesting the participation of two of their subject HoD in the project. Bell (1991) advocates permission being sought through full and transparent disclosure of the aim of the research project and the benefits participation could bring. After this was obtained from five schools (one school turned me down as the Principal said they were involved in other research projects, a replacement was consequently acquired) I then went about approaching HoDs with the response rate agreeing to participate being very good even at a time of the year when the teacher workload was at a high. Those who did not respond were contacted to ascertain whether they wished to participate or not. Those who elected not to participate were replaced by another HoD in the same school.

The participants were also informed via a letter how their identity was to be protected with the use of codes instead of their names within the body of the thesis or any other documentation that is used in the reporting of information or data collected during the course of the research project.
All information recorded and the subsequent transcripts produced that were
derived from the interviews were safely secured by the researcher for a period
of five years. This measure was to ensure ethical protection of the research
project participant’s contributions.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the rational for the undertaking of a small scale
qualitative study. The use of semi structured interviews and focus groups as
data collection methods have been examined and discussed. The process of
data analysis has been explained and the subsequent method for the
development of a suitable set of codes. In chapter four the findings of the
research relating to the issues facing HoDs as departmental managers and
leaders are identified and the subsequent tensions explored.
Chapter Four - Data Findings

Introduction

The findings from the semi-structured interviews and the focus group are presented in this chapter. The data from the research participants is presented in a fashion that aligns itself with the structure of the interviews. Each interview was conducted with questions being organised into three distinct categories. These categories were identified as the educational knowledge, leadership knowledge and the managerial knowledge that an HoD needs or uses within their role as a manager and a leader. The participants were then asked to comment on the issues that HoDs face in relation to these knowledge/role based areas. Finally the participants were asked to discuss any strategies they used to deal with the identified issues within their role as an HoD.

Within each category participants were asked to discuss their thinking with elements of each category provided to guide the interviews. The researcher used the elements of each category as prompts for discussion. However, the researcher was also conscious not to be overly directive of the participant’s responses. Participants were sometimes asked to extrapolate on an answer, idea and/or concept they were explaining if the researcher sought clarification, or expansion on an item being discussed.

Structure of the findings

The structure of the chapter is in the same order as the interview questions with the participants firstly outlining their views on what they perceive the knowledge and skills of an HoD as a manager and a leader should have. Secondly they outlined the issues that they as HoDs encounter within the various areas of knowledge they identified as being necessary to be a leader in learning. Thirdly they outlined the strategies they use to deal with these issues, both on a professional and personal front.
Demographic data

The demographic data of the five schools that participated in the research project is outlined below including each school’s decile rating. The term decile refers to the socio economic demographic of the students that attend a school. Decile one schools are the 10% of all schools which have the highest proportion of students from low socio economic communities. Conversely decile 10 schools are the 10% of all schools who have the highest proportion of students from high socio economic communities (Ministry of Education, 2010).

School A was a decile three co educational state school with an organisational structure based on subject departments at the middle leadership level.

School B was a decile eight co educational state school with an organisational structure including a combination of faculties and departments at the middle leadership level.

School C was a decile one co educational state school with an organisational structure based on subject departments at the middle leadership level.

School D was a decile three co-educational state school with an organisational structure based on subject departments at the middle leadership level.

School E was a decile ten co educational state school with an organisational structure based on subject departments at the middle leadership level.

Each of the participants was an HoD except for one in school B who was an HoF. A Head of Faculty is a manager in charge of a group of subject areas which a school has placed into a collective. There was a large variation in the size of departments, as this had a direct correlation to the overall size of the school. All of the HoDs had been appointed to their respective positions after the inception of Tomorrow’s Schools (New Zealand Government 1988). The amount of experience did vary between the participating HoD, however, not to a great extent except in School B and D. The HoD in school B (LLS2) was in
their first year as a leader in learning and the HoD in school D (LLF4) was in their second school as an HoD.

Table 4.1: Participant codes
The codes allocated to the participants versus the schools they are an HoD in.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding System for Participants.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A: ALLS1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B: BLLS2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School C: CLLS3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School C: CLLF3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School D: DLLS4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School D: DOLLF4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School E: ELLS5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School E: ELLF5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The use of the letter F in the participant codes refers to the participants being in the focus group.

The use of the letter S in the participant codes refers to the participants who participated in the semi structured interviews.

Perceptions of the role of an HoD
The participants perceptions of what the role of an HoD entailed were broken down into three main categories and these were then further broken down into sub categories or elements. The three main categories were educational knowledge, managerial knowledge and leadership knowledge. The sub sets or elements were the various tasks or roles that were seen by the research participants as being integral components or elements of the three main aspects of the role.
Educational Knowledge

The participants identified the educational knowledge required by HoDs as being an important aspect of their role as a manager and a leader. The differences in thinking between some of the participants related to breadth and depth of subject knowledge needed by an HoD within their departmental area.

ALLS1 *I think as an HoD you really need to have a strong grasp of your subject knowledge and the other subject area knowledge in your department.*

And was supported by

CLLF3 *I think as a leader of a curriculum you really need to be knowledgeable.*

This was in contrast to

BLLS2 *I feel in my case, in terms of my subject area I need to have a very broad base of knowledge with not so much depth in some areas. I guess your department members help you out there. I do though think that the breadth of knowledge you have to have is crucial right across your subject area.*

This was supported by the view

DLLS2 *You now need a broader based knowledge, not only of your subject, of others in your area of responsibility.*

There were mainly two contrasting viewpoints from the participants with regards to the breadth and depth that an HoD should have as a leader in learning. Some saw the role of an HoD as having a broad and shallow level of knowledge in contrast to some who saw the role as needing depth with little breadth. An HoDs ability to cope as a manager and a leader in a department would suggest that depending on their level of knowledge reliance on their colleagues for knowledge and information would be dependant on how much subject knowledge they possess. It could also be construed that the amount
of departmental subject knowledge an HoD has would be dependant on the complexities of the department subject make up with some departments having a wider array of subject epistemologies versus others.

Assessment Knowledge

There was agreement between the participants on HoDs knowledge of assessment. This was that HoDs had to be knowledgeable of assessment pertaining to their departmental subject areas and that they also needed to understand the machinations of NZQA.

ALLS1 A strong knowledge of NCEA

Which was supported and expanded upon by comments suggesting that a systemic understanding of the organisation New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) is necessary.

DLLS4 Knowledge of assessment standards and how NZQA works.

And, delivered in or given a more macro focus

BLLS2 Contributing towards where the school is heading assessment wise.

Pedagogical Knowledge

Pedagogical knowledge was seen as an important educational knowledge based skill. (The participants who saw it as a leadership quality are quoted in the appropriate section).

DLLS4 You need a broad based knowledge of pedagogy, of course.

With improved student engagement in the classroom being seen as an important priority by HoDs in the aspect of their role as a leader in learning, they are attempting to incorporate pedagogical practices that improve student enjoyment in learning which will in turn improve student based outcomes.
We are also trying to get back to the fun things involving teaching and learning.

The development of pedagogical practices is seen as an important element of an HoD’s role, however, there was very little in the way of professional development given to participants to expand their pedagogical knowledge.

With the focus on effective pedagogy being an important initiative or aspect of the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) there has, for the most part, been only a small amount of professional development provided in this area. Two of the interviewed HoDs reported a major shift in their relevant curriculum area which would entail changes and possible new pedagogical practices to accompany the inception of two new curriculum strands. They both reported feeling high levels of concern regarding teaching these new strands confidently and also concerns ensuring sound pedagogical practices were in place.

Leadership knowledge

Leadership

Leadership was identified as an extremely important aspect of the role of an HoD as a leader in learning in varying ways; however, there were no situations where evidence of any disagreement or contradiction occurred.

Macro based departmental planning was seen as an important quality and skill that a leader in learning needs and was articulated as

ALLS1 I think HoDs need to have a strategic plan and a knowledge of strategic planning and also a goal, a long term goal for your department.

Supported by

BLLS2 Leadership stuff, I am trying to get that across to the team a bit more. Focus on and towards our shared vision.
Obviously the development of the department I think is one of the key roles.

HoD’s need to have had experience at high levels even in short bursts or even on the Board of Trustees (BoT) to really appreciate their role of where they lie in the school. To me you get a broader perspective of things if you have actually done that as opposed to HoDs who simply have a narrow focus and being an HoD is no longer narrow.

The above HoD implies an awareness of responsibility to a wider organisational level; beyond their department.

This was supported by

You are always working towards the big picture.

Communicate your vision cause that gets discussion going. It’s getting people on board with your ideas that are also part of the vision.

I sort of think of having your vision for the department and theoretically it would be hopefully the vision for the whole school and if you are call working together just trying to enrol the rest of your department in to thinking the vision is worthwhile.

The participants were all in agreement regarding the importance of an HoDs ability to promote a departmental shared vision and have a plan which leads everyone in the department in a direction that works towards the achievement of the shared vision.

Participants also articulated their thinking on leadership as based upon attributes that an HoD has and how those attributes are used to develop their staff within their department.
Coaching them as much as possible along the way. You have got to obviously know there are times when you check along the way. But yeah you need to then accept what they do and say well done to you.

You are taking a leadership role and your staff have got confidence that you know what you are doing and when you delegate it that there is some reason behind that particular opportunity for them to maybe develop their own skills or have a better understanding of what is going on.

The above participants saw their leadership role as including the development of their staff through the planned delegation and overseeing of tasks that promote the professional development of their staff. In addition the following saw the planned development of their staff through being a role model.

also went onto say lead by example.

This was further supported

Lead by example, I think that is really important.

The following participant explained their idea of leadership was to

And I think you need to inspire confidence, you need to know what you are doing and demonstrate that you be willing to stand and lead by example.

Leadership was expressed by participants as being a very important aspect of the role of an HoD. The attributes required of an HoD as a manager and a leader were those of setting an example, being able to walk the walk, sharing a vision and leadership. It also pertained to delegating out not only tasks but the purpose and understanding related to the benefits in doing so.

Team leadership development knowledge and skills

Team leadership development was an area identified by the participants in various ways, however, the common theme that emerged was that HoDs
need to have a shared vision with actions being put in place to see it happen. The provision of professional development also provided the opportunity for team development to occur.

ALLS1 Team development, it is really important for me to identify areas of weakness and to then make sure that there is some sort of system or support in place so that the area can be propped up, improved or extended.

The above participant also went on to further explain that in her view it was important to be seen as an example to her staff so she recently undertook professional development in the form of a master’s degree in her subject area. She rationalised her actions in the following way

ALLS1 Well that is one of the reasons I started doing my master’s degree because I felt that if I was telling other teachers what to do then I really needed as a leader in learning to be at the top of my professional game.

