UNDERSTANDING TEACHER CHANGE:
FOUR TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES WITH
THE ONTARIO GREEN SCHOOLS PROJECT

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
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Abstract

Teachers' voices have, until quite recently, been notably absent from the discourse on educational change. However, as educational researchers are beginning to acknowledge, we can learn a great deal about educational change and the sustaining of innovations by listening to the voices of teachers. The purpose of the present study was to gain a deeper understanding of issues surrounding teacher and educational change from the perspective of the teacher. I have attempted to do so through an analysis of four teachers' experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project, and the contextual variables which influenced those experiences. The experiences of the four participants revealed a number of issues that are important to teachers, including: the amount and duration of support, the amount of ownership that teachers have over the initiative, the meaning that the innovation holds for teachers, opportunities for collaboration and sharing, and the context in which teachers work.
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Chapter One
The Problem and Its Context

Introduction

Educational researchers and change agents often express frustration that teachers do not willingly or quickly accept and implement their suggestions (Richardson, 1990, 10), and have spent considerable energy over the past thirty years attempting to understand why this is so and how it can be remedied (Cohen, 1988, 80 note 16; Fullan, 1990, 137-138). As Virginia Richardson (1990, 10) observes, explanations have largely focused on what researchers term teacher resistance to change. Educational historian Larry Cuban (1988, 86), for example, states that "widespread resistance to change by teachers and administrators has marked the history of public schooling." Following an instructional innovation effort, Gerald Duffy and Laura Roehler (1986, 55) stated: "getting teachers to change is difficult. They particularly resist complex, conceptual, longitudinal changes. . . . Teacher educators and researchers interested in making substantive changes in curricular and instructional practice need to understand this resistance."

The focus on teachers’ so-called resistance to change as an explanation for the failure of educational reforms is perhaps indicative of the fact that educational change research over the past thirty years has, by and large, been initiated from and focused on the perspectives of the reformers themselves. There has been little or no regard for the perspectives of those who are supposed to implement the changes -
the teachers (Butt, Raymond, McCue, & Yamagishi, 1992, 51; Lieberman & Miller, 1992, 81; Sikes, 1992, 36). Accordingly, interpretations and analyses of the success or failure of educational reform initiatives have largely come from the program initiators. Only rarely are teachers' voices a part of that analysis (Butt et al., 1992, 51; Goodson, 1992a, 114; 1992b, 10). Even when teachers are given a voice, it has most often been used to reinforce existing theory, rather than to create new theory based on what teachers say (Clandinin, 1986, 11). However, as Richard Butt and his colleagues (1992, 53) observe, "critical assessments of the reasons for the limited impact of curriculum innovations on classroom practice have pointed to the reformer's neglect of the central role of teachers' intentions and pedagogical expertise in effecting significant classroom change." As such, they argue for "ask[ing] the teachers themselves what classroom change means for them, from their own perspective and criteria." By talking with and listening to teachers about their experiences with change initiatives, we can deepen our understanding of issues surrounding educational change and the sustaining of innovative programs, from a perspective that is far too scarce in the literature - that of the teacher. As Margaret Nelson's (1983) research on retired Vermont schoolteachers has shown, "listening to teachers' own interpretations of their experiences can result in a radical reconstruction of the research problem" (as cited in Casey, 1992, 206).

This research, then, involved an interpretive analysis of four teachers' experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project (OGSP) change initiative and the factors that influenced those experiences, with the purpose of gaining a deeper
understanding of issues surrounding teacher and educational change and the sustaining of innovative programs. I have attempted to do so through the voices of the teachers themselves, honouring their narratives and their interpretations, in the hopes of highlighting the significance of the teacher’s perspective to successful change. In this chapter, I develop a rationale for this research based on my own personal context and on a broader theoretical context. The chapter begins with an explanation of how the research topic fits into my own personal context, in terms of how my experiences as a student, teacher, and researcher led me to this particular study. I then go on to provide a theoretical context for the significance of the study, with an historical overview of educational change research over the past thirty years. I conclude the chapter with a summary of the problem that this study addresses.

**Personal Context: Reflections on my Experience**

My interest in the teacher’s perspective of educational change is rooted in my desire to see global education implemented in schools. In fact, this interest in global education was one of my primary reasons for going into teaching. I wanted to bring what I saw as a much needed aspect of education into schools, and I felt that the most effective way of doing so was as a classroom teacher. Unfortunately, my initial experiences in the field of education left me feeling rather disillusioned about the possibilities of bringing global education into the classroom. Any sort of global education was notably absent from my teachers’ college program. We did not
discuss issues of the environment, peace and violence, sexism, or racism, and we were not encouraged to bring any of this into our teaching. I did not have the opportunity to implement global education during my practice teaching, and it did not appear to be a part of the curriculum of either of the schools that I taught in. I saw this as being largely due to the fact that teachers were conservative and traditional, and largely resistant to change.

My experiences at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education were more positive, in that I met other educators who saw the importance of and were dedicated to global education. However, I still viewed teachers as the major barrier to its implementation in schools. The majority of teachers, I felt, were not committed to global education, and therefore, global education was not likely to occur in many schools on anything more than a superficial level. I saw my role as fighting to bring global education into classrooms and schools, despite the resistance I was sure to receive from other teachers, parents, and administrators. My experiences in the course Global Education: Theory and Practice reinforced those beliefs, as I perceived the majority of teachers in the course as lacking both the will and the knowledge to be global educators, and I dismissed their concerns with school structure, administration, time, and so forth as a lack of commitment to the ideals of global education. Now, when I think back, I am embarrassed at my self-righteousness and arrogance, given the fact that I have never been a full time teacher.

In terms of my research, my initial intent was to assess the impact of the Ontario Green Schools Project on one of the schools involved in the project. The
Ontario Green Schools Project, which ran between January 1993 and January 1996, was an attempt to ‘green’ seven schools (four elementary and three secondary) in two Ontario school boards. For project initiators, ‘green’ was to be more than a synonym for ‘environmental’, and issues of equity, health, peace, and rights were also an integral part of the program (Selby, 1996, 41). The goal of the project was to facilitate the infusion of global education throughout each school in as many ways as possible. It involved a multi-stranded approach to effecting change, through the areas of school ground naturalization, school plant, school ethos, curriculum, community, and telecommunications. Although change efforts were divided into strands, the intent was for a simultaneous and intensive implementation of strands. Ideally, each strand would become the responsibility of two or more key teachers who would encourage the flow of ideas between the strands, with a view to achieving a critical mass of change within the school (OGSP Progress Report, 1994, 2-3). Given my past experiences, I was curious about what sort of impact such a program could have, and if it could be sustained once the project initiators left the scene.

Unfortunately, I ended my first term of participant observation in April 1996 much the same way as I had ended teachers’ college - disillusioned about what was possible in terms of global education in an educational system based on fragmentalism, conservatism, and resistance to change. My initial observations and informal conversations with staff had given me the impression that the Green Schools Project had very little impact on this school, and that the aims of the project
had been far from realized. Despite the holistic approach, initiatives seemed to have been adopted in a rather piecemeal way, with certain teachers, mainly from the junior and intermediate divisions, involved in specific one-time projects. Aside from the work of these teachers, however, it seemed that there was little or no involvement on the part of the rest of the staff. Furthermore, the teachers who were involved in the project indicated to me that the initiative was now over. It was something that they did last year, but was now finished and they have moved on to other things. Although some teachers continued to incorporate global education into their curriculum, any collaborative projects that they may have been involved with during the implementation phase of the project appeared to be over. These preliminary, and largely superficial, findings of the impact of the Ontario Green Schools Project on this particular school further entrenched my belief that teachers were resistant to change, and that if a program was not working, it was the fault of the teachers. I began to wonder if teachers could change.

During the summer of 1996, I explored that question through a reading course. As I read Michael Fullan, Virginia Richardson, Richard Butt, and others I began to get a very different picture of the process of educational change, and for the first time I began to look at change from the teacher’s perspective. Yes, teachers can and do change; in fact, they change all of the time, from changing the number and composition of their reading groups, to trying a new activity, to changing their entire language program (Richardson, 1990, 14). The question, then, is not can teachers change, but when and why do teachers change. These authors suggested
that teachers often have very good reasons for not implementing a new program, and that many reformers fail to take into account the teacher's personal and working context when proposing changes. As a result of these readings, I moved from blaming teachers for not changing to attempting to understand what impedes and what facilitates the process of educational change.

When I resumed volunteering in teachers' classrooms that fall, I began to listen and to make observations with almost a new set of eyes. I paid more attention to what teachers were doing, rather than what they weren't doing in terms of global education. I began to realize that most of the teachers that I worked with were very proud of their accomplishments in terms of global education and how they had incorporated it into their curriculum. It maybe hadn't affected the whole school in the way that the project initiators had hoped, or even permeated an individual teacher's entire curriculum, but it was definitely there in places. Informal conversations with teachers also caught my attention in a way that they hadn't the previous year. When I spoke to one teacher about how she got involved in the project and she said, "I don't know, we were sort of just told that we had to do it" (Field Notes, February 26, 1997), I considered that differently than I might have the previous year. I thought about what that meant in terms of this particular teacher's experiences with the project, and how it might have affected the meaning the project had for her.

What I began to realize was that despite the best intentions of project initiators, what is really important in terms of the success of an initiative is the
teachers' interpretations of the change initiative. If teachers do not see the project as having meaning for them and as fitting in with their particular contexts, then the initiative is unlikely to be successful. The teacher interacts with and impacts on the change, just as the change interacts with and impacts on the teacher. As Marilyn Cochran-Smith (1991, 112) observes, “school restructuring efforts are deeply entangled with the biographies of individual teachers.” This is going to be particularly significant for something as value-laden as global education. As a result of these new understandings, my thesis topic developed into an exploration of four teachers' experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project, as means of gaining a deeper understanding of issues surrounding educational change from the perspective of the teacher.

The above account, a summary of my schooling, teaching, and research experiences, provides a personal context for my interest in teachers' experiences with change. I now turn to the literature in order to provide a theoretical context for the significance of the study.

Theoretical Context: Teachers and Educational Change

Although educational reform has been a topic of research almost as long as there has been compulsory schooling (Cohen, 1988, 30), it has not always been the pervasive issue that it is today. It was not until the late 1950s, with the launching of Sputnik 1 by the Soviet Union, that the modern era of planned change in schools began (Greig, Pike, and Selby, 1989, 37). Both the United States and Canada
responded to the Soviet achievement with several large-scale curriculum innovations as a means of remedying the perceived deficiencies in the maths and sciences in their schools; although indeed, the response was far more pronounced in the United States than in Canada (Fullan, 1991, 5). Like the United States, Canada felt that it was at a disadvantage in an expansionist world. However, Canada lacked anything that resembled an adequate research base for modern systems of education. Lacking domestic intellectual resources, Canada turned largely to American and British sources, borrowing ideas and expertise to promote essential changes (Stevenson, 1979). As Michael Fullan (1991, 5) observes, “it was a period of new math, revisions in chemistry and physics, open education, [and] individualized instruction.” This period, which lasted throughout the 1960s, is known as the adoption era, due to the unprecedented adoption of innovations. However, as Fullan (1990, 137-139) points out, there were two problematic assumptions about this era. The first was the assumption that the more innovations adopted the better. Innovations were seen as the mark of progress, and as a result, there tended to be uncritical acceptance of innovations. The second problematic assumption was that if an innovation was “adopted” by a district or school, it was assumed that the innovation was implemented; that is, that the innovation was occurring in practice. During this period, curriculum innovators and policy analysts assumed away implementation issues or overlooked them altogether (McLaughlin, 1987, 171). “Change would come about, it was thought, as a rational outcome of providing new
classroom materials which had been carefully prepared by experts and extensively trialled in schools” (Greig et al., 1989, 37).

By the early 1970s, however, it was painfully obvious that change had not come about. The innovations of the 1960s were not being implemented. Almost overnight, innovation became a dirty word, and the term implementation came into widespread use (Fullan, 1991, 6). This period saw a shift in the direction of educational change research, as scholars attempted to understand teachers and the teaching profession as a whole in an effort to explain why innovations were not being implemented. Two seminal studies in this area included Philip Jackson’s (1968) study of classroom life (Life in Classrooms) and Dan Lortie’s (1975) investigation of the sociology of the teaching occupation (Schoolteacher). These studies provided one explanation for the lack of implementation of new programs. Both Jackson and Lortie pointed to teachers’ “intuitive and non-technical nature” as reasons for their rejection of curricular innovations. Jackson (1968, 144), for example, suggested that teachers are conceptually simplistic and intuitive. He described “an uncomplicated view of causality” and “an intuitive, rather than rational, approach to classroom events” as aspects of teachers’ conceptual simplicity. Lortie (1975, 231) also concluded that teachers are less rational and analytic than other types of college graduates:

the preparation of teachers does not seem to result in the analytic turn of mind one finds in other occupations whose members are trained in colleges and universities. One notes, for example, that few teachers . . . connect their
knowledge of scientific method with practical teaching matters. One hears little mention of the disciplines of observation, comparison, rules of inference, sampling, testing hypotheses through treatment, and so forth. Jackson and Lortie suggested that one of the reasons why teachers were not implementing the changes imposed upon them was because changes deemed by others on rational grounds as good for teachers and students often did not fit teachers' intuitive and non-technical sense of what they should be doing (Richardson, 1990, 11).