This was supported by another participant who was also undertaking further study in their capacity as an HoD and was doing a master’s degree. She recognised team development as being important and articulated her opinion as

CLLS3 Team development of the department is one of the key roles and to be able to do that, you need quite a sound knowledge of both the actual subject and what is going on.

The following participant who placed an emphasis on the sharing of skills and knowledge as being integral to the development of a team

DLLS4 You are part of a team now and there is a greater emphasis on that whole team, that whole buddy system, that whole sharing of knowledge, ideas, strategies and experience.

The following HoDs went a step further and saw it as their responsibility to provide professional development for their team members in two various
ways. Firstly is through team members identifying their own professional development requirements and secondly the HoD providing professional development through advice and guidance in the form of coaching.

*ELLS5* I think that is the biggest part, providing the professional development that a person might want.

*DLLF4* You coach them as much as you need to along the way.

Team leadership is definitely seen as a crucial part of an HoD role as a leader in learning. There were various ideas and strategies put forward by the participants that they employed in the pursuit of developing their departmental team members. However, the end goal was a common one and that was to improve professional performance. Leading teachers was a predominant theme that came across from the participants with some feeling that they needed to lead by example. One particular HoD distributed the leadership of identifying professional development needs to his departmental members, who then in turn came back to him with self identified needs driven requests. Another HoD saw it as their role to coach their departmental members which in turn required that they identify the necessary areas of required development for their staff. One HoD had a team approach to the development of her departmental members where she facilitated the sharing of skills, knowledge and strategies gained amongst departmental members by themselves. Several saw it as their responsibility to pursue self determining professional development which would assist in two ways. First, it would be the setting of an example to their team members and second it would be the knowledge that they had gained would assist in the development of the team. The significance of this issue will be further examined in chapter 5.

**Management knowledge**

Management was seen as an extremely important part of an HoD’s positional responsibilities. There were a plethora of elements brought up by the participants as being important parts of managerial knowledge. There was once again no disagreement between the participants on what constituted
management knowledge, however, various participants prioritised various skills differently according to their situations and beliefs.

Management of people.
The management of people was identified as an extremely difficult aspect of the role of an HoD. They describe the management of people in their departments as being problematic; involving listening, negotiating, discussing, liaising and supporting.

One HoD described how he/she had been internally promoted and had to change their way of interacting with the people with whom they previously had been on the same structural level with. This also highlights some of the complexities involved in management. Another HoD reported that her observations of other HoDs as managers had highly influenced her management style when she subsequently became an HoD.

\textit{ALLS1} All those sorts of dealings with people things, they are a lot harder than you would expect like mediation, negotiating and liaison.

\textit{BLLS2} The management of people is difficult, especially the differences in the management of adults compared to students.

Participants also indicated the importance of listening to staff in situations of disagreement and the need to take on board what is being discussed as a manager and not be offended or upset

\textit{BLLS2} Your staff might not agree with you, so I am open to listening to reason and I can be flexible and change.

\textit{ELLF5} Very good listener with very broad shoulders and a thick skin.

The complexities and challenges for HoDs in their capacity as managers of people entail certain qualities and skills in people management. These skills, as identified by the participants include flexibility, adaptability, their ability to listen, being open to reason and the ability to change when needed.
Budget management

Budget control and/or management is an important part of an HoD’s role. The importance of prioritising and allocating a department’s funds to meet educational objectives cannot be overstated.

There were a variety of responses to the question regarding budget management. Some participants see it as being important and essential skill. Some were quite matter of fact about it and saw it just as another managerial task. One participant explained that budgeting was a serious difficulty and consequently a challenge for them.

*BLLS2 With my role this year, I have found things like budgeting which I have struggled with as I don’t have a lot of expertise in. The big thing for me has been the budget challenge.*

And another who’s opinion was concise and prescriptive in it’s nature;

*ELLS5 I look at budgeting for instance; you need to be a budgeter.*

The various opinions by the participating HoDs on their ability and subsequent attitude towards being responsible for the department budget could be the result of a variety of factors. These factors could possibly be previous experience in budgeting and/or possible professional development undertaken that has assisted in the execution of that particular aspect of the role. It could also be where an HoD has an affinity for figures or understands the epistemology of budgeting due to professional training in that area.

When the aspect of an HoD’s position relating to budgeting was discussed, one participant relayed her previous experience as a Director of a Sports Academy in the United Kingdom, which helped her in her current position as an HoD.

*CLLS3 Governments fund schools to be specialist colleges so there are sports, maths, ICT languages and performing arts for*
example. You get about six hundred thousand dollars extra coming into the school which goes directly to the PE Department. I had a department of ten staff, 34 sports coaches that would come in at various times during the week. I oversaw primary liaison partnerships and partnerships with other secondary schools. It was a big job so the experience I had in England doing these sorts of things has really helped me.

Compared to a very matter of fact statement

ALLS1 Weekends gets all the big stuff done like, budgets.

With the following participant outlining their view and experiences as follows

DLLS4 Balancing your budget, people say it is easy, but it is not, you have constantly got to keep an eye on it.

The statement above makes mention of the fact that budgets require monitoring as an HoD responsibility and that it is not an easy task. There is also the situation where the size and complexity of a department would have an impact on the complexity of a budget and subsequently the amount of time on monitoring and managing.

**HoDs organisation and efficiency**

Organisation and efficiency was seen as a very large, demanding and important aspect of an HoD’s role. The knowledge, skills and attributes that an HoD needs to have were varied and the participants also felt that they needed to be seen as setting an example as a good manager. The discussion with the participants on the whole vacillated from organisational knowledge, skills and abilities to time management skills. This section pertains specifically to administration with leadership skill being commented upon later on in the thesis. For the most part HoD contributions supported one another’s thinking and most participants used descriptive rather than prescriptive phrases like the following, to describe skills, knowledge and/ or attributes.
CLLF3 Good time management and organisational skills.

This participant went on to further elaborate and expand on their thinking by adding the following

***CLLF3 HoD actually have to, you know, walk the walk.***

This was supported extremely succinctly by

***ALLS1 To ensure there are structures in place.***

***BLLS2 I realise that a faculty manager has to be organised and efficient. You will survive much better if you have good time management skills than if you don’t.***

This is supported by a statement that is very descriptive in its nature stating that an HoD has to be organisationally knowledgeable

***ELLS5 Firstly it is the knowledge they need to have.***

The following participant explains in more detail and draws comparisons from yester year, however, is congruent with the previous participants contributions

***DLLS4 You need it in terms of organisation. The knowledge that you need to have nowadays actually is quite extensive, it has changed a lot. Previously you might not have needed any management knowledge or experience but now you do. It has really significantly changed over the last fifteen years.***

The next HoD was the only participant who spoke about the need for crisis management abilities. Upon reflection, this is an unusual finding as one would assume that more participants would have alluded to this as a quintessential attribute or skill that an HoD would have in their role as a leader in learning.

***ELLS5 I’m a pretty good crisis manager.***

This highlights the fact that in the role of a manager/administrator there are situations that arise where you need to drop everything and deal with the
unexpected or un-planned for situations. This reflexive ability needed by the HoD, which was identified by the above participant, went on to add to their contribution by saying

_ELLS5 Sometimes, all of a sudden things come up, and you are managing it._

**Delegation knowledge and skills**

Further to the organisational skills needed by an HoD, management skills were highlighted as crucial by several HoD's. The ability to delegate was seen as having benefits for the members in a department as it aided and abetted in the improvement of organisational efficiency.

_DLLF4 I think it is important to delegate responsibility to people and to make sure they understand that it is their baby._

This was supported and added further to by

_ELLF5 I just want to add to and reinforce what you have said. You mentioned that it is their baby, and they need to know they have ownership. That ownership is really important._

Reinforced by

_ELLS5 I am a person who tries to delegate and in delegating step back but making sure that it is being done without taking on the role myself._

The following participant placed delegation into context by stating the fact that delegation had occurred within the department so as to achieve a specific departmental goal. The participant went on to explain that through delegation from the senior leadership team the department has been charged with a specific task. This is an example where the HoD had acted as a policy conduit in the implementation of school based policy being delegated down from the senior leadership team.

_DLLS4 The work has fallen on us through delegation._
And she went on to explain that through delegation, throughout the department, one particular departmental goal was achieved.

**DLLS4 We did so much work on it so we have actually trialled the new curriculum this year and have been very successful.**

Delegation was strongly considered as a management based skill, including the stepping back and giving ownership to the person(s) being delegated to tasks whilst maintaining a position that allowed for progress monitoring. It was also perceived as being a strategy to build skills within the department and encourage others to acquire skills necessary for when they in turn become an HoD. In chapter five delegation is examined for its usefulness in professionally developing staff, assisting in the meeting of departmental goals and distributing workload.

**Appraisal knowledge**

Compliance for an HoD was recognised as comprising first and foremost of the use of the appraisal process. This was for the purposes of improvement in individual practice and that as a manager and a leader they appraise others in addition to being appraised themselves. The result was also beneficial for the department as well as the individual.

Appraisal was for the most part recognised as a very beneficial activity with the following being commented upon, however, the following participant did recognise that other people may not feel about it the same way that they do. They said that they were open to the benefits of personal growth inherent in the appraisal system, however, were secure in themselves as being a very competent practitioner.

**ALLS1 I actually really like that for myself personally. I really like being appraised, I like someone coming into my classroom and going oh well maybe you can do this a little better and so I have this weird naïve fantasy that everyone thinks about it the same way. Like that everyone likes someone coming into their
classroom and looking at how they do stuff, but I realise it is not that way.

One HoD put it very simply and succinctly as a task that needed to be undertaken, however, that it was an exercise that warranted ongoing consideration and reflection, wording it so

**BLLS2** You are thinking about appraising.

Or to where appraisal is used as a tool to build individual skills, ability and offset or reduce departmental weaknesses.

**CLLF3** I mean I have a situation where someone who is really hard working, their heart is in the right place but they are just terrible at time management. We have decided as part of the appraisal process to set one period a week aside where we can buddy them up and work with someone else on the same thing together.

This is supported, however, stated in a more functional way.

**ALLS1** I see my responsibility to the people who work in my department is to make sure they are doing their jobs right and that they know how to do their jobs and that they are supported in moving on from there. But I can’t do anything more than do their appraisal and tell them what is not working and set up some professional development for them and that’s it.

**ELLS5** I think appraisal is an interesting one and how it is used and so on. We use it here a lot for looking at professional development needs.