As Milbrey McLaughlin (1987, 172) suggests, the initial disappointment with the lack of success of various curriculum innovations led to the downfall of the "rational man" in the eyes of the scientific community. Those responsible for implementation "responded in what often seemed quite idiosyncratic, frustratingly unpredictable, if not downright resistant ways" - all very irrational responses to sound innovations, according to the so-called experts (educational theorists and policy analysts). The assumption, then, was (and in many cases still is) that teachers do not have the analytical and conceptual skills to allow them to relate the theoretical premises of change initiatives to their own pedagogical practice. In this view, the knowledge and concepts of the educational scholars who have been trained in scientific thought is perceived as a greater source of wisdom than teachers' own powers of critical inquiry and their practical knowledge gained from experience (Berlak & Berlak, 1981, 236).
By the 1980s, the focus of educational research seemed to have come full circle. A number of U.S. documents, including the National Commission on Excellence in Education's (1983) *A Nation at Risk*, the Carnegie Forum's (1986) *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*, and the National Governors' Association's (1986) *A Time for Results*, highlighted a resurgence in the desire for educational reform (as cited in Fullan, 1991, 6). As in the 1960s, the impetus for reform was primarily economic. The belief, in the United States particularly, was that we were falling behind other industrial powers in development, productivity, and quality, and that we had to improve our educational system so as to be competitive in the world marketplace (Stevenson, 1979). This time, however, there were distinct differences from the "adoption" period of the 1960s (Fullan, 1991, 6-7). First, there was a decade of research on how and why educational reform succeeds and fails to go on. Second, this new wave of reform efforts was far more comprehensive. It had become clear that the way to bring about change was through a systematic overhaul of the entire educational system, rather than through individual innovations. Third, this wave of reform was characterized by two distinct and philosophically different mandates, which have dominated the discourse on educational reform from the early 1980s through the 1990s. Fullan (*Ibid.*, 7) has termed them *intensification* and *restructuring*. The intensification movement was based on the idea that what was needed for successful educational reform was "teacher-proof" education. It called for "increased definition of curriculum, mandated textbooks, standardized tests tightly aligned with curriculum,
and specification of teaching and administrative methods backed up by evaluation and monitoring" (Ibid.). The restructuring movement, which followed close on the heels of the intensification movement, took a much more positive view of teachers and their role in educational change. It advocated:

- school-based management, enhanced roles for teachers in instruction and decision making, integration of multiple innovations, restructured timetables supporting collaborative work cultures, radical reorganization of teacher education, new roles such as mentors, coaches, and other teacher leadership arrangements, and revamping and developing the shared mission and goals of the school among teachers, administrators, the community, and sometimes parents (Ibid.).

Along with the restructuring movement came a shift in educational researchers’ explanations of the lack of program implementation, in a light that was somewhat more sympathetic to teachers. Researchers began to focus on the relationship between educational change and teachers’ personal and professional contexts, and an important body of literature began to develop in this area (Butt, Raymond, et al., 1992; Butt, Townsend, & Raymond, 1990; Cochran-Smith, 1991; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Goodson, 1992a, 1992c; Hamilton & Richardson, 1995; Richardson, 1990, 1994a, 1994b; Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Lloyd, 1991; Sikes, 1992; Smylie, 1991). What follows is a look at two particular areas of research which began to map out the relationship between teachers’ personal and professional contexts and educational change: studies of teacher knowledge (Clandinin, 1986,
Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Elbaz, 1983, 1991) and life and career history research (Ball & Goodson, 1985; Butt, Raymond, et al., 1992; Butt, Townsend, et al., 1990; Goodson, 1992a, 1992c; Huberman, 1988, 1992; Measor, 1985; Sikes, 1985). The relationship between teacher knowledge and teacher change is predicated upon the assumption that teachers' practices are intimately connected to the personal and practical knowledge of the individual teacher (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, 4). The life history and career research examines teachers' personal and professional lives in order to understand the nature and sources of teachers' philosophies, beliefs, and practices.

The research on teacher knowledge gave us new understandings about teachers' ways of knowing and their origins. Freema Elbaz's (1983) seminal study, *Teacher Thinking: A Study of Practical Knowledge*, marked the turning point in research on teacher thinking, as her study provided the basis for a conceptualization of teachers' practical knowledge; that is, knowledge derived from experience. Prior to Elbaz's work, the research on teacher thinking viewed knowledge solely as cognitive knowledge. Elbaz's work, however, resulted in a description of the content, orientation, and structure of teachers' practical knowledge, defined in its own terms, rather than in terms derived from theory. She developed the notion that teacher knowledge is not just content knowledge or structure knowledge, but it is knowledge that arises out of, and gives shape and meaning to our experiences (Beattie, 1995, 45). Elbaz (1983, 136-138) offers the constructs of rules of practice, practical principles, and images to give an account of the internal structure of one's
practical knowledge, and the construct of orientation to define how personal knowledge is held and used. As Mary Beattie (1995, 45) observes, it is this holding and using of knowledge that makes it *practical* knowledge. Elbaz demonstrated that teacher knowledge is dynamic, and is held in active relationship to practice (Beattie, *Ibid.*). Building on the work of Elbaz (1983), Connelly and Clandinin (1988, 22), offer a conceptualization of knowledge as past, present, and future experience that is in the mind and body, and is affective - moral, emotional, and aesthetic:

all of our experiences take place within our total being. It is virtually impossible to imagine having an experience that does not carry with it emotional, moral, and aesthetic content. Experiences are felt. Experiences are valued. . . . To know something is to feel something. To know something is to value something. To know something is to respond aesthetically.

This view of teacher knowledge put forth by Elbaz and later by Connelly and Clandinin, is based upon a conception of the teacher as one who holds and actively uses knowledge to shape the work situation and to guide the practice of teaching (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986, 515), and has direct implications for conceptions of teacher and educational change. As Sharon Feiman-Nemser and Robert Floden (*Ibid.*, 513) observe, "teachers use practical knowledge to express purposes, give shape and meaning to their experiences." Given that knowledge gives shape and meaning to our experiences, how a teacher experiences a specific change will depend in large part on the teacher's practical knowledge. As Ivor Goodson (1992a, 116) asserts, "life experiences and background are obviously key ingredients of the
people that we are, our sense of self. To the degree that we invest our ‘self’ in our teaching, experience and background shape our practice.”

Researchers who embrace the conception of the teacher as one who mediates ideas and constructs, and acts upon meaning and knowledge (Richardson, 1994a, 6) are beginning to look at reform efforts from the perspective of the teacher, in terms of their personal and professional contexts. The life history research of Richard Butt and his colleagues (1990, 1992) is an example. Using a method referred to as collaborative autobiography, they look at teachers’ life stories in relation to professional development and change. Collaborative autobiography involves teachers collaborating with each other to write and interpret their personal and professional life stories. Their research suggests that teacher practice is an expression of one’s world view, which is made up of knowledge and beliefs gained through life experience. For example, for one participant in their study, Ray, the ideal image of the classroom is as a “haven” (Butt et al., 1990, 257-260). Ray tries to create a haven by being a friend, counselor, and teacher to the students, by giving students encouragement to develop a sense of personal identity and a strong sense of self-worth, and by trying to recognize and meet the personal needs of the students. In short, Ray tries to create a warm, comfortable, and safe environment for his students, which he recognizes as often being radically different than some of their home environments.

Ray’s image of the classroom as a haven obviously did not occur in a vacuum. It is based upon Ray’s own experiences, both in the past and the present. For
example, Ray (Ibid., 258) tells a story about learning of a student’s home life with an alcoholic and abusive father, and how this had a pronounced effect on the way Ray now sees his classroom:

the awareness of this situation and many others like this one led me to the realization that for many children academic achievement was not a high priority and that school was viewed by some children as an escape from the horrors of their world - as a haven. I determined that my classroom would be viewed as a haven and that the students would be sympathetically and caringly heard in my classroom.

Ray also describes the link between his experiences as a student and his image of haven:

my most dominant memories were of stern, very firm, inflexible teachers. . . .

These events had a significant impact on me. . . . I began to develop a strong sense of compassion for others who seemed to have difficulty and this carried over into all avenues of my development, even into my classroom.

As Butt et al. (Ibid., 261) point out, “from Ray’s autobiography we can see how the notion of haven for his students is rooted in his own personal experience.”

The ‘Kensington’ study conducted by Smith and Keith (1971) is another example of a biographical approach to school improvement in which individuals, including their career history prior to the innovation, were studied (as cited in Huberman, 1988, 121). As Huberman (Ibid.) notes, “the experience undergone by these people became centre stage - the ways in which the innovation was ‘lived’
phenomenologically was a powerful determinant of its outcomes and underscored nicely the interaction between 'person variables' and 'setting variables'.” Michael Huberman and colleagues' (1987) study of Swiss secondary school teachers' career cycles showed that innovations affect and are affected by the teacher's stage in the career cycle (as cited in Huberman, 1988, 1992). Huberman and his colleagues worked with four different “experience groups”: those who had taught for 5 to 10 years, those who had taught for 11 to 19 years, those who had taught for 20 to 29 years, and those who had taught for 30 to 39 years. They found that teachers are most likely to experiment with teaching practices and curriculum between 7 and 18 years. Huberman (1988, 130) explains: “having consolidated their basic repertoires, they are interested in extending them, seeking out new leads and addressing institutional constraints that hinder the changes they are now pursuing more aggressively.” Teachers with 20 to 40 years experience, however, were more likely to be in a phase of “pulling-back”, becoming more internal, focusing on retirement, and interests outside of teaching. Huberman (ibid.) also notes that while this shift in focusing from external to internal issues appears to be “natural”, it is also often a result of “disappointments with ambitious attempts to improve school-wide practices.”

Peter Woods and colleagues' (1981) research differed slightly from Huberman's in that their focus was on the teacher's career cycle within the life cycle (as cited in Sikes, 1985). Woods and his colleagues worked with five age groups of teachers: those in the 21 to 28 age group, those in the 28 to 33 age group, those in the
30 to 40 age group, those in the 40 to 50/55 age group, and those in the 50 to 55 plus age group. Their research showed that teachers in the 28 to 33 age group are beginning to experiment with new ideas, and many are becoming interested in curriculum development and innovation. Teachers in the 30 to 40 age group, however, are at their “peak” in terms of energy, involvement, ambition, and self-confidence. Yet, it is also during this time that decisions are often made as to whether to continue fully focused on teaching and to put most efforts into it, or whether to cut down on energy put into teaching and invest more energy into an alternate career, families, homes, or hobbies (Sikes, 1985, 46-49). For those teachers who choose to stay fully focused on teaching, however, this may be an ideal time for involvement in curriculum and whole school innovations. Sikes (Ibid., 54) notes that the fifty plus age range is a time where “energy and enthusiasm for the job are felt to be declining.” This would appear to coincide with Huberman’s teachers with 20 to 40 years experience who are shifting interests from teaching to home.

The research on teachers’ career and life histories obviously has important implications for educational change. This research suggests that different experiences, attitudes, and perceptions appear to be related to different phases of the teacher’s life and career cycle. If we accept that there are variations in meaning attached to teachers’ work at different phases of their career and life cycle, then it follows that there would be variations in the meaning teachers attach to experiences with change at different phases of their career and life cycles.
The work of Clandinin and Connelly (1996, 24) makes the important link between understanding teacher knowledge and the context in which teachers live and work: "the professional knowledge context shapes effective teaching, what teachers know, what knowledge is seen as essential for teaching, and who is warranted to produce such knowledge." Teacher development and change occur within a school context, and the culture of the school can strongly affect the process and results of a change program, as well as teachers' considerations of changing their practice (Hamilton & Richardson, 1995, 368; Richardson, 1994a, 6).

Ray's story (Butt et al., 1990, 257-260) shows us the impact that situational factors can have on one's practice. For example, in certain contexts (such as in his compulsory Grade 9 social studies classes) he is only able to pursue his ideal image of the haven classroom in limited ways. This is due to a variety of factors, including the mandated curriculum, the maturity level of his students, and the specific nature of the subject matter. However, Ray's sacrifice of his preferred classroom image and teaching style to content and control in his compulsory grade nine classes contrasts significantly with his grade nine geography class. Contextual differences between Ray's geography class and his social studies classes are a factor. Ray developed the geography course himself, and because it is an optional course, many of his students have freely chosen to take this course. As a result of these differing contextual factors, Ray's practices in this class is distinctly different from the compulsory course. Thus, other factors besides teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and experience can influence their practices. Contextual factors such as the teacher's skill, students'
interest and ability, and the nature of the subject matter being taught can all influence the actual pedagogy implemented. In the end, it is the complex interplay between the teachers' personal and professional contexts which influence a teacher's practice, and their willingness to change their practice.

It is extremely difficult to separate the teacher's knowledge, beliefs, and values from those of the school culture as a whole - it is in fact, often very difficult to see where one ends and the other begins. As Connelly and Clandinin (1988) contend, teachers' knowledge, beliefs, experiences, and those of the school culture are enfolded within teachers' narratives, which has direct consequences for how teachers experience change.

The focus of educational change research in the past decade has been considerably more respectful of teachers and their reasons for accepting or rejecting proposed changes (unfortunately, those at the macro-political level have been less than respectful of teachers in recent years). As Richardson (1994a, 5) observes, there has been a shift in research on educational change that reflects considerations of power and voice. Butt et al. (1992, 51-56), for example, speak of the importance of educational reformers understanding the teacher's perspective and hearing the teacher's voice. Goodson (1992a, 112) argues for "reconceptualizing educational research so as to assure that the teacher's voice is heard, both loudly and articulately." Many educational researchers have begun to realize that the implementation of change initiatives is intricately related to teachers' personal and
professional contexts, and this understanding has placed the teacher at the centre of research on educational reform.

The Problem Summarized

As mentioned above, teachers' voices have, until quite recently, been notably absent from the discourse on educational change. However, as educational researchers are beginning to acknowledge, we can learn a great deal about educational change and the sustaining of innovative programs by listening to the voices of teachers. The purpose of the present study was to gain a deeper understanding of issues surrounding teacher and educational change from the perspective of the teacher. I have attempted to do so through an analysis of four teachers' experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project, and the contextual variables which influenced those experiences. The following questions have guided my research:

1. How did four teachers experience the Ontario Green Schools Project and what factors influenced those experiences?

2. What do the teachers' experiences have to tell us about some of the issues surrounding teacher and educational change and the sustaining of innovations?
Several factors emerged as influences on the participants' experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project. They include: one's beliefs, values, and past experiences, realities of teaching, school culture, available support, ownership over the initiative, and the nature of the innovation. I have organized these variables under the headings of personal context, work context, and the change process, which are discussed in chapters three, four, and five, respectively. Although organized into chapters, it will be readily apparent that these factors are not discrete. They are overlapping and flow into one another. The above factors surfaced in the transcripts repeatedly for the participants, and provide us with some insight into issues surrounding teacher and educational change and the sustaining of innovations from the perspectives of the four participants.
Chapter Two

Methodology

Introduction

In chapter one I argued for the importance of talking with and listening to teachers about their experiences with change initiatives, so as to gain a more complete understanding of issues surrounding educational change. In this chapter I outline the methods used in this study to hear, record, and analyse teachers' experiences. The chapter begins with an explanation of the research design. Following that, I discuss the method of selecting the research site and the participants. I then go on to explain the processes of data collection and analysis. Finally, I consider issues of validity and ethics.

The Research Design

The present study is an interpretive case study of four teachers' experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project factors that influenced those experiences. Probably the most agreed upon criterion of what qualifies as a case study is that the focus of investigation is a bounded system; a specific phenomenon such as a program, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group (Merriam, 1988, 9). The phenomenon which I am studying is teachers' experiences with a particular change initiative. The case study is further defined as a research design
which allows the researcher to draw on a variety of research perspectives (Ibid., 2).

This study draws on both the phenomenological and the narrative research perspectives. The narrative perspective, as explained by Connelly and Clandinin (1988, 109), is concerned with "the meaning that specific actions hold in terms of a participant's personal and social history." The locus of phenomenological research is human experience, with a focus on the participant's experienced meaning (Polkinghorne, 1989, 44-45).

The Research Site and Participants

Selecting the School and Gaining Access

The school selected as the site for this study was chosen primarily for practical reasons. Given the distance between my residence and the schools involved in the Green Schools Project, physically getting to most of the schools was going to be time-consuming and inconvenient. A member of the project team suggested Northside Elementary School (pseudonym) as the one which would be on the most direct travel route for me, and which she thought had a staff that would be receptive to being involved in the study. As such, I chose to focus on the experiences of teachers at this particular school. Limiting the focus to teachers at one particular school, however, also has the advantage of eliminating extraneous variables, such as differences in school culture and differences in the level of various schools' involvement in the project, and makes comparison of teachers' experiences within a school possible.
Gaining access to the school began in November 1995 by contacting the principal. I explained that I would like to begin my research by conducting participant observation in the classrooms of several teachers. She told me that she would discuss it with the staff, and asked me to get back to her in early December. We spoke again in early December, and she told me that four teachers had agreed to have me volunteer and observe in their classrooms, which I began in January 1996.

Selecting the Participants

While the school selection process was relatively quick, the process of participant selection took several months. A "snowball" or "network" technique was employed in which the four teachers who initially agreed to have me volunteer and observe in their classrooms were asked to name other teachers who had been involved in the Green Schools Project. Those teachers were then approached, and with their permission I conducted participant observation in their classrooms. These teachers were, in turn, asked to supply the names of others who had been involved in the project. This process allowed me to become acquainted with most of the teachers who had been involved in the Green Schools Project. Through informal conversations in the staffroom, I also became acquainted with several teachers who had not been particularly involved in the Green Schools Project, and with their permission conducted periodic participant observation in their classrooms.

In March 1997, I asked eight teachers for permission to interview them regarding their experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project. This was done
through a letter stating the purpose of the study and an explanation of the interview process (see Appendix A). The teachers who were invited to participate in the study were all teachers with whom I had either volunteered or had informal conversations, during which they had piqued my interest with comments concerning their experiences with the Green Schools Project. Five of the eight teachers agreed to participate in the study, four of whom had been directly involved in the project, and one who had not. However, as I had decided to focus my investigation on the experiences of teachers who had been involved in the project, I limited my selection of participants to the four teachers who had been directly involved in the project.

**Data Collection**

The data collection process evolved in two parts. The first part consisted of participant observation in various teachers' classrooms. In many ways, I followed an ethnographic approach, as the purpose of the participant observation was to inform myself about appropriate areas of investigation, and to develop a sound researcher-participant relationship (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, 40). This phase of the data collection process occurred between January 1996 and March 1997. The second part of the data collection consisted of a series of in-depth interviews with four teachers (see Appendix B for interview questions). This phase of the process occurred between March and September 1997.
**Phase One: Participant Observation**

As explained, the purpose of the beginning phase of participant observation was to gain a sense of the impact of the Green Schools Project on the school, to become acquainted with the school and the staff, and to discover possible areas of investigation. Each teacher involved was verbally informed of the nature of my research and my purposes for conducting participant observation in their classroom. It was also explained that my role in their classroom would first and foremost be to help them, but when they did not require my help, I would be taking field notes of their teaching and classroom activities. Teachers were assured that the notes would remain confidential and that I was the only one who would view them. They were also informed of their right to read the notes at any time, and that their written consent would be obtained before any of the notes would be used in the ensuing thesis. To each teacher it was also made clear that this was simply the beginning phase of my study and once I had narrowed my area of investigation and formulated my research questions, teachers would be formally invited to participate in the study. Upon receiving each teacher’s permission to volunteer and observe in their classroom, I gave the students in each class an oral introduction of myself and my research, and my role in their classroom. Students were also informed that I would be taking field notes, but that these notes would not pertain to them, only to their teacher and their classroom activities.

In the end, only the observational notes from the four teachers who agreed to be interviewed were used to inform the thesis. Written consent was obtained from
each of these teachers (see Appendix C). In terms of the four teachers interviewed, participant observation served two main purposes. First, it helped me to create a more complete profile of the participant as a teacher, and provided an alternate means of obtaining contextual information. Second, classroom observations informed the interviews, giving my questions more depth and more of a grounding in a shared reality.

**Phase Two: In-Depth Phenomenological Interviews**

In order to understand teachers' experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project, I chose an in-depth phenomenological interview approach (Seidman, 1991). I chose such an approach because it is designed to have participants reconstruct and explore the meaning of their experiences, and it is ultimately concerned with the participants' understanding of their experiences (Ibid., 9, 19).

The in-depth phenomenological interview approach "combines life-history interviewing and focused in-depth interviewing informed by assumptions drawn from phenomenology" (Ibid., 9). The approach follows a three-interview format. The purpose of the first interview is to obtain a contextual background for the participant's experiences from their life history. In this interview I explored some of the participants' childhood experiences, what led them to teaching, their development as a teacher, and as some of their experiences with other educational innovations over the years. The second interview is concerned with the details of their experience with the particular phenomenon. In this interview I had the
participants discuss their involvement with the Ontario Green Schools Project in as much detail as possible. The purpose of the third interview is to allow for reflection on the meaning that the experience has had for the participant. In this interview, which was conducted in the form of a questionnaire due to busy and conflicting schedules, participants reflected on their involvement in the Green Schools Project and summarized its meaning for them.

Although conducting the third interview in person would have likely yielded more detailed data, overall, I do not think that conducting the interview as a questionnaire affected the quality of the data in any substantial way. Two participants indicated that they already felt “talked out” on the subject of the Green Schools Project, and I may not have obtained much more information from those participants regardless of the form of the interview. Also, use of the questionnaire had the advantage of providing participants with the opportunity to take more time to reflect on their answers than they may have during a face to face interview. As a result, while I may not have obtained as much information in terms of quantity, the quality of the information that I did receive may have been increased.

Interviews were conducted between March and September 1997. Each interview lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. Interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. At the time of the first interview, each participant received a Letter of Informed Consent (see Appendix C), which was signed and dated by myself and the participant before we began the interview. A photocopy of the signed consent form was given to the participant, and I kept the original. Each participant also received a
Participant Information form to fill out (see Appendix D). Participants were given a copy of the interview questions at the beginning of the first interview, if not before. The location of each interview was negotiated with the participants, with the goal being to find a place where both the participant and myself felt most comfortable. Most interviews took place in the teachers’ classrooms after school. Following Seidman’s model, the interviews were very open-ended, following the basic question that established the purpose and focus of each interview. Although I had some guiding questions, my questions largely emerged from the participant’s narrative. Each participant was given a copy of their interview transcripts for review, and was asked to contact me if there was anything in the transcripts that they wanted to discuss or that they did not want included in the thesis.

It should be noted that although I drew heavily on Seidman’s model, I did not follow it to the letter, but adapted it to suit my own purposes and needs. For example, Seidman (Ibid., 13) strongly suggests “respecting the structure,” by sticking to a focus on life history in interview one, a focus on the details of the experience in question in interview two, and a focus on reflection of meanings in interview three. However, I did not discourage participants if, for example, during the second interview they began discussing their personal history in order to explain or give meaning to their experiences with Green Schools Project.

Another important aspect of my interviewing technique differed from Seidman’s model. Despite the open-ended interview model, Seidman (Ibid., 72-73) still advocates an “I-Thou” relationship, as opposed to a “We” relationship,
suggesting that the interview should be approached as an interview, not as a conversation, which a "We" relationship would entail. Seidman (ibid., 73) argues for "keep[ing] enough distance to allow the participant to fashion his or her responses as independently as possible," and "saying enough . . . to be alive and responsive, but little enough to preserve the autonomy of the participant’s words and to keep the focus of attention on his or her experience rather than [the researcher’s]."

However, I found that in most cases, sharing my own experiences and perceptions helped to open participants up and got them talking about themselves in much more detail. As in any conversation, self-disclosure on the part of one participant can trigger ideas and thoughts in the other. As such, I followed a more feminist approach to interviewing, interpreting the interview as a conversation; a "We" relationship. I drew on Ann Oakley’s (1981) notions of the interview as an interactive and reciprocal relationship. For Oakley, personal responsiveness and engagement in the process of interviewing by the researcher can provide the basis for data collection of the richest kind. Based on her experiences as a feminist interviewer, she found that "the goal of finding out about people through interviewing is best achieved when the relationship of interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship" (Oakley, 1981, 41). Shulamit Reinharz (1992, 32) also argues that "researcher self-disclosure during interviews is good feminist practice."
Further, given my all-female sample of teachers, feminist research techniques are especially appropriate, in that in feminist research, the interview acts as a vehicle for empowering the participants to find their “voice”. Women’s voices have been traditionally silenced in the academic community, and the field of educational research is no exception. Scholars, until recently, have shown little interest in studying the perspectives and knowledge of women who teach (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986, 518). My research is an attempt to allow those who have been traditionally silenced (that is, teachers, most of whom are women) to share their perspectives and experiences. I am interested in the political act of giving teachers’ voices expression, with the hope that by simply understanding their experiences, I might in some small way strengthen their voices in the negotiations that determine educational policy.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data was an ongoing process, beginning with the recording of analytical field notes of my reflections, interpretations, thoughts, and feelings regarding my observations. These analytic notes helped me to focus my study and to develop my research questions. My next step was transcribing the interviews, during which I also recorded my reflections, interpretations, and thoughts regarding themes emerging from the interviews. This process allowed me a considerable amount of initial analysis and development of my understandings and interpretations.
Once all of the interviews were transcribed, I began the next stage of data analysis. I followed Seidman’s (1991, 91-101) suggestion of creating “cut-and-pasted” transcripts for each participant, as a way to “find and display coherence in the constitutive events of a participant’s experience” (Ibid., 92). As with the interview process, I did not follow Seidman’s instructions precisely, but rather used his idea as a guideline for my own process. I also used many of Glesne and Peshkin’s (1992, 132-135) suggestions of how to approach this stage of the data analysis. The first step involved organizing and sorting each participant’s interview transcripts into topics of discussion. This was done on two levels. First, the interviews were sorted into biographical information and data pertaining to participants’ experiences with the Green Schools Project. All biographical information was cut-and-pasted into a single transcript, which was labeled Part A. The same was done for all of the data pertaining to participants’ experiences with the Green Schools Project, which was labeled Part B. Second, parts A and B were further sorted into more specific subjects of discussion. For example, in Part A, there were categories of childhood experiences, early teaching experiences, and teaching philosophies and beliefs. In Part B, there were topics of why the participant chose to get involved in the Green Schools Project, school culture, and administration’s role in the project. I then sifted through each category, synthesizing the text by discarding passages that were redundant or off-topic. I also discarded most of my comments, except when they were necessary for understanding the participant’s
statements. What emerged was a synthesis of each participant's comments pertaining to various topics of discussion.

The second step in the process involved marking passages in each category that seemed important and/or interesting, and labeling them with a theme. An interpretation of the possible meaning of the passages was also noted in the margins. The cut-and-pasted transcripts were then reviewed and the themes grouped under the headings of major themes, such as realities of teaching, school culture, support, and ownership. Major themes were then coded using coloured "Post-It Notes". Each passage was marked with a different colour for each main theme that had emerged. After coding the themes, I was then able to make an overall outline of the thesis chapters and major sections, by placing the themes into a meaningful sequence.

**Issues of Validity**

The concept of validity has its roots in a positive and deductive tradition of scientific inquiry. Campbell and Stanley's (1963) classic distinction between internal and external validity holds "the former referring to the specific findings of a particular study and the latter to the generalizability of findings to other populations" (as cited in Mishler, 1986, 110-111). However, such a conceptualization is inappropriate for interpretive, inductive research. As the Personal Narratives Group (1989, 261) asserts, "the truths of personal narratives are neither open to proof nor self-evident. We come to understand them only through interpretation,
paying careful attention to the contexts that shape their creation and to the world views that inform them.” As the sharing of one’s experience involves the creation of meaning, it is not an objective understanding of the past as it actually was that I am interested in. Instead, I am interested in the participant’s interpretation of their experiences, and the current meaning that those experiences hold for them. Such meanings are undoubtedly expected to change as we grow and change. As Harry Walcott (1990, 144) argues, in qualitative research there is “no single and ‘correct’ interpretation, nothing scientific to measure that tells us anything important.” Moreover, as Seidman (1991, 103) observes, “the narratives that we present are a function of our interaction with the participants and their words.” The Personal Narratives Group (1989, 262) further argues that inflating research which conforms to the traditional criteria of validity artificially elevates certain kinds of truth over others. Those truths which do not meet the criteria tend to be those of the particular, which are often those of women and other minority groups whose voices are seldom heard. This serves to close off certain questions, and assume partial reality to be the whole story. However, it is essential that we hear these truths of experience because they are specific. It is only by attending to the specific (experiences and perspectives) that we may find the general: “if Truth rests on generalization, it must take into account experience that has previously been ignored, forgotten, ridiculed, and devalued” (Ibid., 262-263).