It is clear from the participant’s input that appraisal is seen as a beneficial managerial tool to identify opportunities for improvement in practice in both themselves and in others. It is a process that requires thought and reflection for it to be beneficial; however, the persons being appraised have an obligation to undertake the advice and/or professional development that is a
subsequent outcome of the appraisal process and act upon it. In chapter five the appraisal process is examined for its usefulness in developing departmental member’s knowledge and skills. In conjunction with this, the issues and subsequent tensions for HoDs in managing the process are examined and discussed.

**The issues facing Heads of Departments**

This section pertains to the issues experienced by an HoD within their role as a leader in learning. The issues are presented in the same order as the previous section so links can be established between what HoDs saw as being the integral components of their role and then subsequently the issues that pertain to that aspect of the role. The issues are categorised into three main sections, these being educational issues, leadership issues and management issues. This section outlines what these issues are for the participants and how they were personally affected by them.

As these issues were identified by the five separate semi structured interview participants and the three focus group participants the issues are dependant on their specific contextual situations. The semi structured interviews respondents were reporting in isolation about the issues they faced consequently their answers were singular and introspective to a large extent. The focus group situation stimulated an environment where the respondents fed off each other creating a much more dynamic situation.

*Educational issues*

One of the educational issues identified by the participants was based around the rapidity and extent of educational changes that were taking place. With this rapidity, came work intensification and an increase in volume of work

*ALLS1 The educational environment is changing rapidly.*

The following participant concurred with the aforementioned statement, however, went on to say that the MoE and NZQA as two most important external stakeholder groups for schools were part of the problem for HoDs.
They felt that the steep level of changes that leaders in learning were being subjected to came mostly from these two agencies.

**DLLS4 Where does it actually stop? The Ministry of Education (MoE) and The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) are part of the problem.**

The following respondent made mention of the ongoing amount of material that one had to keep abreast with due to the rapidity of change

**ELLS5 It’s just that continual, everything coming at you.**

He went on to say that it was difficult to keep up with the requirements involved in all the changes

**ELLS5 Something I will admit I just don’t feel I am doing in my job, is keeping up.**

This is supported by the following participant who felt under a large amount of pressure from the volume of educational changes

**DLLS4 We are just going under, with the demands from the MoE.**

The common theme from the participants related to the changes taking place in the areas of curriculum and assessment are that the volume of change coupled with rapidity both add to what is quite clearly a situation of the participating HoDs feeling very overloaded and consequently overwhelmed. This issue will be further examined in chapter five.

The following participant made mention of their school’s response to an ERO directive to the introduction/inception of the new national curriculum

**CLLF3 With the new curriculum there has been an excuse to have more meetings. We had this at an HoD meeting actually, where we got one extra meeting put in on the weekly roll around for departments to meet because the Educational...**
Review Office (ERO) said we haven't had enough time, we need more time to think about the NZC.

The following participant added that they were using a similar strategy at this juncture

DLLF4 We have started; we are having a meeting every Tuesday morning.

Although the benefits of having meetings to discuss the new curriculum and formulate action plans to deal with the inception thereof is a logical and beneficial idea it has added significantly to the participating HoDs workload increasing the level of difficulties they face. No mention was made of any reduction in workload elsewhere would take place to offset the increased time consumed with another new weekly meeting.

The main educational issue for HoDs as leaders in learning was the rapidity of change that they were currently experiencing, this included curriculum and assessment changes. This resulted in overloading resulting from more information to absorb, more meetings to cope with and the subsequent seeing through of requirements that resulted from these meetings. Subsequently, this left some participants feeling they could not keep pace with the demands that are currently prevalent in their position as an HoD. In chapter five the educational issues for HoDs are examined and discussed within the context of their role as a subject leader.

Leadership issues facing HoD

The leadership issue facing HoDs was categorised into one main area and that was the issue of leadership knowledge based training or professional development that was specifically directed at HoDs.

The participants all saw this issue in a similar light; there was provision of ongoing training across the various subject areas, however, there was no professional development aimed specifically at an HoD that targeted their role as a leader. Most HoDs identified a gap in the secondary school system
where there is a lack of professional leadership training provided to assist in
the execution of their role.

It was stated by several HoDs that other leaders in the up-line leadership tiers
received professional development to assist them in their role as a leader.
There was, however, none available on a similar basis at the middle
leadership level. This was considered very unfortunate by the participants,
especially with the greater leadership focus within the role of an HoD in the
current educational organisational framework.

ALLS1 It would be nice if there was more professional
development specifically for HoD. That would be the only thing
I would say would be the better way to do things and a bit more
sharing of that. I know they do that at the next levels of the
hierarchy but the mid level gets neglected.

DLLS4 Well there are really no professional development
opportunities for HoD. There are a lot of curriculum ones, well
you know, which I have done to death. I have been on an
emerging Principal’s three day course that was fantastic.
There are not enough of those to do actually to start getting
that higher development; you are kind of cut off really.

ELLS5 Well you have three cluster meetings in your area a
year and that’s professional development, hello!

DLLF4 There is no induction for HoD’s in schools, but there is
for Principals. They can formally sign up and they get looked
after, as there is a Principalship programme, and yeah they get
a mentor and time to do it. You know, but HoDs have got
absolutely nothing and that’s the point.

ELLF5 To put it down in black and white, a lot of it is assumed
knowledge there is no hand book.
With the evolving nature of an HoD’s role over the last one to one and half decades it is disturbing and a concern is that up until very recently there has been no provision of leadership development targeted at HoDs in their role as a leader and a manager. Tomorrow’s Schools (Government of New Zealand, 1998). has resulted in the devolution of some leadership requirements down to the middle tier of schools. This means that there should be specific professional development targeted at this organisational tier that is generic in its nature to adequately professionally develop them in a sustainable way that is congruent with the dynamic and evolving nature of the role. In chapter five the significance of research participant's perceived lack of leadership training for HoDs as departmental leaders is further examined and discussed.

**Management issues**

The management issues faced by HoD are expressed in several areas their role encompasses. The identified issues are outlined below.

*Administrative issues involving workload and the lack of time*

The difficulties involving the administrative workload of an HoD are well articulated below, with leaders in learning making reference to the amount of work an HoD has versus the little amount of time in which to complete it.

*ALLS1 I have no life, it is workload and the time available, the time available to do the job well.*

*BLLS2 We just never have enough time.*

Contrastingly the following participant conveyed a different mind set and attitude towards their role relaying it in the following fashion.

*CLLS3 You have to be prepared to be in at 7am and leave at 7pm and whatever else it takes.*

*CLLS3 also went on to say You have to be prepared to work at the weekend.*
The following participant also highlighted an important function that they felt was being neglected due to the lack of time and that was professional reflection within their role as an HoD.

*DLLS4* Constantly being torn between all those responsibilities, yes you are and it is a juggling act indeed and the thing I find is that often you don’t have the time to sit reflect and evaluate in terms of those responsibilities.

This juggling act sums up well the situation where pressure on time means that tasks within the role of an HoD were competing in nature and subsequently in a situation of being in tension.

*ELLS5* Paperwork! The paperwork, internet sites, we get so much stuff now and you don’t get the time.

*CLLF3* I think it is the mountain of paperwork on top of everything.

*ELLF5* You never get through your list do you!

All of the participants were in agreement that there was insufficient time to ever get through the amount of administration that is present in the job of an HoD as a manager and a leader. Administrative demands were cited as primarily the foremost reason in the creation of role strain, with some of them encompassing appraisal, budgeting and moderation.

**Issues involving appraisal**

Appraisal is seen by the majority of the participants as a very beneficial area of development, however, there are areas and issues are seen as being problematic for HoD as leaders in learning within the appraisal process.

*ALLS1* It does take up a lot of time but I think if you are an HoD and you have got your department and you know what is happening in each you go around and visit people regularly then most of the appraisal is straight forward. It is when you have issues with a colleague that it becomes difficult.
This is compared with an HoD who was not happy with their appraiser as they have not come up through the ranks as an HoD themselves, consequently credibility is an issue here. The two situations were contrasting in nature in so far they described difficulties from differing directions in the appraisal process, one from up line and one from down line. Where they were similar in nature is the relational factor that they encompassed with the appraisal process.

CLLS3 I understand why we have to appraise and why we have to be appraised. My personal appraiser, I am not happy with the way I am appraised from my line manager as they have not been an HoD themselves. They don't know the nitty gritty of running a department and they have never watched me in a lesson.

The above mentioned issues outline some of the difficulties involved in the appraisal process for HoDs where tensions may arise on a relational fashion. It is also noteworthy that the aforementioned HoD has never been observed in their role as a teacher by their appraiser. The issues with appraisal are further examined in chapter five.

The following HoDs were over burdened in the area of appraisal and experienced the following issues due to time constraints.

DLLS4 I didn't do the appraisals particularly well this year and yet they are an important part of the role. I didn't get to see some people; you know getting around thirteen staff members twice a year is very hard.

ELLS5 That's important, but there are times I think that yeah it's just another document that we have to fill in, let's do it as quickly as possible as it is so time consuming. The intent is great but the reality of it is it's another paper exercise that we have to do.

ELLF5 Looking at appraisal it starts off all good, with all good intentions at the beginning of the year and we sit down and we
write our targets with our staff. Do we then have the time to review those targets? I mean how many of you can put your hand on your heart and say right at least five occasions I have checked with my staff or have done something to help them or provided them with some PD to help them achieve those targets. I don’t think it is realistic and it is, well, it is not working, appraisal, if that is the right way of putting it.

CLLF3 Sometimes, I haven’t, I feel a bit bad I haven’t done as many as I should, but we have quite an open classroom policy where we are in and out of each others rooms all of the time.

The overriding theme from the participants is that appraisal is an important aspect of an HoDs role as a manager and a leader. It must however be stated that the work load associated with it and the other contributing factors that impact on an HoD create barriers that impede the process being completed to a professional and satisfactory level. This is a serious dilemma as HoDs recognise the benefits of appraisal and agree with the intentions of the process, however, do not have the resources to undertake the process properly. This issue will be further examined and discussed in chapter 5.

**Issues involving moderation**

Most of the participants when questioned about moderation were for the most part not happy with the requirements and saw it is a managerial burden.

**ALLS1** Yeah compliance is hell on earth. It just extends, you know you already have a huge workload and even when you have got all your moderation organised and all the other things that you have got to do that you are legally required to do and in Art that is actually quite a big chunk it just sucks a huge amount of time with very little time being given to you by the school.

This is in contrast to where an HoD refers to the effects on the entire department rather than just on an individual or individuals.
BLLS2 I mean all the NZQA stuff achievement and moderation that has got to be done can put pressure on departments at different times.