The case study is the ultimate form of research which holds concern for the particular. As such external validity (generalizability) is often identified as its single
greatest weakness (Campbell, 1975 as cited in Walcott, 1990, 123). Yet, as Barry MacDonald and Rob Walker (1977, 188) assert, new criteria for judging the case study are needed. In their words:

proof is rarely obtainable in case-study research. Rather than setting proof as the primary goal, the case worker should aim to increase understanding of the variables, parameters and dynamics of the case under study. Cross-checking rather than consistency is the main strategy of validation. The case-study worker is guided in his research by the pursuit of discrepancy. It is implicit in the notion of case-study that there is no one true definition of the situation. In social situations, truth is multiple.

With consideration to the arguments made in this section, I made the following efforts as a means of "validating" my data, understanding that I use the term validity to mean presenting an honest interpretation of the experiences of my four participants. First and foremost, I continually documented my thesis process. Second, I put myself into the research, acknowledging and working with my subjectivity, biases, and assumptions. As discussed in chapter one, my assumptions concerning teachers and educational change shifted dramatically over the course of my research. I began my research under the assumption that most teachers are resistant to change, and for this reason they were the major barrier to the implementation of global education in schools. That presumption shifted, however, throughout the research process, and I moved from blaming teachers for not changing to attempting to understand change from the teacher's perspective. I
began to suppose that other factors many factors beyond the control of teachers were related to the success and failure of educational change. For example, the teachers’ work context, the demanding nature of teaching, lack of sufficient support for teachers, and perhaps most importantly, the fact that teachers are rarely included in the conceptualization of such changes. They are simply expected to implement what someone else, often far removed from the reality of the teacher’s classroom, has deemed important. It was with these suppositions that I ultimately focused my research on gaining a deeper understanding of some of the issues related to teacher and educational change from the perspective of the teacher. The third way I have attempted to validate my data is by recording my field notes as accurately and as detailed as possible. Fourth, I provided participants with their interview transcripts for review and validation. Finally, I have tried to be careful to differentiate between my meanings and interpretations and my those of participants.

**Ethical Considerations**

In order to ensure that each participant in this study was treated with the utmost respect and dignity, and that the anonymity of each participant was maintained to the best of my ability, my research was guided by two main principles; the principle of anonymity and the principle of awareness. To honour the principle of anonymity, I kept all raw data (audio-tapes, transcripts, field notes, computer disks, information sheets, consent forms) secure in my home and in my locked office. Each participant’s name, the names of persons and schools they
referred to, and the school site in question have been disguised with pseudonyms. Also, anything that the participants said to me (informally or during formal interview and classroom observation sessions), was held in confidence and was only discussed in the anonymized context of the research or in general terms.

There is of course some threat to anonymity being revealed, as in the thesis I openly discuss the name of the school change initiative. Since there were a limited number of schools involved in the project, it is possible to deduce which school I am referring to, and from there to deduce which teachers I am referring to. In order to guard against this, I have used only as much biographical data as is of value to understanding the thesis. Also, each participant has been given the opportunity to veto the use of any information that pertains to them. This leads into my principle of awareness. In order to honour this principle, I consistently worked to keep the participants aware at all times of my research process, of my preliminary interpretations, understandings, and analyses, and of how I was using the data. I also submitted all interview transcripts to participants for comments, revisions and/or censorship.

In following the above principles of procedure, I have endeavored to treat each participant with respect and dignity, and to honour their narrative and their interpretation of their experiences. In essence, I have attempted to allow each participant to tell their story and to respect the authenticity and integrity of that story.
Chapter Three

Personal Context

Introduction

In order to understand what meaning a change initiative holds for teachers, it is necessary to understand the personal context that teachers bring to those experiences. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the participants and to show how each participant's personal context (beliefs, values, and life experiences) influenced their involvement in the Ontario Green Schools Project.

As explained in chapter two, I conducted participant observation at Northside Elementary School between January 1996 and March 1997. During that time, I became acquainted with each of the participants, and spent time volunteering and observing in the classrooms of three of the participants. Between March and September 1997, each teacher participated in three interviews. The first two interviews were conducted in person at the teachers' school, and lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. Our conversations were audio-taped and later transcribed. The third interview was conducted in the form of a questionnaire, which participants completed and then returned to me by mail. Each teacher was given a copy of their interview transcripts for review, and was asked to contact me if there was anything in the transcripts that they wanted to discuss or that they did not want included in the thesis.
Sandra

I met Sandra in January 1996 when I began conducting participant observation in her classroom for the purposes of this study. Out of all of the participants, I spent the most time in Sandra’s classroom. Between January 1996 and March 1997, I volunteered and observed in her classroom for approximately two hours on each of ten occasions. She welcomed my help and was very supportive of my research. She was eager to share her Green Schools Project experiences, and our interviews always lasted a full 90 minutes. At the time of the interviews, Sandra had been teaching for four years and was thirty-seven years old. She was in her second year of full time teaching when she became involved in the Ontario Green Schools Project.

In order to understand Sandra as a teacher, and what drew her to the Ontario Green Schools Project, it is necessary to look at her childhood experiences, particularly as a school student, as they play an important role in the teacher she is today. Sandra describes herself as “not a good student” who was always worried about failing. She remembers herself as “being sort of dopey” and the “klutz” of the family, never quite measuring up to her older sister. Looking back, she believes that she had a learning disability that was perhaps not recognized by her parents or teachers. Because of her difficulties in school, she recalls her childhood as a stressful one, fraught with constant worry over failing and disappointing her parents and teachers.
I was always, you know, threatened, 'you're going to fail. Sandra's going to fail if she doesn't stop daydreaming.' Ones were good and fives were bad, and I only got a five once but I was devastated and I thought I was going to be sent away to a home, you know. [laughs] Oh, it was awful. I thought I was going to be sent away and I'd be in so much trouble and ohhh - a very stressful childhood I guess.

During our interviews, Sandra spoke candidly about the relationship between her teaching practices and her own difficulties in school. As a result of her difficulties in school, Sandra feels that she is much more in tune with students who have learning difficulties. She explained how she tries to create a supportive learning environment in which students are able work at their individual levels, but at the same time are encouraged to develop in areas in which they are weak. For example, she makes sure that her students understand that she is grading them according to their personal abilities.

Like, look at the cover of this book one of my students did. She drew this. . . . Now, you have other kids going, 'I can't draw' or 'mine won't look like hers.' But it doesn't matter because if that's your best, if that's the best you can do, then that's great. Like with this one, oh this kid worked and worked and worked, and I think he was happy with [it]. Now he's not a drawer and you can see that. But if they know that they've tried, then that's all you can ask. . . . You know, like what's expected for some is not the same as what we expect for others. It comes down to this again - your A is not somebody else's A, your very best picture is not [hers] . . . that's her ten, that's not
your ten. And the kids know that I mark them that way. I mark them according to how you do and what you’re capable of, as opposed to what she’s capable of.

She also provides opportunities for students with differing strengths and weaknesses to work together and learn from each other. In this way, students whose strengths fall outside the realm of “academics” have opportunities to be in the spotlight.

I’ve got grade six students who are reading at a grade one, grade two level. They’re still doing the same content. In centres where there’s reading, someone reads with them. I mean, there’s two able children and there’s two disabled kids in every group, or there’s two messy kids and two neat kids. . . . But all my bright kids aren’t necessarily my neat children, so you know, the dynamics of these groups are they play off of each other very well. You know, like some of my real vocals are artsy fartsy kids, and that’s wonderful because the real brainers who can’t colour to save their life, you know it teaches them to appreciate somebody else like that.

Sandra explained that she also emphasizes to her students that they should use whatever learning strategy works for them, and she is not embarrassed to share with her students some of the learning strategies that she uses.

*When I add numbers in my head, I’ll tell them, I picture playing cards. Like I see seven as a group of five and a group of two, and I’ll make pictures and add them together, or I’ll tap my foot. So I have to hear things and see things at the same time, and quite often I’ll have to touch them, so that’s just the way I learn* . . . So I let them
know that whatever they want to do is valid and that will help them. If it works, then you do it. It doesn’t matter if you think it’s silly. It works, then use it.

Sandra’s main goal as a teacher is to create a supportive learning environment for all of her students, no matter what their individual abilities. Her own difficulties as a student have made her try to be a patient, understanding, and compassionate teacher. All that she asks from her students is that they do their best and that they try their hardest.

I think I get that from my dad because [me] not being a student, he would say [to me], ‘well, all you can do is your best.’ And if they do that, then I think that I’m happy and they’ll be happy.

Through our conversations, it also became apparent that Sandra believes in providing her students with a structured and organized program, and her focus is on helping her students to master the basic skills first and foremost. This is related to what she herself needed for success as a student. For example, basic writing skills are an important part of her program. She relates her emphasis on language skills to her own struggles with writing, both as a student and as an adult. She feels that she is not a proficient writer, and as a result “writing and knowing what they’re writing” tends to be a big focus in her program. She wants her students to not only be able to write well, but to be able to talk about their learning and take ownership of their work. Her emphasis on structure and organization is also related to what she needs to be a successful teacher.
I always take tons of stuff home because I have to plan. From here I want to know what it is I’m going to be doing, because I need structure. I need to know what’s my next step. I have to start thinking about it before. And I’ve always been like that.

This may suggest a rather dry and boring program, however, this is not the case. There is a very humanistic quality to Sandra’s curriculum. During my time in her classroom, I observed her use humour, personal stories, and creative lesson plans to teach her students. She is always willing to try something new that will be interesting for both her and her students, and as she pointed out, this was a key factor in her interest and involvement in the Ontario Green Schools Project. She saw environmental education as an opportunity to provide her students with the basic skills that they needed in an interesting and positive way. It was something that both she and her students were enthusiastic about and interested in.

They [students] really bought into the whole environmental thing. I think that too helped me see where I wanted to go with it. . . . So it was like, totally awesome. I just loved it. It was just fabulous the way these kids bought into it because they loved it so much. That was the same year, my second year, that we did the waste audit, which was, I mean it really is, it was such a neat experience. The kids loved it. . . . We took the totals [for the waste audit] and we made graphs as part of our math program. So I gave two people an area each, and what they had to do was they graphed it in percentage, and everything that was recyclable was graphed in blue, like drawn on in blue, and everything else was just whatever colour. And when we had them up we had like thirty of them all around the room and it was amazing how much blue, like
the visual impact to the kids was really neat. But they had to convert it into you
know the weights to percentages and then - it was excellent. It was such an
awesome, awesome thing that they did.

Sandra’s interest in the Green Schools Project is also related to her early
teaching experiences. Sandra began her teaching career five years ago, during a
time when environmental education was popular with teachers, students, and
administrators. Her first occasional contract placement was in a school with a
strong environmental focus. She says that her experiences in this school had a large
impact on her interest in environmental education. When Sandra began teaching on
a permanent contract at the present school, she was assigned a grade five class
which had an environmental program already in place.

So I got a grade five class and I loved it. The thing I liked most about grade five was
when I came here, ah, the program was set. Like, I was already signed up for a three
day Earthkeeper program and I was twinned with a school in Costa Rica in the cloud
forest, which was really neat.

The following year, Sandra’s second year in grade five, she felt much more
confident in her role as a teacher and continued with the environmental program
that had been set for her, but also began to add more elements to it of her own
initiative.

The garbage unit the second year was because I wanted to do this, because I saw how
it connected everything together.
She also got the school involved in the Seeds Foundation’s Learners in Action Program, which involves students and classes working toward becoming a Green School by completing environmental deeds. It was at the beginning of that school year that Sandra remembers first hearing about the Ontario Green Schools Project and she jumped at the chance to become involved.

*I'd already done the first year of grade five and was heavy into the environmental thing and I loved it, so I knew this was what I was going to do.*

She worked on the Green Schools Project in partnership with the grade four teacher. Sandra took on the waste audit, while the other teacher took on the school yard naturalization. They also started up a school environmental club called the Green Team.

Over the course of our time together, I came to see Sandra as deeply committed to her students and as someone who genuinely loves teaching. Her interest and involvement in the Green Schools Project was in large part related to her desire to make learning a positive and enjoyable experience for all of her students, no matter what their individual abilities. Through activities such as the waste audit, students were able to learn a variety of skills and concepts in a way that captured their interest and enthusiasm. For Sandra, this was one of the most beneficial aspects of the Ontario Green Schools Project.
Beverley

I did not meet Beverley until my second year of volunteering and observing at Northside, as she had been on leave the previous year. Like Sandra, Beverley was very supportive of my research and she agreed without hesitation to participate in the study. I conducted participant observation in Beverley’s classroom for approximately two hours on each of six occasions, between November 1996 and March 1997. At the time of the interviews, Beverley had been teaching for five years and was thirty-seven years old. She was in her third year of teaching when she became involved with the Ontario Green Schools Project.

The most predominant factor related to Beverley’s involvement in the Green Schools Project stems from the inconsistencies that she felt during her beginning years as a teacher. To understand this more fully, we must examine her teaching philosophies and beliefs, and the nature of her early teaching experiences. Beverley’s decision to become a teacher was formed at a young age and stuck with her throughout her schooling years.

I guess really the first impressionable moment I remember was [short pause] we had a Superintendent who taught us physed and I never enjoyed it, and I was very athletic. And I always thought, I remember saying to myself at a very young age, ‘I’m gonna come back and I’m gonna get his job.’ So in my mind, I always thought I was going to be the teacher who was going to come back and teach physed to all of the young kids, and make it fun. So that was always in my mind.
Thus, Beverley embarked on a career in teaching as a means of offering students the opportunity to learn and to develop their strengths in a fun and safe environment, something which she felt she did always not have the opportunity to do as a student. This philosophy of teaching continues to be important to Beverley. Upon entering her classroom for the first time, I was struck by the warm and friendly atmosphere. One of the first things I noticed was a ‘Personal Celebrations’ bulletin board. The board was filled with photographs, awards, and biographical information about one of the students in the classroom. Beverley later told me that each student was given a turn to share their personal celebrations with the class and display them on the board for one week. This bulletin board is very telling of Beverley’s teaching philosophy and practices.

*I guess what it would be, my whole philosophy is trying to provide one opportunity for each kid to have a moment to shine, somewhere, at some point in the year. . . . anything that makes them feel that they’ve had that one, one minimum, positive moment to shine. And I guess that’s really what it is, is finding, even with the difficult kids that your chemistry isn’t really there, what are you going to do to help that person find a moment to shine. Yeah, I think that would be the root of it for me.*

In order to help each student to “find a moment to shine,” Beverley tries to get to know her students on a personal and social level, and she tries very hard to create a community within the classroom. She wants the classroom to be a safe and positive learning environment where cooperative and participatory learning can take place.
I like to know more than just the math part of a group, and sometimes I find that I can do that with the shy ones when we do a seating plan change and have them closer to my desk, not because they’re a behavioural concern but because they won’t volunteer you any information. But if they’re there and you have a down minute you can say something social and try to pull out and get to know them a little bit more. . . . For the most part I really like the atmosphere in this classroom where the students basically feel comfortable enough that they can laugh [and] that they can explore their social skills.

Beverley’s teaching philosophy is also apparent in the fact that she is a firm believer in the concept of multiple intelligence. She recognizes that students have different strengths and weaknesses and she tries to provide opportunities for students to develop in a variety of areas of intelligence, including kinesthetic, artistic, visual, and cognitive. She also likes to develop her students’ higher order thinking skills, such as evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing. She believes that these skills will enable her students to be better problem solvers in all areas of their lives.

I really like to use multiple intelligence as a basis and I really like to pull together, where I can, upper level Blooms. Like Blooms’ taxonomy, where you’re doing some synthesis or can they evaluate. I don’t think we do enough of it, and I think sometimes that’s why they can’t problem solve, because we don’t give them enough situations where they’re not just regurgitating [and] they’ve really gotta analyse it.
And that's why I don't mind spending longer on some units, because if you don't, you'll always just get knowledge and comprehension.

However, as Beverley pointed out to me, she has not always been able to teach in a way that is consistent with her philosophy. She has found her beginning years as a teacher, her first two years in particular, to be very difficult and rather discouraging. She spoke extensively and passionately about this in our interviews. In the following comment, Beverley recalls her first year of teaching.

I had a grade eight homeroom for math, I had five grade seven classes for science and I had two grade seven French immersion classes for their language arts portion. It was [lowers voice] brutal. That was my first year teaching [laughing]. It was basically a survival year, but a very frustrating one because when you’re fresh out of teachers’ college you’ve got all this plethora of ideas that you would just love to try, and certainly the assignment didn’t lean to any [pause] creativity or [pause] divergent planning and thinking.

Due to the demanding nature of her assignment, as well as the fact that the intermediate teachers at this school did very little group work with their students, Beverley found it difficult to create a cooperative and participatory learning environment. As such, she felt limited to a more “traditional” teaching pedagogy in which students sit in rows and the focus is on knowledge and memorization of facts.

Her second year of teaching was also rather difficult. She was in a team teaching situation, teaching a grade six/seven class in the morning and another grade six class in the afternoon. Again, she felt that she was in a situation where she
did not have the opportunity to put her teaching philosophies and beliefs into practice. Beverley feared that without the opportunity to implement her ideas, she would begin to conform to the traditional pedagogy of teaching.

*I'm basically an off the wall tactile person, but I know that I conform very easily to what needs to be done, or what's around me, and that was my biggest fear. I had all kinds of very different ideas, but if I didn't have an opportunity, or I didn't make that opportunity, then I wouldn't do them. I would conform and I would do what I was planning with somebody else, or the easy road, and that would just be your, like your style too, for lack of things that were mine. And I found that a little scary, not to want to conform into being what you need to do to, just to go through the motions. The Ontario Green Schools Project, however, offered Beverley the opportunity to finally employ some of her ideas and philosophies. It was the focus on the whole child and holistic education that particularly interested Beverley, in that it coincided with her interest in multiple intelligence and with her focus on creating a community within the classroom.

*It was probably one of the first opportunities that I had to plan using the kinds of things that I like. And I know I was very vocal, and I really enjoyed it, because it was more my thing, my style. . . . It was a good feeling and it was a positive.*

In this respect, involvement in the Green Schools Project was very empowering for Beverley, in that it gave her the confidence to voice and to implement some of her teaching ideas, beliefs, and philosophies. For Beverley, involvement in the Green
Schools Project was an active step toward removing some of the inconsistencies that she has felt as a teacher.

Jane

I became aware of Jane’s involvement in the Green Schools Project late in my second year of volunteering and observing. It was Beverley who suggested that I talk to Jane, as they had worked together on the grade six Green Schools Project team. Because I was informed of Jane’s involvement in the project so late in the school year, I did not have a chance to volunteer and observe in her classroom. However, despite our relatively short time together, I came to know her very well, and came away from the interviews with what I felt was a sufficient understanding of her teaching philosophies and practices. During our interviews, she was very open about herself and her Green Schools Project experiences. At the time of the interviews, Jane had been teaching for twenty-two years and was forty-six years old.

Jane’s involvement in the Ontario Green Schools Project can be related to three aspects of her personal biography: her environmental ethic, her belief in continual professional development, and her belief in the importance of collaborative work relationships. Each of these aspects was a significant factor in her desire to become involved in the Green Schools Project and, ultimately, in how she experienced the project. An important factor in Jane’s desire to become involved in the Green Schools Project was that it coincided with her values and beliefs concerning environmental issues. During our interviews, Jane spoke extensively of
the environmental ethic that she was exposed to as a child. Her parents and teachers had lived through two world wars and the depression, and this had a large impact on their values and beliefs with regards to the use of commodities and resources. As a result, the importance of saving, reducing waste, and reusing resources was reinforced throughout Jane’s childhood.

When I grew up, as I say, it was the fifties, [and] my teachers were older, single women who had lived through the depression and they had gone through the wars and were accustomed to shortages and saving and being careful, to the point of being almost miserly. Like we were really scolded if we skipped more than two lines in our notebook or if we wasted a page. . . . And I think growing up, like on into high school and even into university, I had a thing about if I didn’t use both sides of the paper, I felt I was being frivolous. And it’s just because of having these older ladies in about grades five, six, and seven, that had probably had to do without a lot, and they just kept emphasizing that. . . . My parents are older, they didn’t have me ‘til, well my mom was in her late thirties, and so they too had been through the depression and the war and used to talk about shortages and saved everything. You know, like saved paper bags and saved plastic bags to reuse to wrap food instead of buying ceran-wrap, all that kind of stuff. So I grew up I guess with a kind of recycling background that I wasn’t maybe as aware of as I am now. . . . I think it’s about as ingrained in me as my hair colour, you know [laughs]. But that’s the way it was.
Jane's parents and teachers instilled in her an appreciation for the fact that our resources are precious and limited and are not to be wasted. She has carried this belief into her classroom and tries to impress this upon her students.

*It used to really drive me nuts when I first started teaching because kids would start to write on a piece of paper and they'd crumple it all up and say, 'well I wrecked it, I have to start again' and they would want a brand new sheet of paper. And I'd say, 'well that's a tree you are talking about and it was a fine piece of paper when you got it... But it's - they want everything to look pristine and beautiful but they don't do a lot of preplanning and thinking before they start to write and that's something that still bothers me. Like when I see blue boxes in the classroom [and] the kids feel that 'well, if they throw it in the blue box it'll be recycled so that's okay.' But I think we need to use wisely first, then recycle or reuse, rather than just figuring 'well, if it's recycled then there's no guilt involved,' you know. Yeah, so that's just a personal beef, but I think it stems back from having those old lady teachers that never let you skip more than a line or two [laughs].*

Jane's parents also taught her to respect nature and to appreciate the natural and social history of her environment. As a family they took summer trips across Canada, because her father felt that it was important that she and her brother understand their country's history. Jane also spent many summers at camp. She attended the Ontario Leadership Camp Centre, and was a member of the first girl's camp to go on a portage canoe trip. Jane has brought her interest in natural and social history into her teaching, and many of her curriculum units reflect that. For
example, she has taught mining and forestry units, which she looks at with her students from an ecological perspective.

I did a mining trip with kids a number of years ago, we went up to Manitouage. We looked at mining and we looked at tree farming, and again there was an ecological focus to that too, in how the logging is done in replacing the trees and all that. It was very interesting.

Jane’s involvement in the Green Schools Project was in large part due to the fact that it coincided with her interest in environmental issues. She explained that she saw the Green Schools Project as an opportunity to develop new curriculum units that would impart to students the importance of using our resources wisely and the connections between our actions and changes in the environment.

It was really an opportunity to bring out some of those resources that I’ve been wanting to use and be able to inject some of that into what we were doing. . . . We picked Native Peoples as the vehicle for Green Schools, just because Native Peoples used their environment very carefully. They didn’t waste things and they certainly didn’t vandalize their environment in any way, and we felt there was something that could be learned through an examination of the culture. . . . You know what I mean, like I think sometimes the white man in particular has done things and thought that they’ve been really great, doing certain things or providing people with certain things, and in actual fact it’s been very detrimental to the culture of the people because the white man didn’t understand that very well. . . . The environment is tied into that in as much as the wealthier nations sometimes have had a major role in
environmental destruction in other countries. . . So, I think sometimes man improves things at a cost, and we need to weigh those things out. And I think that we’re going to need to be more and more aware of that as time goes on because there’s just not another best west to go to, or there’s not - unless they find some other planet that they can go to and live on, you know what are we going to do? We have to use what we’ve got, and use it well.

For Jane, the chance to develop and implement curriculum with an environmental focus was a positive aspect of her experience with the Green Schools Project. She felt that it fostered her own professional development, and was extremely beneficial to the students.

The second aspect of Jane’s personal biography that can be related to her interest and involvement in the Ontario Green Schools Project is her belief in the importance of professional development. Jane saw the Green Schools Project as “a great way to develop professionally,” and thus, was eager to become involved. It was Jane’s father, a teacher himself, who instilled in her a love of learning and a belief in the concept of life-long learning. Jane describes her father as “a very resourceful person who was willing to do any kind of work or teach anywhere.” His resourcefulness brought him to the mining communities of northern Ontario, teaching in one room school houses in Temagammi and South Porcupine. For seven years, Jane’s parents lived up North with no running water or electricity. Perhaps due to his need to be as employable as possible during the Depression years, Jane’s father continually
attempted to better himself through education and new experiences. Jane sees her father as having a major impact on her own passion for learning.

*I've always enjoyed learning and I'd have to say that in many ways my father was a real role model in that way because he was always taking courses and he was always studying and learning new things and reading a lot. He had gone to get his Master's degree back when I was a little kid. I think I was about seven years old when I went to his graduation . . . and I was really impressed by the whole thing . . . and I told him, 'I'll do this too,' and about twenty some odd years later I did, so that was kind of neat.*

Like her father, Jane is a very resourceful person who continually works to improve herself as a teacher. One of the ways she has done this is by continuing to upgrade her education. Throughout her teaching career she has acquired a Master's degree, a special education specialist diploma, and a history specialist diploma. She has also obtained her intermediate English certificate, primary certificate, guidance certificate, and vice-principal certificate. Last summer she began taking an early literacy course offered by the Board. She has also made it a priority to become computer literate, and has recently obtained her computer specialist diploma. 

Along with furthering her education, Jane has developed professionally through involvement in various curriculum development projects. At the Board level, she has been involved in a values education project, the writing of the social science curriculum, and a basic thinking skills project. At the Federation level, she has been
vice-president of her region, as well as chair of the professional development committee.

Jane has continued to develop professionally despite the fact that the rewards and reimbursements from the Board have been drastically reduced over the years. Almost all of such professional development takes place on her own time - in the evenings, on the weekends, and during the holidays. She feels that as the resource person in her school, she has a responsibility to be familiar with new initiatives and programs so that she might share that knowledge and information with the other educators in her school.

*I just felt in the role that I do, I had to be up there with the new things that are happening, to share that information with the people I work with. And it keeps me growing and current, otherwise I think maybe I should do something else.*

An important factor, then, in Jane’s desire to become involved in the Ontario Green Schools Project was that she saw it as “an opportunity for well supported teacher professional development which is rarely provided.” She feels that she benefited a great deal from her involvement in the Green Schools Project, in that she was exposed to new teaching ideas, strategies, and philosophies, and a result, developed professionally.

The third aspect of Jane’s personal context which influenced her interest in the Green Schools Project was her belief in the importance of collaborative work relationships. Involvement in the Green Schools Project meant the opportunity to work collaboratively with her colleagues, which Jane views as a positive means of
professional development, and as a necessary element of effective teaching. To more fully understand the value that Jane places on collaboration with colleagues, we need to go back to Jane’s experiences during her beginning years as a teacher when she encountered both positive and negative intercollegial relationships.

Jane found her first few years of teaching to be very positive, and she attributes this to the fact that she developed a collaborative relationship with another teacher. This was made possible due to the fact that they had planning time built directly into their timetable.

*We used to have shortened Mondays in those days, and a shortened Monday meant that you finished at about 2:00 and you would have from 2:00 ‘til 3:30 to do planning. So this other fellow, who taught the same subject as I did, and I would get together and we planned a lot. I think we planned a lot of creative and fun things for the kids because we had the time every Monday to meet. We would do things like, you know, you’d do a lesson that we had planned together and then we’d talk to each other about it next Monday, or you know, how we were going with something, or how his class had found something more interesting that mine hadn’t, and we’d maybe gone in different directions. But when I think back on it, what we were doing was very good from a sort of an informal coaching, self-help professional development model. It was really the kind of thing it should be.*

Jane’s positive experiences with collaborative planning during her early teaching years had a definite impact on the development of her confidence in herself as a
teacher. She learned to count on support from her colleagues as a means of getting through difficult teaching assignments and learning the ropes as a new teacher.

A negative experience with another colleague served to reinforce her belief in the importance of collaborative relationships among teachers.

Then I had to start teaching English again and well, that was a shock, having only done it the one year, my first year. . . . I had this woman beside me who kept her door locked all the time and she had all the teaching materials. So you couldn’t even run in after school to see what books were available cause her door was locked. . . . So it wasn’t a very collaborative setting. She felt that she had taught English all these years and English teachers had worked harder than the social science teachers, and therefore she wasn’t going to share anything. And I thought that we’d kind of work as a team. [Pause] Then I found that she wasn’t sharing anything with me and if I asked her something she’d give me a really vague kind of response. . . . and because we didn’t get an allocated planning time together, she wouldn’t take personal time to sit down and talk with me. . . . So anyway, that was kind of a miserable year.