The following HoD went on to discuss specific difficulties that moderation entailed for him in his school

ELLS5 Before the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) we had a moderation system for certain levels in our subject. The rest of it was done in house with results sent away. Now we moderate for five internals for level 1, five internals for level 2 and three for level 3. So there is all that moderation stuff that then has to be kept. And if students want to take it away to university it’s got to be photocopied. It has to be colour copied, so you have got all of those things. We have coming up, all the work to bag for NZQA, that’s not our responsibility, it is a contract between the student and NZQA, why do we have to do anything with it?

The following HoD made an emotive statement with regards to their feelings on the subject of moderation compliance

DLLS4 Compliance issues they really peeve me off!

The overwhelming message from the participants was the burden that the moderation process placed upon them as HoDs. They felt that the time it consumed was not offset with sufficient resources for it to be undertaken without it being a difficult and demanding process.

Conclusion to issues of appraisal and compliance

The participants all identified a major issue that they face as HoDs and that was the volume of managerial responsibilities versus the limited amount of time available to complete them in. This even interfered with the appraisal process for the majority of the participants to the extent that were unable to do justice to what was a perceived as a valuable leadership and management tool. Moderation, which is an area of compliance is seen as being too time
consuming, even unwieldy and costly. This was due to some subject areas had to colour photocopy students work so they could provide their outcomes as evidence to present to universities and/or other tertiary institutes upon making an application, whilst leaving original work with schools for moderation purposes. Some departments were required to photograph student work for moderation purposes which was reported as being extremely time consuming. Subject departments receive no extra or explicit funding for this with the cost having to come out of the department’s general budget. As a result of these issues there were some emotive words used when moderation was discussed as being an issue by the participating HoDs.

Summary discussion of issues

The issues faced by HoD as leaders in learning are well articulated by the research project participants. It was very interesting how there was no disagreement between the participants regarding issues highlighted, some however, did articulate them within varying contexts that related to the particular circumstances pertinent to their role in their school which will be further discussed in chapter 5.

The challenge for the researcher was separating out the articulated issues into the various categories so as to make sense of them. It became apparent to the researcher that some issues were by their very nature contextual and complex and were articulated by the participants in a correspondingly sophisticated fashion. When the issues were examined they were scoped in a micro fashion to determine for example if an issue was a managerial or leadership one by nature. This assisted in the identifying of circumstances where there may have been an issue in one area, however, not another, as perceived by the HoD. One such issue was appraisal where on a leadership level it was perceived as a very valuable process by HoDs in which to lead departmental improvement. It was however, perceived by HoDs on a management level as time consuming and under resourced. This tension between the obvious leadership benefits of appraisal versus the obvious difficulties in the execution of the process by HoD is interesting and also highlights areas where improvements could be made in the area of better
resourcing the appraisal process. The appraisal process and the subsequent issues and tensions for HoDs are further examined and discussed in chapter five with recommendations to assist in alleviating the tensions discussed in chapter six.

**Strategies used by HoD in response to the identified issues**

The strategies used by an HoD as leaders in learning have been coded into two main categories. These categories are firstly, the use of professional strategies to deal with the identified issues. The other is personal strategies that the participants used to deal with the identified issues.

**Professional strategies**

The professional strategies identified by the participants as assisting them in their role as an HoD are as follows. They encompass a wide range of strategies, however, they share in some instances a common theme. The theme was that of undertaking professional development or finding a professional source of advice that would assist in an improved understanding of some of the professional aspects of the role of an HoD and the subsequent dealing with the issues encountered within the role.

**Professional development**

These strategies all involved the use of professional development so as to improve ones intellectual problem solving abilities as an HoD so as to assist in the overcoming of the issues they face within their role as a manager and a leader.

*ALLS1 With the leadership and development, especially, I am doing a course once a month after school on how to deal with various personality types.*

One participant explained how they were involved in professional development of a didactic nature. On one level it involved doing a Masters Degree in her subject area and on the other undertaking a course of study on dealing with various personality types.
ALLS1 I am also undertaking further studies in the form of a Masters Degree.

The following participant explained how they had undertaken further studies in the area of educational leadership and management to assist in the improvement of their abilities as an HoD.

CLLS3 I have gone back to studying and am really enjoying it. I have learned so much about pedagogy and management that has helped me with my job and career.

This is in contrast to an HoD who focused on developing their entire department where as the previous leaders in learning have undertaken professional learning for themselves. It could be viewed, however, that whether this is done on an individual or on a departmental level the end result could be improved practice which in turn could lead to improved student outcomes.

DLLS4 I have spent a lot of time on professional development. Every department meeting has had a professional development component and I have spent a lot of time working with people individually.

The above strategies have the common feature; which is the improvement of knowledge through the developing of oneself and subsequently the members of their departments.

Delegation as a strategy

The following participants saw delegation as an effective strategy in the overcoming of some of the issues related to workload encountered by HoDs as managers and leaders. It was also seen as a method of professionally developing their staff.

CLLF3 You need to delegate, because for example in my subject area English it is such a big area and I have also been getting staff to share their experience with each other.
This view was shared by another participant during the course of the focus group, with her saying that ownership needs to accompany a delegated task to encourage personal growth.

*ELLF5 I want to add to that and reinforce what you have said; delegation and they need to have ownership.*

**Sharing of knowledge as a strategy**

The tapping into collective knowledge and group intellectual problem solving is another identified and used strategy used by some HoDs as outlined below. This can be achieved through professional discourse with colleagues and the subsequent sharing of knowledge or a group approach to solving problems. The following HoD advocated open dialogue with any colleague that could possibly assist in overcoming a problem

*ELLS5 Try to open up discussions, you can talk to people.*

In contrast to the following who specifically only went up line to their Deputy Principal in the next organisational tier to discuss any issues. Issues were not discussed with their departmental colleagues.

*BLLS2 If I need to talk to anybody I go to my DP and get advice from up line.*

**Professional strategies conclusion**

The professional strategies to enable HoD as managers and leaders identified by the participants to cope with their role were simple by definition, however, were seen as being one very effective way of dealing with issues.

The undertaking of professional development to improve knowledge was seen as one desirable way to cope with the rigours of the role. Another was the undertaking of professional discourse with others in an attempt to solve problems through collective intellectual problem solving.
Personal strategies

The personal strategies outlined by the some of the participants were put in place to assist them in dealing with demands that came with the position. They felt if not controlled would end up devouring all of ones time and would detract from a person’s ability to cope with the inherent demands of an HoD’s position.

It was also highlighted by one HoD that balance was a very important strategy for her in her managing process.

DLLS4 The weekend is mine and that is a survival tactic because you know otherwise you come back and you think I have worked all weekend and now I am back at school again.

She went on to say

DLLS4 I also do work over the holidays but I don’t come in to school. If I choose to work at home that’s fine, however, that’s my choice. So it is simple strategies like that that actually work and give you a life outside of teaching because otherwise it will consume you and that is not good, it should not consume you.

The following participant was very much into routine and structure in the way they worked due to the fact they were studying part time as well as running their department.

CLLS3 I am usually at school at 7am and don’t usually leave until 6pm most nights. Occasionally if I have had enough I will say, that’s it I’m going but if I leave early I will work at home anyway. I try to make Saturday my time and so as I like playing golf, I will play. I usually work on a Sunday and I am also doing Masters papers which is extra work, but that is my choice.
The following participant explained how he and his wife tried to leave Auckland on the weekends as much as possible and wind down in their secondary residence out of town.

*BLLS2* I get away out of town on the weekends when possible, that’s one of my ways of coping.

The following participant explained how he allowed himself a certain amount of time in a week for school work then the remaining time was for him and his family. He went on to say that this strategy was a matter of survival in the role

*ELLS5* You have to have time when you say this is mine and you put your work aside otherwise you will not survive.

The above strategies used by HoDs as managers and leaders to cope with the issues inherent within the role were relatively simple. It was, however, recognised that balance is very important for a person to function and survive within the demands of the role. The participant identified strategies used by HoDs to cope with the inherent difficulties are further discussed in chapter five.

**Conclusion to issues faced by HoDs**

*Educational knowledge*

The candidates identified subject and assessment based knowledge as being integral and essential for an HoD to have as a manager and a leader. The issues attached to these knowledge based requirements pertained to the changing educational landscape where the volume and velocity of change to curriculum and assessment were creating difficulties for HoDs to complete the myriad of tasks associated with these educational changes.

*Leadership knowledge*

The participants identified leadership knowledge as being a very important aspect of an HoDs knowledge base. As a result of the delegation of instructional leadership from the senior management/leadership team down to HoDs as leaders in learning, leadership consequently, has now become
another integral component of an HoDs role. The issue for HoDs was the lack of leadership training provided to them by the Ministry of Education or their schools. The participants identified the inequities within the school system where leadership training was provided to Principals and Deputy Principals alike, including professional associations. Whereas HoDs do not have these opportunities or methods of support to the same extent as some of their senior management colleagues. The participants stated that they operate using assumed knowledge and that there is no handbook on how to go about this crucial aspect of their role.

Management knowledge

The participants identified managerial knowledge as another important aspect of their role as an HoD. They saw an HoDs role as having structures and systems in place so the department they were responsible for was functional.

Time management was also identified as an important if not essential skill that an HoD had to possess if they were to be able to cope with the demands of the role as a departmental leader.

Appraisal and moderation were discussed within the parameters of their role requirements that HoDs as managers and leaders are required to see through as a department leader. The participants outlined the knowledge required to see through the appraisal and moderation processes and discussed the issues pertaining to them, which included the lack of time to work to a standard that they felt was suitable or congruent with the intentions underpinning appraisal and moderation.

Strategies used by HoDs

The professional strategies used by HoDs to cope with issues pertaining to their role as an HoD and a leader in learning consisted of the use of delegation to distribute workload. The undertaking of further studies to improve their abilities as a leader in learning was also identified by participants as a strategy to cope with the issues within the role. The use of collegiality underpinning a shared approach to dealing with issues was also
used by HoDs, this however, was not an overt strategy, but was inherent in the participating HoDs inclusive leadership/management styles.

In chapter 5 the findings from chapter 4 are un-packed, examined and compared to the current literature with a view to establishing possible links with the findings in current literature and the significance of these findings.
Chapter Five – Discussion of Findings

Introduction

In this chapter the findings from chapter four will be discussed with reference to the highlighted issues in the literature encapsulated in chapter two. This will develop a deeper understanding of the role of an HoD in the current educational climate and the subsequent issues they face within their role as a leader in learning. The identified issues including the shortage of time in which to complete tasks competing for priority, the lack of resourcing in the area of appraisal and moderation and the lack of leadership training provided to HoDs as departmental leaders is discussed. The subsequent strategies used by HoDs pertaining to the position of a manager and a leader will also be examined against the literature to ascertain if there are any areas of congruence, contradictions or gaps.

The role of an HoD as an educational leader

The participants identified educational knowledge, leadership and management as an integral component of an HoDs ability to function within the role and execute the plethora of duties involved in being a leader in learning. The trend over the last two decades has been a massive increase in the breadth and depth of the knowledge that an HoD requires since the inception of the self governing model of Tomorrow’s Schools (Government of New Zealand, 1988). This has resulted in the transition of the role from what was primarily an administrator to that of being a manager, a leader of people and a leader in learning. The participants identified an HoD now needing a comprehensive level of educational, management and leadership based knowledge due to the delegation down from senior leadership to them as those who occupy the organisational tier between the teaching staff and the aforementioned school wide leaders (Fitzgerald, Gunter & Eaton, 2006). This increase and ongoing initiative based diversification of the duties of an HoD is what Piggot-Irvine (2002) terms as ‘role intensification’ and goes on to say that this has placed HoDs under heavy pressure in their role as managers and leaders. The primary aim of an HoD as a departmental leader in learning is to improve students’ academic and social outcomes (Lingard et al., 2003).
participants were in agreement regarding the level of knowledge required by an HoD in their role as a subject. It was, however, interesting that none of the participants made any specific reference to any of the new educational initiatives like the inception of the New Zealand Curriculum in 2010 or enquiry based learning, however, the participants focused on levels of breadth and depth of subject based knowledge across the department they were responsible for. The overwhelming opinion of all of the participants, bar one, was that HoDs need to have a broad based knowledge of their department’s subject areas in order to be responsible for leading learning. An in depth knowledge across all the subjects within a department which one participant advocated for could be construed as not practicable or feasible. If necessary an HoD would consult with an appropriate colleague within the department to obtain any relevant information if the situation arose.

Accompanying, complementing and being epistemologically intertwined with subject knowledge for an HoD is that of assessment knowledge. Lingard et al. (2003) describes the comprehensive and correct understanding of assessment as an element of the knowledge base and subsequently being part of the role of an HoD in the form of maximising student academic outcomes through the improvement of classroom practices. As a role of an HoD is to lead learning, the balance between the application of subject knowledge and in turn the application of assessment based knowledge in an appropriate fashion would be interrelated forming a cohesive and unified application of practice (Feist, 2007). An understanding of NZQA was also identified by the participants as being necessary for effective student achievement. DLLS4 describes this as “Having knowledge of assessment standards and how NCEA works.” The importance of an HoD, in an aspect of their role in leading learning, having as much knowledge as possible or what could be deemed as an appropriate level of assessment based knowledge cannot be overstated, with Cranston, (2007) articulating this as an HoD having the skills, abilities and attributes that are crucial in carrying out the role of a middle manager.
Pedagogy is identified in the literature as an essential and extremely important aspect of an HoD’s knowledge base in leading learning. With the aim of leading learning being that of raising student achievement, the subsequent use of a variety of pedagogical methods and practices to engage students in the teaching and learning process can be deemed as being very important (Middlewood, 1997). The findings identified the use of pedagogical practices that encouraged the willing engagement of students where the subsequent learning was fun. The participants also articulated how an HoD needs to have a broad based knowledge regarding pedagogy, however, it is interesting that no specifics were reported on, just descriptive generalisations like ‘encouraged and making learning fun.’

**Leadership knowledge required by HoDs**

A significant finding of this research study was that leadership was seen as an extremely important aspect of the role of an HoD as a manager and a leader by all the participants. There was absolute agreement on the part of the participants that extensive knowledge underpinning leadership action was now seen as being crucial to the role of an HoD. This is congruent with what Robertson (2005) explains as an HoD’s position entailing an expected set of behaviours related to the position. Fitzgerald (2000) articulates this as HoDs as leaders in learning as now being in the business of planning, coordinating, team leading, delegating, appraising and coaching. A significant finding was the emphasis participants placed on an HoD having a shared vision in their role as a leader in learning. This aspect of the role of a leader in learning as seen by the participants is congruent with what Bottery (2004) describes as being; a leader’s role is to exert influence on others to provide professional direction. It is significant that the participant’s comments were congruent with one another and aligned with the literature in this regard. The recognition of the fact that an HoDs role in today’s educational climate involves aspects of instructional leadership with an important aspect being a strategic vision for a department. ALLS1 “I think you need to have a strategic plan, a shared vision and a knowledge of strategic planning and also a goal, a long term goal for your department.” Middlewood (1997) succinctly describes this as
organisational improvement through ‘hard action’ where the shared vision is living and has purpose through actual organisational improvement occurring.

**Leadership in team development**

A second significant finding from the research was the emphasis participants placed on their role as a leader in team development. All but one of the participants saw themselves as the lead provider or lead facilitator in the development of the team they are responsible for. At the time of the research project being conducted three of the participants were at the time of the research project being conducted were in the process of undertaking further studies. This was to enable them to be a better manager and leader and have more knowledge in their position as an HoD to impart to their respective team members. In contrast one of the participants saw their role in a very different light, seeing his/her role very much as being a team member with the development of the team being provided by the team for the team. Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) support the concept that individuals should be involved in the team development process, as the collective intellectual stimulation promotes group problem solving. Notions of team development by the team as a group rather than one particular person taking sole charge would require high levels of collegiality in so far that team development would be a distributed action undertaken by a group or team which would have the effect of promoting a common purpose of collective learning represented in unified action (Harvey, 1997).

There are, however, possible limitations in what Bennett et al. (2007) postulates as the sole responsibility of the leader in learning to provide models of pedagogic practices for their team members. This possible limitation is that the underpinning methods of developing the team will be designed and possibly delivered by only the HoD as a leader in learning which possibly narrows down the pedagogic delivery style and or practices. In light of this possibility occurring a collegially distributed method or system that was underpinned by a culture of the team training the team and what Bartlett Merton (2000) call the use of differing opinions need to be used for the improvement and formulation of new pedagogical ideas and practices. This
could have the effect of widening the process style and improving the effectiveness of team development. Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) theorise that the intellectual involvement of department members in team development as a form of stimulation would have the effect of improving departmental collective capacity and promote a culture of professional growth within the leader in learning’s department (Blasé & Blasé, 2000).

Management of people

The role of an HoD involves many varied duties which require a correspondingly wide and varied array of skills and knowledge. The participants identified that dealing with human beings was a difficult aspect of their role. Within the role of an HoD they have to work with both the students and colleagues. This brings to light complexities within this aspect of their role where dealings between colleagues and students on a management level would vary greatly. These complexities manifest themselves through the managing of a wide variety of relational based scenarios including; discipline, liaison, negotiating, assisting and supporting. Bottery (2004) asserts this as exerting direction on others to give professional direction.

Some of the difficulties for an HoD as a manager and a leader when dealing with their colleagues could be attributed to some of the structural aspects of the role. This is where an HoD on the one hand is a leader of their colleagues being on a higher level of the organisational tier and on the other operates as a teacher and is as a consequence on the same level. This organisational situation leads to large amounts of role tension for HoDs with them having to slide up and down this structural continuum. This situation could be construed as a unique structural dynamic which is an anomaly that continually impacts on the role of a leader in learning in their dealings with their colleagues. Wright (2002) supports this with the theory that the duality of the role involves challenges in trying to balance them.

HoDs organisation and efficiency

The organisational aspect of an HoDs role was seen as being important so a department can function in a sound fashion. The participants also used
descriptive language to describe the skills and attributes that an HoD as a leader in learning needed to have to ensure survival within the demands of the role. Cardno (1995) postulates that one aspect of an HoDs role as monitoring departmental procedures and teaching. The literature supports the remarks by the participants, however, the research respondents add to this by saying that an HoD must be good at executing the aforementioned aspects of their role and must also have good time management skills to cope with and facilitate efficiency within what Piggot- Irvine (2002) describes as the intensifying demands of the role which have resulted in overloading for HoDs placing them under heavy pressure.

**Delegation**

Gunter (2002) postulates that delegation is a form of professional development where an aspiring leader of learning is taught by an effective leader in learning. The participants were all in agreement regarding the necessity and usefulness of delegation by an HoD in the accomplishment of departmental goals and the seeing through of tasks involved in leading learning. Ingvarson, et al. (2005) postulates that work intensification resulting from the introduction of educational initiatives like appraisal and NCEA have resulted in high levels of work intensification for HoDs. Leaders in learning have in turn used delegation as a method of distributing work load and providing opportunity for professional development of departmental members.

**Appraisal**

The philosophical intentions and reasoning underpinning the appraisal process were all fully and enthusiastically supported by the participants. They were also in agreement regarding the benefits that appraisal would bring to the teacher as an individual and the department that they belong to (Cardno, 1995). Sammons et, al. (1997) concur with the sentiments of Cardno (1995) when they postulate that the optimisation of team learning is through the individuals contributing in the process for the betterment of the whole department with the leader in learning setting an example by undertaking the process of ongoing betterment themselves.
Conclusion
The role of an HoD as a leader in learning is a complex one involving teaching and learning, leading of teaching and learning, administration, managing and departmental leadership. HoDs also find themselves in a difficult position within the organisational structure where they have to move up and down the structural continuum according to the situation and context they are operating in at any given time. Fitzgerald (2004) postulates that this situation, where the role of a leader in learning occupies the middle ground, is complex, messy and highly ambiguous.

Findings related to the issues facing HoDs as leaders in learning
The issues facing HoDs as managers and leaders identified by the participants are many and complex in their nature. They have, however, for the purposes of discussion been classified into three separate knowledge based categories of education, leadership and management. These issues are now examined to establish any commonalities between the contributing participants and any links and/or gaps with the existing literature.

Educational issues
The main issues in the educational aspect of a leader in learning’s role can be articulated as the rapidity of change on the educational front and the subsequent volume of work that is a resulting condition of this. Fitzgerald (2000) refers to the large amount of compliance work like curriculum and assessment that HoDs are required to do whilst still fulfilling their role as a leader in learning. Ingvarson et al., (2005) report that HoDs as leaders in learning have been impacted on the most by the inception of NCEA since its inception in 2001. Gunter (2005) goes on to report and in doing so, supports the previously mentioned educational theorists saying that leaders in learning are the primary organisational tier in secondary schools that are responsible for the implementation and ongoing operation of new educational initiatives. The participants reported how they felt largely impacted upon by the volume of change that schools have had to deal with which they as middle managers have been directly charged with doing through delegation from the senior leadership tier (Sisken & Warren Little, 1995).
Leadership issues

The major issue pertaining to the role of an HoD that the participants identified was the lack of leadership professional development provided to them as managers and leaders in middle management. They identified this situation as creating problems for them as they did not have the specific knowledge to undertake this aspect of their role. As a result the participants felt that leadership training should be afforded them the same as it is given to the senior leadership tier in a secondary school. Gunter (2004) postulates that there is little known about how leadership is exercised and how teachers can be professionally developed to undertake this critical role.