This experience left Jane feeling vulnerable about her abilities as an English teacher. Not having a strong background teaching English, she did not feel confident that she was “doing it right.” She had hoped to receive support and guidance from her more experienced teaching partner and was disappointed and frustrated when this did not occur.

As a result of Jane’s experiences with intercollegial relations, both positive and negative, she is extremely sensitive to the importance of intercollegial support
for teachers as a means of professional development. For Jane, collaboration is the cornerstone of successful teaching, and it frustrates her when others, such as administration and trustees, are quick to dismiss the usefulness and importance of team planning amongst teachers. Jane’s belief in the importance of collaborative planning was a key factor in her desire to become involved in the Green Schools Project. She saw it as a wonderful opportunity work collaboratively with her colleagues on a project that was of interest to her. As she put it:

*Any time teachers, as a working team, are given the opportunity, time, and support to participate in a project of this nature is, from my point of view, a very positive learning and teaching opportunity. It is a great way to develop professionally and come together as a team.*

As such, the collaborative process was a very significant and positive aspect of the Green Schools Project for Jane.

Jane’s involvement in the Ontario Green Schools Project and the nature of her experiences with the project are significantly related to her values and beliefs concerning environmental issues, professional development, and collaborative work relationships. She sees her involvement in the project as a very positive experience, as it gave her the opportunity to develop and implement global/environmental curriculum with the collaboration and support of her colleagues.
Debra

I met Debra in March 1996 when I began volunteering and observing in her classroom for the purposes of this study. I volunteered and observed in her classroom for approximately two hours on each of four occasions, between March 1996 and April 1997. Debra is perhaps the participant that I “know” the least, mainly due to the fact that our interviews were considerably shorter than the others. Due to time constraints, both interviews had to be conducted on the same day, during limited time periods. Nevertheless, Debra was very supportive of my research and gave me as much information as time would allow. At the time of the interviews, Debra had been teaching for twenty-four years and was fifty years of age.

Debra’s involvement in the Ontario Green Schools Project stems largely from her interest in global issues and her desire to develop and implement curriculum in this area. When she first heard about the Green Schools Project, Debra was already working on incorporating global issues such as social justice, human rights, ecology, and peace into the grade eight curriculum. Thus, Debra saw the Green Schools Project as a wonderful opportunity to expand her repertoire of global education resources, ideas, and teaching strategies with the support of her colleagues and the school’s consultant.

For Debra “global education” is a holistic concept, which she defines as education with an emphasis on helping students to develop “a sense of self and an
understanding of how we are connected to our community and the world.” She attributes her interest in global issues to her family upbringing. Like Jane, she grew up in a family with a strong environmental ethic. Her father had grown up on a farm and this had a significant impact on his beliefs and values with regards to our connection to and dependence on the environment.

My parents were very respectful of the outdoors. My father died two years ago and he was 92, so at the time of his life of course it was a large farming community. He came from Virginia where they made their living off the farm. And so I think if you are working on a farm, brought up on a farm, you maybe end up being a little more respectful of our food does come from the earth and it is a cycle.

Debra’s parents passed their love of the outdoors and respect for nature onto her and her brother in a profound way. As a family, they spent much of their summers out of doors, connecting with the natural environment.

I grew up in a family that was very caring of the environment. An environment where we loved to fish and respected nature, enjoyed cottage life, always outdoors, skiing and that kind of thing. I always was taught by my parents to respect, whether it be plant life or animal life and you treat it well according to those kind of ethics, you know, like throwing fish back in the water because you have already caught the limited number.

For Debra, these experiences have had a profound impact on her current teaching philosophies and practices, and as such, her interest in the Green Schools Project. She sees global education as an important part of the school curriculum, and works
hard to incorporate it into her daily teaching. She tries to help her students to see
correlations between themselves, their community, and the global environment. In
the following comment, Debra explains the values that she tries to impart to her
students.

_The whole idea of being humanitarian, being good to each other, caring for each other._

... Kind of caring for the environment as they would care for a person. That is very
important and very much part of my classroom every single day. ... How we can
teach children to actually connect with their real world and apply what they are doing
in school to the real world. What we are doing in the classroom actually relevant to
the real world? I think that is becoming more and more a focus of all teachers. How
we treat the environment, how we treat each other, it's all connected. ... What I hope
the kids get out of it is that they see man, generically man, as also part of the
environment, part of the cycle. That is what I've tried to achieve. That a tree doesn't
stand alone and we look at it and protect it. The tree is looking after you and you are
looking after the tree.

As one who believes strongly in the importance of offering students a global
education, the Green Schools Project offered Debra resources, ideas, and support for
professional development in that area. Through her involvement in the project, she
learned a variety of global education activities and ways of helping her students to
develop a global awareness. In this respect, involvement in the Ontario Green
Schools Project was very positive experience for Debra.
Chapter Summary

As I have shown, each participant’s interest and involvement in the Ontario Green Schools Project was intimately tied to their personal beliefs, values, and past experiences. For Sandra, it was her interest in providing her students with an interesting and innovative program that drew her to the Green Schools Project. For Beverley, it was the fact that the Green Schools Project offered her the chance to finally implement some of her own teaching philosophies that led to her involvement. Jane became involved because she saw it as an excellent opportunity to work collaboratively with her colleagues on a project that was of interest to her. Debra was drawn to the Green Schools Project because it offered her the opportunity to develop professionally in an area that was important to her.

Understanding the personal context that each participant brought to their Green Schools Project experiences provides a basis for an analysis of those experiences. As will be shown in the succeeding chapters, the participants’ individual backgrounds and interests are intricately related to their particular experiences with the project.
Chapter Four

Work Context

Introduction

As discussed in chapter one, other factors besides a teacher's personal context influences their experiences with change initiatives. Teachers work within several contexts - within a classroom context, within a school context, within a community context, and within the context of the teaching profession as a whole. Each of these contextual layers has an impact on how teachers experience their work, as well as on how they experience change initiatives. Two aspects of the participants' work contexts emerged as important influences on their experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project. The first concerns what I call realities of teaching. The second concerns the culture of the school within which they teach. In this chapter I examine these two factors and their influences on the participants' experiences with the Green Schools Project. I do so through the voices of the teachers themselves; through their own words about their work as teachers and the environment within which they work.

Realities of Teaching

The job of teaching brings with it a host of stressful and satisfying experiences that those outside the profession often fail to grasp. In a study of the teaching
experiences of almost 6000 teachers in Ontario by King, Warren, and Peart (1988, as cited in Fullan, 1991, 123-124), it was found that some of the most stressful aspects of being a teacher included: excessive demands on time, classroom control and discipline, student apathy, lack of administrative support, scarcity of equipment and resources, large class sizes, multiple and often conflicting ministry directives, lack of parental and community support, and negative societal attitudes towards teachers and the educational system. Such aspects of teaching play a significant role in how teachers experience change initiatives and, ultimately, in the success of those initiatives. When reformers are sensitive to and take into account the daily demands of teaching, teachers' experiences are more likely to be positive and innovations stand a greater chance of success. However, when reformers fail to acknowledge and incorporate teachers' working realities into proposed changes, teachers' experiences are more likely to be characterized by frustration and resentment. As Michael Fullan (Ibid., 127) points out, change attempts fail more often than not because of an insensitivity to teachers' working realities.

The above description of the realities of teaching may give the impression that teaching is a profession characterized solely by intense workloads, pressures, and demands. However, it would be wrong to conclude that teachers' work is all negative. There are many satisfying aspects of teaching that, for many teachers, far outweigh the drawbacks. As revealed in King, Warren, and Peart's (1988, as cited in Fullan, Ibid., 123-124) study, some of the more satisfying aspects of teaching include: positive relationships with students, student enthusiasm, student success, positive
feedback from students, involvement in extra-curricular activities, positive interactions with and support from colleagues, helping students individually with academic or personal problems, influencing the growth, character, and attitudes of students, developing curriculum, and feeling that a lesson was taught well. It is noteworthy that most of the above satisfactions of teaching in some way had to do with students. As Lieberman and Miller (1992, 2) note, a major source of reward for teachers is the success and well-being of their students. As such, a critical factor in teachers' involvement and experiences with change initiatives is whether they view the initiative as beneficial to their students. Innovations which teachers see as having a positive effect on the success and well-being of their students are likely to be seen as worthwhile. However, teachers are unlikely to become willingly involved in projects in which they do not see any obvious benefits for their students.

Teachers' working realities play a critical role in how they experience change initiatives, and, ultimately, in the success of those initiatives. As Beverly Bailey (1995, 11) observes, the quality of teachers' professional lives affects the kinds of change initiatives they are willing to be involved in, how much they can reasonably be expected to take on, and their level of commitment to various change initiatives. In this section, I examine the working realities of each of the four participants, and how the stresses and satisfactions of teaching influenced their experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project.
Workload and Job Complexity

Few would disagree that the nature and demands of teaching have changed profoundly over the years. The student population has become more diverse and, for many teachers, more challenging to teach. Curriculum programs are constantly changing and innovations multiplying. Assessment strategies are more complex and diverse. There is an increased accountability of teachers to administrators, parents, and to the community at large. In addition, the list of educational objectives continues to expand to include such goals as fostering creative and divergent thinking, building moral and ethical character, development of interpersonal skills, preparation for economic success, and meeting students’ social, emotional, and physical needs. Overall, teachers’ responsibilities are more extensive and their roles more diverse, and this significantly impacts their experiences with change initiatives. The following comments made by the participants give some sense of the extraordinary amount of work that teaching involves.

People always give us a hard time about getting the summers off. Well I say, we work twelve months, we just do it in ten. And it’s amazing, because at the end of June there’s a day - and you just can’t do it. It doesn’t matter what you have left to do, you can’t do it. It’s like a treadmill. It’s amazing the amount of work. I work every night, all my holidays. I’ll go home and I will work ‘til ten or eleven o’clock. I always take stuff home, I always take tons of stuff home because I have to plan. . . . Being a teacher is a ton of work. (Sandra)
What it's like to be a teacher? It's hard work, a lot of hard work. I find that I often take concerns home in my head. I do a lot of calling at night from my house just because I am in the classroom during the day and all the running around. It's hard enough sometimes to fit phone calls to agencies and other things in. I try to run in here sometimes between periods. I may leave couple minutes early from one class and arrive a couple of minutes late just to squeeze something in. If I really have something to say to a parent and they are at work, I will call at night. . . . I think good teachers do that. That class is with you for the whole year, those kids are with you and you are always trying to sort out what would be best, how you're going to do this to help them. (Jane)

Pretty well in the primary section you're on your feet all morning, unless you have 15 minute break recess. Same in the afternoon. In the primary area here I have four prep times a week, which is 40 minutes, which generally other people want to plan with you as well. So you don't end up having a lot of free time during the day. . . . [It was] very difficult [getting ready for this year having changed grades and schools] because I spent a lot of money, took a course, was always - I don't think there was probably a week this summer, except when we went away for a week, that I wasn't doing something, thinking about my classroom, work this year. (Debra)

Participants also spoke of the increased pressures and expectations that they had experienced in recent years from a variety of sources - the ministry of education,
administrators, parents, and challenging students - all combined with decreased support. In the following comment, Jane discusses some of these pressures.

There are stresses, there are many more stresses now than when I started. There are more pressures coming from the ministry, just the whole concept of doing more with less. You can do more with less for a few years but when it becomes a lifestyle it grinds on you. From a moral standpoint it can bug you from time to time. With the cutbacks in resources and things we don't have the number of social worker hours or the number of child and youth counselor hours for the number of hurting kids that come to school. We have kids coming to school with a lot of issues that we never had in the fifties or twenties or whatever. Maybe they were different issues, but certainly I don't think they had drug related issues. We have to deal with everyone that walks through the door and some of them are very challenging and difficult to work with and very trying.

The above comments give a sense of the intensity and demanding nature of teaching. These teachers not only put in a full day at school, arriving as early as 7:00 a.m. and staying as late as 6:00 p.m., but they also work at home in the evenings, on the weekends, and during their holidays. They take their concerns about their students home with them in the evenings, making phone calls to parents, lesson planning, individualizing assignments, marking homework, and filling out reports. For these teachers, the work of teaching continues most hours of the day, for literally 365 days a year. This is combined with their responsibilities outside of teaching. They have families to care for, household chores to tend to, errands to run, and
elderly parents in their care. In the comment that follows, Debra describes the challenges of balancing responsibilities at home and school.

_Do you want to know it [life of a teacher] as a homemaker as well, and a mother? As a wife? [laughing] I arrive at school at 7:30 [a.m.]. And before that I generally organize the household with the help of my husband as far as what we are eating tonight, when the cleaning lady is coming, when the laundry is going to be done, when the lawn is going to be cut. I also have an elderly mother which I am helping to look after as well, who is not living with us but in another area, so that means another schedule to look at as well._

For Beverley, the intense workload of teaching combined with pressures and responsibilities at home led her to take a leave of absence after only four years of teaching.

_And I found - my husband changed jobs at that point, so he was very, very busy. We had the two children, and things were like being on a treadmill all of the time. It was so hectic, I applied for a personal leave to stay at home and settle everyone down._

_And that was last year. I found that I was marking, I was always doing school work. I was always doing school work. And when I was reading with my children my mind was always on what I should be doing next, and I found I was never enjoying the moment._

The degree to which reformers acknowledge and incorporate teachers' working realities into proposed changes is in direct relationship with how teachers experience change initiatives and with the success of those changes. Most of the
participants felt that the Green Schools Project initiators were sensitive to their needs and to their existing responsibilities. Sandra, for example, felt that the principal was sensitive to the fact that involvement in the Green Schools Project was going to be demanding, as he did not ask her to take on any other projects that year.

_Because Susan and I were going to do the Green Team and start that whole environmental thing, Ron [the principal] said, ‘well that’s all you have to do.’ Cause you have to do it, instruction and the school growth plan, so that was our school growth plan. So he just said, ‘oh, just do that,’ because I mean, it was gimungous. We just had pages and pages of things that we were going to do, and that we did._

Debra felt that the consultant in particular was sensitive to “where teachers are coming from” and this had a positive effect on Debra’s experiences with the project.