Three of the participants indicated that they were in the process of undertaking a Masters Degree for the purposes of professional development in their own time to improve their knowledge and skills so as to improve their subject based and/ or leadership skills. The issue they identified pertaining to this undertaking is the time and workload component that has been added to their existing large workload as an HoD.

Management issues

The management issues identified by the participants were more varied in their nature and were expressed across several areas. The volume of administration was identified as an issue, with both appraisal and the moderation process being identified as areas of administrative compliance that were problematic for HoDs as leaders in learning. The problems related to the amount of time both processes consumed versus the time available to do the aforementioned tasks in, and in some cases the participants felt dissatisfied with the fact that they could not produce results to a standard that they felt personally satisfied with.

The participants reported being swamped with administrative duties that involved incessant amounts of paperwork requiring the ongoing shifting and reprioritising of tasks that were competing for limited time (Sisken, 1991). The participants also identified the rapidity of task turnover in what Fitzgerald (2004) refers as brevity, ambiguities accompanied with little time for reflection.
This unenviable position that the participants identified themselves as being in was due to the current demands of the role of an HoD. Feist (2007) postulates that this can be coped with through a leader in learning’s ability to unify and rationalise practices through planned co-operation and co-ordination.

Appraisal was voiced as a valuable process by the participants which can be used to raise teaching and learning standards which ultimately leads to improved academic outcomes for students (Lingard et al., 2003). The benefits for the individual in the form of improved professional practice will ultimately assist in the overall improvement of standards across an entire department (Middlewood, 1997).

The reality for the participating HoDs was that the appraisal process was an exercise filled with tensions and issues. These were present in the form of severe time constraints that HoDs work under as managers and leaders. They reported having insufficient time to undertake the tasks involved in appraisal to a level where they felt professionally satisfied. They also felt that the process was rushed and as a result the reality of the exercise fell well short of the intentions of the appraisal process. Some of the participants reported not being able to get around all of their staff due to the large workload they were experiencing as an HoD. They also stated that the tasks they have to deal with are constantly competing for a shifting set of administrative and managerial priorities making the role an hermaphroditic one (Sisken, 1991).

Moderation as an area of compliance was not seen in a favourable light by the participating HoDs. They claimed it was burdensome, and overly time consuming exercise that was riddled with various difficulties that appeared to be subject specific. These tensions are postulated by Fitzgerald, Gunter & Eaton (2006) as being ambiguous which in turn brings about its own set of issues for a leader in learning. The ongoing intensification of workload as a direct subsequence of the implementation of NCEA has had serious ramifications for HoDs as managers and leaders (Ingvarson et al., 2005). This is no more evident than in the area of departmental moderation.
requirements. This is where the participants for the most part convey their concerns regarding the workload in fulfilling this legal requirement and the lack of resources in which they are supplied to complete this onerous task.

**Summing up the management issues faced by HoDs as leaders in learning**

The participants contributions highlight the difficulties that exist within the role of an HoD as a manager and a leader. The difficulties involved in undertaking and completing the time consuming management duties that the position is beleaguered with are well highlighted and described by the participants. The recognition of the importance of the two participant identified areas of compliance that HoDs are legally required to adhere to and see through in their role as a manager and a leader is irrefutable. What is also irrefutable, is the complexities within the role pertaining to appraisal and moderation where the execution of these duties by a leader in learning is difficult, time consuming and highly messy (Fitzgerald, 2004).

*Professional strategies used by an HoD in response to the identified issues*

The strategies employed by leaders in learning to deal with the issues that they encountered in their role have been categorised into what has been generally classified as professional strategies.

The professional strategies identified by the participants as assisting them in their role as an HoD are as follows: They encompass a wide range of strategies, however, they share in some instances a common theme. The theme was that of undertaking professional development or finding a source of advice that would assist in an improved understanding of some of the professional aspects of the role of a leader in learning and dealing with the issues encountered within the role.

These strategies all involve the use of intellectual problem solving by HoDs as managers and leaders to overcome the issues they face within their role (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999). This intellectual stimulation was used or undertaken in several forms. One was in the undertaking of professional learning pertaining to a person’s subject area which in turn would promote
greater subject based skills and knowledge. Another was intellectual stimulation in the area of professional learning pertaining to educational leadership which would assist in the area of leadership within the role of an HoD. The improvement of knowledge, Middlewood (1997) postulates, would lead to improved individual performance which would in turn assist in the overall improvement of departmental performance. One of the drawbacks, however, in the undertaking of professional development in the form of a Masters Degree is the huge increase in workload and the cost that is incurred for an HoD.

The undertaking of individual or collective professional development or the organised tapping into collective knowledge and group intellectual problem solving is another highlighted strategy used by some leaders in learning. The promotion of professional development as a strategy by the participants is described by Bottery (2004) and supported by Blasé and Blasé (2000) as exerting influence on others to provide professional direction where open discourse between professionals across the tiers within an organisation which will result in the promotion of professional growth within a subject department.

Delegation was seen by the participants as a strategy to cope with some of the issues they encountered as a leader in learning which is congruent with the literature. It was seen as a method of professionally developing one's staff which is an inherent duty of an HoD (Fitzgerald, 2000). It is also a method of sharing out some of the HoD’s duties, thus promoting a sharing of professional knowledge which also has the effect of preparing aspiring colleagues for their role as an HoD (Gunter, 2005).

The professional strategies used by HoDs as leaders in learning to cope with the identified issues were the use of professional development to upskill themselves so as to be better equipped to deal with the issues within the role of an HoD as a manager and a leader. This is congruent with what Middlewood (1997) postulates as, the undertaking of professional development, would also lead to improved individual performance which would in turn assist in the overall improvement of the department.
Fitzgerald (2000) advocates delegation as a method to professionally develop departmental members which is the inherent duty of an HoD. The participants identified the use of delegation as having the effect of distributing the workload of an HoD and also providing a platform for the upskilling of department members who are aspiring HoDs.

The tapping into the entire collective intellectual knowledge base of the department members through collegial interaction to deal with problems or issues was also identified as a strategy that the participants used. Feist (2007) articulates this ability, as the attributes and abilities to unify and rationalise practices through systematic and planned co-operation and coordination.

The aspects of an HoDs role where the issues and subsequent tensions are very difficult to deal with, could be attributed to and exacerbated by where they sit in the hierarchy of the organisation; on one hand they work side by side with teachers as a teacher and on the other hand their role involves them leading the teachers. This moving up and down the organisational continuum creates difficulties for HoDs as they are neither as Siskin (1991) describes as solely a teacher or a manager of teachers, but both. This situation promotes as described by Fitzgerald (2004) role ambiguity which is messy and as a result complex.

Conclusion

The professional strategies used by HoDs as leaders in learning to cope with the issues inherent within the role on the surface could appear to be relatively simple. However, they involve in some instances, the undertaking of time consuming professional development to improve performance. Taking the time to utilize departmental expertise in a unified forum to group for intellectual problem solving and the use of delegation to distribute workload. The time constraints facing HoDs are well documented in this thesis, however, so are the aforementioned strategies in the available literature pertaining to this topic. It is up to each HoD how they rationalise their practices so as to optimise their abilities and resources. This was well evident
in the data collected with participants all using varying strategies to cope, however, all were evident in the literature.

It is also important for an HoD if they are to be functional and survive within the role to have a bank of strategies and knowledge that they have at their disposal which determines the level of ‘professional readiness’ they have that enables them to discharge their duties. It is therefore the responsibility of an HoD to increase their level of professional readiness through the acquisition of knowledge and skills using intellectual stimulation to enable them to dynamically improve their performance as an HoD (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999).

In chapter six the implications of the research are considered, discussed and some recommendations for future research and practice are made.
CHAPTER SIX – CONCLUSION

Introduction

This research project has examined the issues facing HoDs as leaders in learning in the New Zealand secondary school system. This particular research topic was prompted by questions that emerged from my own experience as an HoD and a desire to investigate ways in which subject leaders experienced these issues and attempted to address them. This chapter presents a summary of the research findings, a consideration of their implications and recommendations for future research and practice.

Research Questions

1. How do HoDs as managers and leaders perceive their roles in New Zealand secondary schools considering factors such as:

2. What are the key issues facing HoDs as managers and leaders?

3. What strategies do HoDs as managers and leaders in learning employ in response to the identified issues?

Research findings

HoD’s perception of their role

The participants identified a set of skills, qualities and knowledge that an HoD needs to have for them to be able to undertake the role of a departmental manager and a leader. This plethora of knowledge, skills and qualities identified by the participants are all very much intertwined and interrelated, however, are all part and parcel of an HoD’s role as a manager, a leader of people, a leader in learning and an administrator.

Subject knowledge was rated very highly and accompanying that was assessment knowledge. The hallmark of an HoD and what is inherent in the position of a subject leader is the breadth and depth of their subject knowledge and also that of assessment. A broad base of pedagogical knowledge was also identified as a necessary skill base for an HoD as subject leader. HoDs were identified as leaders with the participants conveying the
need for an HoD to lead and develop their department through the use of a shared vision and strategic planning. An aspect of an HoD’s role is that of team development through leadership. The participants recognised the importance of team development through the provision and undertaking of various types of appropriate and relevant professional development and the HoD’s role in this as a departmental leader. The management of people was seen as an important aspect of an HoDs role with the participants identifying a manager needing to be a good listener, flexible, open to change and have broad shoulders. The participants identified an HoD having to be a good budgeter which involved the ongoing monitoring of expenditure. The participants also identified organisational skills and time management as being important components of an HoD skill base so a department has structures and also so they will survive within the demands of the role. Delegation was identified as a skill to develop other team members and to assist in the alleviation of HoD workload. Appraisal was seen as an important aspect of the role of an HoD as a manager and a leader. It was seen as a method of improving practices of departmental members through identified areas of need.

The participants have outlined their perceptions of what they consider their role to be, which conveys the complexities and comprehensiveness of the role of an HoD as a manager and a leader.

**Educational issues encountered by an HoD within their role as a leader in learning**

The main educational issues for an HoD pertained to the volume and rapidity of educational change. This brought with it increased levels of workload and the subsequent intensification within the increased levels of workload (Piggot-Irvine, 2002). Milne (1995) supports the view by the research participants whereby the ongoing implementation of change and the subsequent volume of work that can be attributed to the ongoing levels of educational change has brought with it steep learning curves.