_Our discussion right at the beginning was how effective was this going to be for our children and for ourselves or would it be an add on that would be really impractical and a lot of extra work for teachers. But it turned out, because I really believed in Jean [consultant] and because I have worked with Jean before, I know she is a hands on realistic person and understands where teachers are coming from._

Such was not the case for all participants, however. For Beverley, the combination of a highly demanding school change initiative and the existing pressures and demands of teaching served to negate many of the positive aspects of involvement in the project for her.

_My feelings about the Green Schools Project are somewhat mixed. The ideals and concepts are wonderful – global and personal awareness. However, the process we
went through to arrive at new curriculum was overwhelming. Time commitment was a major factor. Feeling that I was fragmented all the time. And as I say, maybe in the sense that we bit off the whole year, which was just, I mean it was great, but it was, ah, it was big time. But yet, I really liked it. It was just too much all at once.

While the daily demands of teaching did not seem to take away from Debra, Jane, or Sandra’s positive Green Schools Project experiences, such pressures, as well as additional demands and expectations placed on them by administration and the ministry, served to limit the amount of time and energy they had to dedicate to the Green Schools Project, especially once the project initiators left the scene.

*The second year, because of budget cuts and Jean going back to her teaching position, it then did not get continued. . . . We had no more support money for release time. And no one teacher, really, with the changes in the Ministry of Education and what we were doing - you simply had more and more weight on your shoulder with trying out the new report card, all that kind of thing, that you just had to cut something. So the funding wasn’t there to make your life easier. I’m not sure anyone is going to pick it up in their spare time. . . . There are a lot of initiatives going on right now. I think there are just so many, there are so many variables here as far as teachers’ time and planning, how many learning outcomes they are expected to teach, and how do you, what do you cut out? (Debra)*

*You have to understand that in and around this time - I don’t know if this is before Rae Days or after Rae Days, but we were starting to lose our, our time to do that kind*
of thing. . . The common curriculum at that point was still in its draft form, so we were trying to grapple with that as well. (Jane)

The administration at the time was saying, you know, ‘the Green School Project is just the thing to do’, and you know, at the time I think it was the buzz word. . . But that’s sort of gone now because now it’s, you know, budget cuts and ‘no, we can’t do that anymore’ sort of thing, and you’re not talking about environmental things now. You’re talking about cuts and how it hurts the classroom. Do you know what I mean? It’s just that it’s taken the emphasis away from it. It’s like something else everybody’s either looking to or worried about or thinking about. . . When it’s part of your program and it’s part of your school growth and that - but I wouldn’t say that it’s part of our school growth plan now. I mean the administration changes and then - things happen. You know, technology’s big and it’s all into computer growth plan and that sort of thing, and the environmental stuff sort of gets [pause] stopped.

(Sandra)

The participants’ comments give an indication of how important it is for change initiators to take into account not only the daily demands of teaching, but also the multitude of innovations and programs that teachers continually face. These teaching realities have a significant impact on teachers’ experiences with innovations, as well as on the amount of time and energy they have to dedicate to such projects. As such, it would seem that the more easily a change initiative can be incorporated into teachers’ existing responsibilities, the greater its chance of success.
Rewards of Teaching

As previously mentioned, satisfying experiences with students is also a reality of teaching, and as such, teachers’ experiences with change initiatives are significantly related to their perceptions of the project’s impact on the success and well-being of their students. Such was the case in the present study. Participants saw the Ontario Green Schools Project as having a positive impact on their students, and this, in turn, had a positive effect on participants’ experiences with the project.

They [students] really bought into the whole environmental thing. I think that too helped me see where I wanted to go with it. . . . So it was like, totally awesome. I just loved it. It was just fabulous the way these kids bought into it because they loved it so much. (Sandra)

Well, I really like doing more ‘real time’, and if you’re gonna have a curriculum it has to be meaningful. Meaning the opportunity to actually implement something that’s real life. Whereas, if you just do a unit for the sake of going through the curriculum and covering an area - if it doesn’t mean anything to them, if they can’t relate to how somebody might have felt or lived, then they’re not gonna remember it. They’re going to remember a few facts, but they’re not really gonna have any ownership on it. And so I did like that idea of always tying it back and providing them with opportunities to be involved with relating to the material. (Beverley)
I just wanted to see more of an awareness around multiple intelligence. . . . Basically, where I was coming from was that if we could as much as possible adjust our strategies to meet more of their [students'] needs - so that was the method in my madness. Unfortunately, some children need a whole lot of other things, and it's hard through just changing strategies or adjusting strategies to make up for some of the deficits that they have, but this was a very good start. (Jane)

I really thought the ethos issue was important because it was something at grade eight they are ready to grab and understand and are interested in. When you start talking to them, giving them clippings on women's rights in Saudi Arabia, what has happened in a factory for instance in India, or looking at child’s labour in Canada and Britain and still the sweatshops in Toronto, that really interested the kids, because our kids live in a very cocoonish environment. Most of them do anyway, and have really not known what its like to stand in line for food, or can’t even imagine a child chained to a machine to produce goods for a very wealthy society. So it was something [for] their age group to look at the ethos strand. It was very important and I think it touched a lot of the kids that I taught at that time. (Debra)

As the above comments indicate, each of the participants felt that the Green Schools Project was very beneficial to their students. This factor seemed to have more of an impact on their assessment of the project than any inconveniences involvement in the project may have caused them. Because they saw obvious benefits for their students, participants felt positive about their involvement in the
Green Schools Project, even though it added to their already heavy workload. Even Beverley, who perhaps felt the most overwhelmed by the project, generally felt positive about it because it was so beneficial to her students. Thus, for participants in this study, that the rewards of involvement in the Green Schools Project outweighed the costs, was an important factor in their positive experiences with the project.

**School Culture**

Since the early 1970’s when Seymour Sarason first drew attention to the relationship between what he called *the culture of the school* and educational change, educational researchers and change theorists have begun look more closely at the impact of the school context on the adoption of new practices and the implementation of changes. Researchers have begun to realize that the culture of the school can strongly affect the process and results of a change program (Hamilton & Richardson, 1995, 368; Richardson, 1994a, 6). School culture refers to the beliefs, values, and practices shared by the school community, which Andy Hargreaves defines as the *content* of school culture. It also refers to the patterns of relationships between teachers and their colleagues, which Hargreaves defines as the *form* of school culture (Hargreaves, 1992, 219). The culture of a school is influenced by a number of sources. It is influenced by the culture of the community within which it is set, as well as the wider socio-political culture. The culture of the school is also influenced by the individual biographies, perspectives, and experiences of its
members, as well as the broader occupational culture of teaching. It is the complex interactions between each of these levels of culture which gives rise to the culture of a school. School culture, in particular, patterns of staff relations, emerged as a major influence on the participants' experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project. In this section, I examine the nature of staff collegiality and collaboration at Northside Elementary School and the impact of that culture on teachers' experiences with the Green Schools Project. First, however, I describe some of the various forms of staff relations and their relationship to school change.

**Forms of Collegiality and Collaboration**

The patterns of relationships between teachers and their colleagues, commonly referred to as staff collegiality and collaboration, and its relation to school change is a complex one. Collegiality and collaboration can take many forms, not all of which are necessarily related to successful teacher and whole school change. Andy Hargreaves helpfully distinguishes between different kinds of collegial relations in terms of their implications for school change. Hargreaves (1992, 220-236) describes four different forms of staff relations that can be found within schools: individualism, fragmentation, collaboration, and contrived collegiality.

In a culture of individualism, teachers work largely in isolation from their colleagues and struggle with the problems and anxieties of teaching privately. In such a culture, teachers concentrate on short-term planning within their own
classrooms, they avoid discussing with their colleagues the fundamental theories or principles that underlie their teaching and classroom practices, and they avoid planning and collaborating with their colleagues. This is not to say, however, that teachers in an individualized school culture do not interact with one another. On the contrary, the staffrooms of schools characterized by individualism are often marked by a great deal of solidarity and sharing amongst teachers, what one might call *social collegiality*. In the socially collegial environment of the staffroom, teachers share classroom anecdotes, practical tips for managing the classroom, specific activity ideas, and news and ‘gossip’ about particular students and their parents. This is also the place where frustrations and complaints are vented about students, parents, and administration. Teachers also chat about things completely unrelated to school and teaching. They discuss their children and grandchildren, their holiday plans, what they did over the weekend, movies, and local events and news.

Hargreaves (*Ibid.*, 221) describes such staffrooms as “a retreat from the ‘front lines’ of teaching. They are places of relaxation and relief, where social, morale-boosting behaviour relieves some of the stresses and eases some of the pains of the school day.” Thus, even in individualistic school cultures, a form of collegiality and collaboration occurs. However, as Hargreaves (*Ibid.*) observes, “staffroom solidarity and sharing in individualistic schools has its limitations. . . . In effect, conversation sticks . . . to things that will not intrude upon or challenge the autonomous judgement of the classroom-isolated teacher.” Judith Warren Little (1990, 571)
describes the above form of collegial relations as "weak", in that it constitutes a relatively weak source of influence on teachers' practices.

In schools characterized by fragmentation, teachers work neither in isolation, nor with most of their colleagues as a whole school. Instead, they work in smaller sub-groups within the school community, such as secondary school subject departments or primary, junior, and intermediate divisions within the elementary school. Teachers in fragmented school communities attach their loyalties and identities to particular groups of colleagues. These are usually colleagues with whom they work most closely and socialize most often. While there is often a great deal of cooperation, collegiality, and collaboration within these groups, there is virtually none between groups. Groups tend to be isolated from one another, both physically and philosophically, which frequently results in poor communication and continuity across grade levels, divisions, and subjects in terms of expectations of students' performance and behaviour.

As Hargreaves (1994, 214-215) points out, fragmented school communities are not merely the result of benign popularity contests amongst teachers. Rather, there are complex dynamics of power and control at work. The existence of divided teacher communities in a school often reflects and reinforces the school hierarchy. Promotion, status, and resources are not distributed evenly, but rather, are bestowed upon those who hold favour with administration. It is teachers of older students, teachers of academic subjects, teachers who wholeheartedly support new innovations, and energetic young teachers who tend to receive more status and
rewards from administration (Hargreaves, 1992, 225-226; 1994, 215). In such schools, democracy is virtually non-existent, and dynamics of power and self-interest are the major determinants of who gets what. Whole school initiatives have little chance of success in schools with fragmented teacher communities.

In the small number of schools with collaborative cultures, a very different situation exists. In such schools, teachers form spontaneous, voluntary, and pervasive collaborative relationships with their colleagues. As Hargreaves (1992, 226; 1994, 192-193) observes, much of the way teachers in collaborative school communities work together is in brief yet frequent informal encounters, which take the form of kind words and personal interest, praises and thanks, small gestures, and sharing of ideas, resources, and problems. There is the acceptance and intermixture of personal lives with professional ones. Although there is generally broad agreement of educational philosophies and values, disagreement is tolerated, and to some extent actively encouraged within those limits. In collaborative school communities, teachers work together primarily on projects that hold meaning for them and that they themselves have initiated. Such group work is not formally organized or mounted just for specific projects or events, rather it is central to teachers' daily work. Projects initiated within such schools have an excellent chance at succeeding, as teachers will only accept initiatives that they are personally committed to and that hold meaning for them.

Contrived collegiality is a superficial form of collaboration. Rather than the spontaneous and voluntary collaboration amongst teachers that characterizes
collaborative cultures, a culture of contrived collegiality is generally administratively regulated and compulsory. Teachers are required to meet and work together at specific times and places, often for the purposes of implementing the mandates of others, rather than for their own purposes. It can be seen in initiatives such as peer coaching, team teaching, mentor teaching, joint planning, and formally scheduled planning meetings during preparation time. These sorts of initiatives are generally designed to increase joint teacher planning and consultation so as to move schools from an individualized or fragmented culture to a collaborative one. As Hargreaves (1992, 230) notes, "at its best, contrived collegiality can be a useful preliminary phase in a move towards deeper collaborative relationships. . . . at its worst, however, contrived collegiality can be little more than a quick administrative surrogate for more genuinely collaborative teacher cultures."

The above forms of staff relations (individualism, fragmentation, collaboration, and contrived collegiality) constitute the dominant patterns of relationships that are currently found among teachers and their colleagues. However, it is rare to find any of these patterns of relationships in their pure form. More commonly, school cultures are made up of a combination of two or three forms of collegiality and collaboration. Indeed, within the school in which my participants taught, I observed and my participants spoke of at least three forms of collegiality and collaboration: individualism, fragmentation, and contrived collegiality. The most pervasive and dominant form, however, and that which had
the most implications for teachers' experiences with the Green Schools Project, was fragmentation.

**Northside: A Fragmented School Community**

It became apparent very quickly, both through my own observations and through interviews with the participants, that the teachers in this school were divided between the primary division and the junior/junior/intermediate division. For example, one of the first things that I noticed was that the primary teachers sat together in one section of the staffroom during recess and lunch hour, while the junior and intermediate teachers sat in another section of the staffroom. There was minimal or no social discussion between these groups of teachers, although there was a great deal of socializing within the groups. I also noticed that there was a lack of communal coffee and tea in the staffroom. Instead, the teachers made their coffee and tea in their individual classrooms, or teachers in a grade or division shared refreshments. This too seems indicative of Northside's fragmented community.

Another observation was that the primary teachers participated in a "soup and salad day" every Thursday, in which they took turns bringing in soup and salad to share for lunch, while the intermediate teachers went out to lunch together every Friday. Most participants cited the size and physical layout of the school as a major factor in the split between the primary and junior/junior/intermediate divisions. The primary teachers are in one wing of the school and the junior/junior/intermediate teachers in another. Also, there is no place where the entire school can gather. Therefore,
assemblies and other events tend to be split by division. In the following comment, Sandra discusses this factor.