The participants reported difficulties in keeping abreast with the demands of ongoing change. They described difficulties in having the time to deal with the
rapidity of change and being under resourced to adequately maintain the demands of educational compliance requirements which is congruent with what Piggott- Irvine (2002) describes as the issue of HoD overloading. Milne (1995) also supports the HoD’s comments where the volume and rate of information travelling across their desk required to be examined, learnt and or analysed in their role as an HoD has been compounded by a shortage of time.

Some participants indicated that they could not keep up with the volume of educational change and expressed concern saying when is it all going to end? They felt that the MoE and NZQA were equally to blame for the large amounts of change that HoD were having to deal with as managers and leaders.

**Issues involving leadership within the role of HoDs as leaders in learning**

The identified leadership issue by the participants was that of the lack of professional training/ professional development that was specifically offered to HoDs or aspiring HoDs. It was of general consensus by the participants that there were pressures within the role of an HoD as a leader pertaining to the lack of leadership specific training that was supplied as part of the role. Comparisons were drawn against the senior leadership team tier of the secondary school organisation where Principals and Deputy Principals are provided with MoE funded leadership professional development and leadership organisations that they can belong to like SPANZ.

It was also felt that HoDs worked mostly in isolation and that there was no handbook available that gave them guidance on how to go about their role. This is an issue that runs parallel with Gunter (2004) who states that that little is known about how HoDs as leaders in learning go about executing their role. Bennett (1995) postulates that HoD’s will exercise their leadership style in a fashion that is congruent with the epistemological workings of their particular subject area(s). Cranston, Ehrich and Rosenfeld (2008) postulates that being an HoD entails an awareness of leadership skills and practices beyond that of the epistemology of any given subject area and would encompass them having the skills, abilities and attributes that are now crucial in carrying out the role of a middle manager. It could therefore possibly be construed that middle
leadership nowadays requires suitable professional development otherwise subject based leadership styles could possibly not be holistic enough for an HoD as a manager and a leader. This is possibly why participants referred the need for leadership professional development and that there was no handbook supplied for being an HoD as they possibly lack some of the aforementioned crucial skills postulated by Cranston, Ehrich and Rosenfeld (2008).

Issues involving management tensions within the role of HoDs

The identified tensions by the participants within the role of an HoD were very much interrelated. The tasks that make up the role of an HoD are many and varied in their nature, especially in the area of management. The management based tensions for an HoD are mainly in the area of compliance

The main issues or tensions related to the lack of time to undertake tasks associated with the role and their ability to complete them to what they felt was a satisfactory professional standard. HoDs described a range of issues in relation to management compliance requirements and highlighted the difficulties and frustrations involved. Problems included the lack of time in which to see the moderation and appraisal process through and the monetary cost involved in seeing through the moderation process.

The research highlights the lack of support for HoDs as managers particularly in relation to workload issues and compliance requirements. Participants expressed frustration at their lack of ability to complete tasks within given time frames.

While participants acknowledged the importance of completing the appraisal and moderation process the difficulties they experienced in the completion of these tasks made it difficult to maintain professional standards. This is a key area of professional tension for HoDs identified in this research. On the one hand as subject leaders they wished to emphasise students learning, on the other they faced workload issues and time constraints which made it difficult to maintain professional standards.
Strategies used by HoDs as managers and leaders in response to the issues they face

The strategies used by HoDs to deal with the issues fell into two main categories. Firstly there was the use of various professional strategies to deal with the identified issues and secondly there was the use of personal strategies by participants to enable them to protect or assist themselves in surviving the demands of the role as a leader in learning.

Professional Strategies

Professional development was seen as one of the effective ways of dealing with the difficulties within the role of an HoD. There was within this category, two main sub categories described by HoDs.

Firstly there was that of HoDs directly improving themselves and subsequently improving their abilities as a manager and a leader with the pursuit of further long term academic studies in the area of educational leadership and management or subject matter that was within their subject area.

Secondly there was the undertaking of short term professional development by some HoD and their staff to improve themselves as professionals. Some of this professional development was seen as being necessary via the appraisal process as a way of assisting them as managers and leaders and subsequently their respective team members in the execution of their role.

Attached to the pursuit of professional development is the concept of HoD tapping into the collective knowledge of their subject team members in an attempt to deal with issues that they encounter as middle leaders. Consequently, a number of participants indicated the more professional development that team members pursue through planned distribution the more able and professionally ready they are to deal with issues and solve problems (Sammons et al., 1997).

Delegation was also seen as an effective leadership and management strategy to alleviate some of the issues they encounter in their role as a
manager and leader. Delegation was used by HoDs to distribute workload, provide a forum for the upskilling of department members and the accomplishment of departmental goals. Gunter (2005) theorises that professional development through delegation is the process of an aspiring leader being taught by an effective leader.

The strategies used by the participants were found to be congruent with the literature pertaining to HoDs as middle leaders. The use of professional development, group intellectual based problem solving and delegation were all identified as being pertinent and appropriate ways of improving team performance and the subsequent dealing of issues that HoD use in their capacity as a manager and a leader.

With the intensification of workload that HoDs have experienced since the implementation of Performance Management Systems (MoE, 1999b), NCEA (MoE, 2001) and the NZC (MoE, 2007) described by Piggott-Irvine (2002) describes as “overloading” the work of HoDs. This means that HoDs have to be more prepared to distribute the overwhelming burden that is a large part of the role of being a middle leader. This possibly may assist in enabling the workload to be shared and consequently more satisfactorily dealt with by an HoD.

Personal strategies

The personal strategies used by the participants to assist them in coping with the issues they encountered within the role as an HoD were all particular to their lifestyle and personal needs.

There was, however, an underlying theme in the participant’s approach on a personal level and that was allowing them wind down time so as to be mentally refreshed when they walk back into the job at the beginning of the next week or the following term.

The participants also talked about doing work from home so as to get themselves out of the work environment when feasible.
Implications of the findings

HoDs in New Zealand secondary schools face a number of issues. These issues are inter-related, complex in their nature and create huge tensions for HoDs as managers and leaders. The main issues for HoDs is what they perceive as a lack of leadership training available for them to access to assist them in their role as a leader. The lack of time in which to complete all the tasks that make up the role of an HoD to what they perceive is a professional standard that they are satisfied with. There is also the issue of HoDs struggling to meet requirements that pertain to compliance. These findings have implications for both the research and practice.

One implication from the research related to the lack of leadership training for existing or aspiring HoDs. The participants made mention of the fact that they perceive that there is no handbook which leaders in learning can refer to for assistance in their role. There is also the issue where they perceive that there is no forum for HoDs to come together as a group for the sharing of knowledge, ideas and skills which would specifically assist them as a positional and professional collective. It is also interesting that the participants felt and clearly articulated that there was insufficient leadership training for HoDs even with the existence of the Professional Leadership Plan (MoE, 2007).

The participant's identified the necessity for the provision by the Ministry of Education of specifically targeted leadership professional development for HoDs. Including and accompanied by the formulation of an HoD association which is responsible for their ongoing training and the provision of a forum for collective problem solving could lead to HoDs reorienting their practices which could lead to a defendable model of accountable practice (Fitzgerald, Gunter & Eaton, 2006).

Another implication from the research is the lack of support, mainly in the area of time for HoDs to undertake the appraisal process in. Even though the participants receive a non contact allowance they still identified the lack of time as a major tension within their role as an HoD. Whilst the philosophical intentions for the appraisal process were all strongly supported by the
participant HoDs and the benefits seen as extremely beneficial in supporting improved performance through identified and targeted professional development. HoDs, however, voiced their concerns regarding their abilities to work to a professional level that they felt satisfied with. Work intensification, brevity and competing tasks all impeded an HoDs ability to execute their duties to a standard that is congruent with the philosophical intentions of the appraisal process and that can be classified as productive leadership (Lingard et al., 2003).

Compliance requirements in the form of moderation was also seen as being very time consuming, unwieldy, lacking in resource support and in some instances being an expensive exercise for a department to fund. With the participants being stretched as HoDs they expressed resentment regarding how much time moderation consumed.

The above issues that HoDs encountered within their role as a leader in learning are an impediment to them succeeding in their role at an optimum level. The implications of this are that leaders in learning are not provided with the resources and time to offset the aforementioned issues and as a result are not be able to focus on the primary purpose of their role which is to provide leadership in pedagogy, organisational management, departmental leadership and ultimately optimise opportunities for student outcomes to be improved.

Limitations of this research

As this study draws upon an interpretivist research methodology, the findings from it have relevance to the contexts explored and can make only limited claims for generalisations of the findings. However, the findings have implications for the issues facing contemporary HoDs and suggest future research pathways to investigate the issues facing HoDs as subject leaders and managers.

The findings in this research project are relevant to the contexts and circumstances of the participating HoDs but have implications for HoDs in general as the identified causal factors like appraisal and moderation that
have given rise to the issues that affect all secondary schools in New Zealand. The participants have made their contributions according to their particular circumstances and experiences in their particular schools as an HoD. It could therefore be said that the data findings are a representation of a small collective of secondary schools and are specific and consequently limited to them. To establish if the findings of this research project have external validity and as a consequence can be replicated would be dependant on the freezing or reproduction of the social setting (Le Compte & Goetz, 1982). Bryman (2004) supports this in saying that social stability and inter observer consistency must exist if results are to be replicated.

Recommendations

The findings and the implications of this research project have highlighted some areas where practice might be improved. The following recommendations that are an outcome of this research project could provide a framework for future research and for addressing particular practice issues.

Recommendations for practice

1) That schools internally provide leadership and management professional development for HoDs. The training could lead to improved middle management performance and a forum for shared discussion.

2) I recommend that national strategies be put in place to formulate a representative body for HoDs in New Zealand secondary schools. The body should be responsible for the provision of some professional development for its members and the sharing of knowledge and problem solving strategies that assist in the raising of professional standards.

3) I recommend that the policy makers either make changes to the moderation requirements of schools to assist in alleviating the burden on HoDs. Or that they in turn provide more resources in schools to assist in alleviating the moderation process burden on HoDs.
4) I recommend that on a national level policies be put in place that assist in improving the resourcing and manageability of the appraisal process so the optimum results for participants can be obtained.

**Recommendations for further research**

Further research could be conducted on the issues facing HoDs as leaders in learning:

1) To determine if the issues in this research project are prevalent across a greater range of schools.

2) To determine if there are any other issues that HoDs are facing as leaders in learning that would be highlighted through research.

3) Into the possible procedures in setting up a national professional body that represents HoDs as leaders in learning.

4) Into possible nationally developed professional development programmes that can be run at school levels that assist in the improvement of practices amongst leaders in learning in New Zealand secondary schools.

**Overall conclusion**

This research project has investigated some of the key issues facing HoDs and emerges from my personal experience of the massive increase in workload, the subsequent tensions between the role of management and subject leadership and the ongoing problems facing HoDs over the last fifteen years.

I also undertook this research topic in an attempt to become a more informed HoD and a better practitioner in my role as a leader in learning. I have gained an insight into the existing literature pertaining to the research topic. This in turn was used as a point of reference in which to conduct a research project where eight HoDs were interviewed regarding the issues they faced in their role as a leader in learning. There were strong links between the literature
and the research data collected with regards to the levels of work intensification that has resulted through ongoing educational change and the introduction of ongoing educational requirements like appraisal and NCEA.

It is clearly evident from my research that the participating HoDs were overburdened with the demands of the role and clearly lacked the corresponding level of resources to execute their duties (Piggot- Irvine, 2002). This imbalance has created issues for HoDs where they have competing demands involving the tasks expected to be executed within the role and also to what standard these tasks are also completed to. This tension resulted in some of the HoDs expressing extreme levels of frustration and dissatisfaction with their role as a manager and a leader.

The strategies that HoDs used to deal with the issues were all initiated by themselves, were of their own design and were not handed down from those more senior to them. Consequently HoDs work very much in isolation with very little assistance from the senior leadership team which is the organisational tier above when they deal with the problems associated within their role. As HoDs as leaders in learning are the expected instructional leaders within their departments as the senior leadership team are now more focused holistically on a macro level within the school structure. It could be construed from the data that the participants have provided, that HoDs are in more need of being given resources and assistance now due to the aforementioned increase in workload and the new tasks that have been assigned to the role of a leader in learning in the last 15 years.

Another implication from the research relates to the amount of knowledge an HoD needs in today’s educational environment as a manager and a leader. The participants all identified the need for HoDs to have ongoing professional development to be able to cope with the rigours of the role. Some were in the process of undertaking professional development with a view to upskilling themselves in the form of organised studies like Masters Degrees or had attained study grants for part of the 2010 academic year. It was, however, stated by a large majority of the participants that leadership training should be provided to HoDs as the professional development they receive in their
particular subject areas as their role is dual or hermaphroditic in its nature (Siskin 1991).

I suggest that HoDs be given more support in the aspect of their role as a leader in learning as their position within the secondary system is a pivotal one with regards to improving outcomes for students. This is the primary objective of the educational system in New Zealand and HoDs as leaders are at the forefront of this aim.

HoDs in their role as a manager and a leader will attempt to strategise solutions to the issues they face, if they are able to deal with an issue then the issue will be resolved. If they are not able to resolve the issue through the use of professional development, delegation, asking for assistance from the senior leadership team or some other strategy then the issues manifests itself as a work related tension. These tensions promote difficulties within the role of a leader in learning and in some cases reduce or possibly inhibit an HoDs ability to improve student achievement and outcomes.

To enable HoDs as leaders in learning to be able to cope on a better level, there needs to be more practical assistance and support given them. This needs to be on several levels, including more professional development pertaining to leadership and more resources to cope with the increased demands and complexities as a result of significant role intensification.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Principals’ Consent Form

Date:

To:

From: Alan Stephenson

I am writing to request your permission to go about recruiting two HoD’s at _____________College for the purposes of conducting an educational research assignment.

I am enrolled in the Master in Educational Leadership and Management programme at Unitec Institute of Technology. The thesis I am planning to undertake is a partial requirement in the fulfilment of a Masters degree in Educational Leadership and Management.

I am seeking your permission to proceed with the research project in your school at this juncture, so as to assist in my application for the ethical approval process. My intention is to ask a total of five schools in the Auckland region to participate in this research project. The schools I have asked to participate have all been randomly selected.

My process of selecting specific leaders in learning will be done by drawing two subject areas out of a hat. I will then go about identifying these people and write to them asking them to participate in this research project. One person from each school will be asked to participate in a focus group and the other in a semi structured interview.

The research project is outlined below and also includes how ethical procedures will be adhered to.
RESEARCH PROJECT RATIONALE

Heads of Departments and Heads of Faculties in New Zealand secondary schools have a pivotal role to play as leaders of learning. There has been little domestic research done in this educational area, and consequently there is little known about how HoD/ HoF as leaders in learning go about dealing with the issues they face as leaders in learning. There is also little known about how they deal with the subsequent problems they encounter that arise in this role.

This gives rise for the opportunity to conduct a research project into this educational issue.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1) How do HoDs perceive and experience their role in New Zealand secondary schools?

2) Do HoDs consider that they face issues in their role as a manager and a leader involving the following aspects of their role:
   a) Do they experience tension(s) between their pedagogical and management responsibilities?
   b) Team leadership and development.
   c) Workload
   d) Compliance
   e) Others

3) What strategies do they as HoDs employ in response to these issues?

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The participants in the research project will be afforded full anonymity with their contributions being protected by the use of a pseudonym instead of their name. The school they belong to will also have its name replaced with a pseudonym. This will also include no reference being made in the research
project to either the participant or their school that people can make direct associations with.

The participants will also be given the opportunity to review transcripts if they request to.

I will also be meeting Unitec’s UREC ethical requirements.

I anticipate that I will be conducting my data collection in terms three and four at this juncture.

If you would like to contact me with regards to this matter I would be only to happy to answer any questions you may have. I can be contacted on either of the following phone numbers or the provided e-mail address:

(Details removed).

Your assistance is appreciated.

Yours truly,

Alan Stephenson
HoD Technology

I, _______________ give Alan Stephenson permission to conduct the above outlined research project at _____________ College.

I, _______________ decline Alan Stephenson permission to conduct the above outlined research project at ______________ College.

Please circle choice.

Signed _____________________________ (Principal _________ College).

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2009-991

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 26th August 2009 to 26th August 2010. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815- 4321 ext 7248). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Dear ____________

I am currently enrolled in the Master in Educational Leadership and Management programme at Unitec New Zealand. I am asking that you assist me in meeting the requirements of the Masters programme by participating in this research project. The research project will be expressed in the format of a Thesis which forms a substantial part of this degree.

The aim of my research is to examine how HoD go about their role as managers and leaders in New Zealand secondary schools.

**Data Collection Method:**

Your participation will be in the form of a semi structured interview in which the researcher will gather qualitative data.

**Participant protection:**

Your protection as a participant is guaranteed with your name and that of your school not being used or conveyed in any recorded material, including transcripts, reports or in the body of the submitted thesis. Pseudonyms will be used to replace all participants’ names to ensure that people and their schools are anonymous. Unitec’s UREC Research Ethics Protocols will also be strictly adhered to which are in place to ensure participant protection.

Withdrawal from the project by you as a participant can take place up to two weeks after participation in the data collection process. You are also afforded the opportunity to review the transcript of the interview between yourself and the researcher.

I will be following up this letter with a phone call so as to afford you the opportunity to ask any questions that you may have.
If you require any further information with regards to this research project please feel free to contact my supervisor or myself using the following details:

Dr Jenny Collins
School of Education
Unitec Institute of Technology
(Details removed)

Or

Alan Stephenson
(Details removed)

Yours truly,
Alan Stephenson
HoD Technology

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2009-991

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 26th August 2009 to 26th August 2010. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 7248). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
APPENDIX C: Pro-Forma Participant Consent Form

PRO-FORMA CONSENT FORM

FROM: Alan Stephenson

DATE:

RE: HoDs as Managers and Leaders

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project for the Masters in Educational Leadership and Management. I have had an opportunity to ask questions. I understand that neither my name nor the name of my organisation will be used in any public reports. I may withdraw myself from the project up until the time I have contributed at the interview or focus group.

I agree to take part in this project.

Signed: __________________________

Name: ____________________________

Date: ____________________________

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2009-991

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 26th August 2009 to 26th August 2010. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 7248). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
APPENDIX D: Focus Group Information Sheet

To:

Date:

From:

Dear

Firstly I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in my research project. I am aware of how difficult it is at this time of year to take time out of your busy schedule, consequently I am very grateful.

The details with regards to the Focus Group meeting are:

Date; Monday 7th December 09
Time; 2:30 pm
Venue; One Tree Hill College (421 Great South Road, Penrose)

I propose that people arrive at 1:30pm where a light lunch will be provided. We will then commence the focus group meeting at 2:30 and will finish at 3:30pm.

As travel is expensive I would like to gift participants an MTA travel voucher to reimburse them for their petrol costs.

**What will happen in the Focus Group?**

I will be putting some questions to the group regarding their role as an HoD and a Leader of Learning. I am asking that people answer the questions honestly taking into account their experiences and all the other factors that influence how they go about their role.

The interview will be taped and then transcribed. When the data is referred to in the thesis a code will be used so as to maintain the anonymity of the focus group members.

Can you please contact me via email to confirm your attendance via the email address below? As your Principal has approved your participation in this research project I am hoping that any of you who request coverage of classes to attend this focus group meeting will have no problems.
If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me on any of the following:

Cell:
Email:
Work phone:

Once again I would like to thank you for your assistance.

Regards,

Alan Stephenson
HoD Technology

**UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2009-991**

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 26th August 2009 to 26th August 2010. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 7248). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
APPENDIX E: Interview Questionnaire

Research Questionnaire

Heads of Departments as Managers and Leaders.

Focus Group and Semi Structured Interview Questions:

1) How do HoDs perceive their roles in New Zealand secondary schools, considering factors such as:
   - Knowledge they need to have
   - Team leadership and development
   - Attributes they possibly need to have in today’s educational environment
   - Tasks they are required to perform
   - Their structural position within the school hierarchy
   - Responsibilities versus limitations to authority
   - Recognition versus responsibilities
   - Instructional knowledge

2) What are the key issues facing HoDs involving:
   - a) Tensions experienced in the role between pedagogical and management responsibilities
   - b) Team leadership and development
   - c) Time available to do the job in
   - d) Workload
   - e) Compliance
   - f) Appraisal
   - g) Others

3) What strategies do HoDs employ in response to the identified issues?
   - a) The tensions experienced in the role between pedagogical and management responsibilities
   - b) Team leadership and development
   - c) The time available to do the job in
   - d) The workload experienced within the role
   - e) The issues around compliance requirements
   - f) The issue concerning Appraisal (PMS)
   - g) Others.

The interviewer will where pertinent probe, asking participants to expand on their answers to questions to promote extrapolation of ideas.