And you know, part of it's the physical nature of the school. The primary teachers, they live over there, and they don't come down here. And likewise these teachers [intermediate teachers] don't go down there unless they have to. . . . They've tried at different times, because the school doesn't all fit in one place at one time, they've tried to say, 'okay, let's have grades two, four, six, and eight in this assembly, and then one, three, you know . . . and they've tried to do that, but even that still doesn't keep it as one school.

Participants commented on the division between primary and junior/intermediate teachers as being an important factor in the lack of whole school involvement in the Green Schools Project.

So it was never - the Green Schools Project unfortunately was never a whole big entity in this school. But it's the same - I mean you've been in this school at lunch. The primary teachers sit here and the intermediate teachers sit there. . . . And the recess thing, you know they [primary teachers] get recess and it's like the little recess club. They always go sit in the same seats and have the same conversations. It's just the way it is. I don't think there's any one thing, except maybe lack of morale, that goes right through the whole school. (Sandra)

You had [grades] four, six, and eight, so that was probably as good a job as you will get in a school with 550 kids. . . . When one link is missing, then you are going to
have a pocket somewhere where it is not being done. . . . But the other thing is
primary and junior and intermediate people did not get together very often to make
sure that it was a consistent plan throughout the school. (Debra)

I’m not sure about primary, I really couldn’t tell you. You’d have to ask [name of
teacher] who was involved in the primary end, because here it is - this school does
tend to be fragmented because of the rotary, the six, seven, and eight, and you’re
really not too much in touch with what’s going on in the other wing. (Beverley)

Unfortunately, the principal did not see fit to attempt to bridge the gap between the
primary and junior/intermediate divisions, and as a result, involvement in the
Green Schools Project was confined to the junior and intermediate teachers.
Without involvement from the primary level, it was virtually impossible for the
Green Schools Project to become a whole school initiative.

Not only was the school fragmented between the primary and
junior/intermediate teachers, but teachers were further divided between the
different grades. As such, teachers involved in the Green Schools Project interacted
and collaborated mainly with those in their particular project teams, which were
organized by grades (grade 4/5 team, grade six team, and grade eight team).
Collaboration across the Green School Project teams, however, was virtually non-
existent, and the teachers I interviewed were not very aware of the specifics of what
other teams were doing with the project, as is illustrated in the following comments.
There were a couple of other aspects to it as well. There were some involvement with the grade eights, they did a Yellow Fish Road, and I'm not sure how much more involved they got, but I know Debra and some of the grade eight teachers were involved. . . . I don't know to what extent the fours and fives were - I do know that the four and five teachers at that time were involved because of the Green Team.

(Beverley)

Let's see, what else was going on? Previous to that, the grade five teacher had been involved in the rainforest, so that was - and some how computers and some funding is tied into this. . . . I don't know if it was part of this project per se, but it was certainly a part of them supporting the environment and generating a more global awareness of lakes, rivers, and streams and, and the rainforest. So I'm just not sure where they come together and where they don't, cause I may have mixed it all in one pot. (Jane)

The only way I got involved with the energy audit is because I was there when they did the in-service. The Green Team members came back to train the sixes because some of those sixes were on the Green Team, so they were sort of the peer coaches who brought the process back. I brought the materials and the knowledge as far as telling the teachers, 'this is what you have to do'. And after that, don't know what happened.

(Sandra)

The lack of collaboration among the different project teams was frustrating for participants, and significantly influenced their experiences with the project. A
major criticism of the Green Schools Project by participants concerned the fact that the administration failed to hold whole staff meetings around the project and did not provide teachers with opportunities to share what they were doing with other staff members.

*It was most unfortunate that the administration at the time, which is not the administration that we have now, didn’t see fit to bring the three parts together, you know, the technology component, the nature thing, and the conservation part - never brought the three together. So that was a shame... But I thought too there could have been, I don’t know, maybe Jean [consultant] could have liaisined more, or informed us more, or instead of writing memos to one person write them to everybody and copy everybody, but hindsight’s twenty-twenty. (Sandra)*

*I think that you need to revisit, that you need to have the continuity. I mean when you finish a unit... you put yellow stickies, or as you go along you say, ‘I would change this, I would do that.’ Well you need to do that for the people involved, to pull in the new staff as they come in, to revisit and try to pull in, to link with administration to try and have them revisit and debrief. (Beverley)*

*It would have been nice to have a key person from grade four/five, a key person from six, and a key person from eight to also meet at a common time to see what you are doing in each area and maybe how you could make connections for the whole school...*
... They almost expected it to happen through osmosis. ... It was a little bit here, a little bit there. (Debra)

For Sandra in particular, the fragmentation had a very negative effect on her experiences with the project. During interviews she spoke repeatedly of her disappointment at not being invited to be involved in more aspects of the project.

Now it was very fractured and very fragmented. In fact, I probably can’t tell you who else was doing it, because something came through and we got it and I said, 'but we’re not going to that,' and it was about the electricity and the conservation part of it, which was the grade sixes at the time. ... But we never got, or I was never invited to, something else - you know, 'what, there was a technology component of it as well?' And I know that somebody else went and the someone else who went was not a sharing or a communicating person, so I never heard about that. And I believe she learned the internet or something at that time. ... I’m still disappointed that I don’t know what the technology aspect of it was. ... There was an opportunity to link it together and it wasn’t taken.

The lack of collaboration among the different project teams obviously had implications for the participants’ experiences with the project and for the project being implemented school-wide. As Werner (1980) puts it, “implementation is an ongoing construction of a shared reality among group members through their interaction with one another within the program” (as cited in Fullan, ibid., 132). Without collaboration and discussion between the various project teams, the project remained fragmented, like the school itself, with only isolated pockets of
involvement, and a “shared reality” was confined to individual groups rather than spreading throughout the school. Without a shared reality, a project’s chances of becoming a whole school initiative are minimal.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have discussed two aspects of the participants’ work contexts which were important influences on their experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project: realities of teaching and the culture of the school. The intensity and complexity of teaching emerged as an important influence on the participants’ experiences with the project. Factors such as workload, the multitude of pressures and expectations from administration and the ministry combined with decreased support, had an impact on their experiences and on their ability to continue implementing the project once the project initiators left the scene. However, the project’s positive impact on the students was also a significant factor in the participants’ assessment of the project. That participants saw the Green Schools Project as beneficial for the students seemed to outweigh any drawbacks of the project, and resulted in participants feeling positive about their involvement in the project.

School culture, in particular the fragmented nature of Northside, also emerged as a major influence on the participants’ experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project and on the initiative’s overall success. The fragmented nature of the school made it difficult for the Green Schools Project to become a whole
school initiative as teachers tended to confine collaboration and discussion to their grade teams, and there was very little interaction amongst participants outside those teams. Also, there was no involvement in the project on the part of the primary teachers, as the principal did little, if anything, to include them in the project. The lack of whole school involvement in the project was frustrating for participants, and they felt that whole staff meetings around the project and opportunities to share what they were doing with other staff members might have improved the situation.

The factors discussed in this chapter as influences on the participants’ Green Schools Project experiences indicate that some of the issues surrounding educational change that are important to teachers include: the degree to which reformers incorporate teachers’ existing responsibilities into the proposed changes, the impact of the innovation on the students, and the culture of the school in which teachers work, in particular, the patterns of staff relations that exist. These issues are discussed in detail in chapter six.
Chapter Five

The Change Process

Introduction

In addition to the participants' personal and work contexts, a third contextual variable emerged from the data as an important influence on their Green Schools Project experiences - that of the change process itself. Three aspects of the change process emerged as important influences on the participants' experiences with the initiative. First, the amount of support participants received during their involvement with the Green Schools Project, particularly from the principal, proved to be paramount to participants' experiences. Second, the amount of ownership that participants felt they had over the project as a whole was an important factor in how they experienced the project. Finally, the innovation itself, in terms of its multi-stranded and process-oriented approach, became a factor. In this chapter, I examine these three factors and their influences on participants' experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project.

Support for Teachers

The importance of adequate support for teachers involved in change initiatives has been widely cited in the educational change literature (Fullan, 1991; Hall, 1988; McLaughlin & Marsh, 1978; Waugh & Punch, 1987; Wideen, 1992). The
intense workload, pressures, and demands that teachers face daily make it difficult for teachers to take on new projects if they are not given adequate support. As Michael Fullan (1991, 129) notes, one of the reasons why educational innovations fail is that "resources to support implementation are missing." The level of support provided for teachers plays an important role in how teachers experience change initiatives and the meaning that those experiences have for them. When support is available, teachers' experiences with innovations are more likely to be positive and initiatives stand a greater chance of success. However, when support is unavailable, or is promised and fails to materialize, teachers' experiences are likely to be characterized by frustration and discouragement. In this section, I examine the amount and sources of support received by participants, and how that influenced their experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project.

Administrative Support

As Fullan (1991, 76) observes, "all major research on innovation and school effectiveness shows that the principal strongly influences the likelihood of change." Berman and McLaughlin (1977), for example, found that "projects having the active support of the principal were the most likely to fare well" (as cited in Fullan, 1991, 76). The research of Gene Hall and his colleagues (1988, 49) has documented that "principals can make a significant difference in terms of teacher success in implementing curriculum innovations." Rosenholtz, Bassler, and Hoover-Dempsey (1986) examined school organizational conditions that provided the greatest
opportunities for staff development, and found that a critical factor was a principal who provided adequate support, assistance, and expertise. In his case study of a successful school change initiative, Marvin Wideen (1992) found that the principal was a key factor in bringing about and maintaining the change. A participant from the present study aptly summarizes the importance of principal support for successful school change.

Nothing can squash an effort more readily than having some teachers who are enthusiastic about something the principal cares less about - there's sabotage spelled all over the place [laughs]. And I've experienced that. . . . I've had principals who haven't been as concerned about some issues as the teachers were who were trying to do something. Consequently, they didn't make a huge effort to make sure that you would have planning time together or really care about whether you'd get together or whether a consultant would be available to you, that kind of thing. So you need everybody of a similar mind. (Jane)

Study after study highlights the importance of the principal's role in successful school change. The findings of the present study are no different. During interviews with the participants, the role of the principal was cited repeatedly as a key factor in the implementation of the Green Schools Project, and his departure from the school as a main reason for the project's lack of continuation. An analysis of the interviews with teachers indicate that the principal at Northside Elementary School supported the goals and ideals of the Green Schools Project and he expressed this to his staff in very concrete ways. For example, the implementation of global
education into the school's curriculum was a significant part of the school's growth plan, and teachers were encouraged to make the objectives of the Green Schools Project a part of their teaching goals. Teachers involved in the Green Schools Project were also provided with relief time to plan and to attend workshops, and they were provided with resources and assistance. The principal's style of leadership can be described as "pressure - support". As Fullan (1991, 91) notes, a combination of pressure and support is necessary for successful change initiatives: "Successful change projects always include elements of both pressure and support. Pressure without support leads to resistance and alienation; support without pressure leads to drift or waste of resources." The following comments were made by the participants when asked to describe the kind of support they received from the school's administration:

*Excellent support from the principals. . . Release time. It was a focus for them.*

*They thought it was worthwhile for the kids and they attended some of the planning meetings as well.* (Debra)

*The principal certainly was very motivated to have us involved. . . and you need an encouraging leader and we certainly had that, and so I guess the right ingredients were in place through enthusiasm and encouragement and maybe a little pushing.* (Jane)
I think for that year . . . my school cooperative supervision evaluation as being a teacher was kicking off the Green Team, the whole environmental club thing. Because Susan and I were going to do the Green Team and start that whole environmental thing, Ron [the principal] said, 'well that's all you have to do.' Cause you have to do it, instruction and the school growth plan, so that was our school growth plan.

(Sandra)

The Change Facilitating Team

Teachers not only received support from the principal, but they also received support from the vice-principal, the consultant, and the external project initiators. Debra, for example, spoke at length of the wonderful support that her team received from the consultant.

I would say she [the consultant] came to bring us resources, updates as to where we were, and she was very actively involved. She would be either on the computer network talking to us. . . or she would come to the planning meetings. So she was very active and she would always have resources that were practical, and she would say 'this worked in this school, you might want to try it.' She also had funding that we used . . . and [she] also provided a lot of activities to do. . . . It turned out great. But she was there to back it up and she did carry it through. It wasn't just all put on teachers to carry it through.

Jane praised the vice-principal for her assistance and support.
And the vice-principal was part of the group and she was really supportive. . . . [she] is a very keen person and she always came to the meetings and was very interested in what was going on. She didn’t maybe make every single meeting, but certainly the ones she could make, she did. And the consultant was involved too, so we were certainly supported - we weren’t kind of thrown a piece of bait and then left with it.

The picture that emerges here is one of a “change facilitating team” as defined by Hall (1988), with the principal as leader, but working collaboratively with other members of the team. As Hall (1988, 49) stresses,

principals do not lead change efforts single-handedly. Rather, principals work with other change facilitators, who, in most cases, are making a large number of interventions also. . . . It is this team of facilitators, under the lead of the principal, that makes successful change happen in schools.

The change facilitating team in this school seems to have been made up of the principal, vice-principal, consultant, and the external project initiators. Although teachers experienced different levels of support from different members of the change facilitating team, the one constant was the principal. He sanctioned the Green Schools Project by encouraging teachers to be involved, making it a part of the school’s growth plan, setting up organizational structures which allowed teachers to plan together, and providing relief time so that teachers could attend workshops and meetings. His actions made the statement that this was a priority for him and was something in which he believed. As Fullan (1991, 76) observes “principals’ actions serve to legitimate whether a change is to be taken seriously
(and not all changes are) and to support teachers both psychologically and with resources."

The importance of both psychological and practical support to teachers was evident as I spoke to the participants about the support they received during their involvement in the Green Schools Project. Participants stated that the amount of support offered (and that they believed that they would receive) was a crucial factor in their decision to become involved in the project in the first place.

*It was also presented that there would be - that we would not be alone, that there would be resources, that there would be time to plan, that there would be input, ongoing input. And to a certain degree there was, and that's why our grade six team bought in, because it was fairly new, like some of the staffing, and we were all kind of interested in the philosophy and we thought, 'well great if they're gonna provide resources, if they're gonna provide us with relief time to plan,' it was a great opportunity to buy in. (Beverley)*

*We were also offered some planning time so that seemed as if it were something we were able to work out okay. People are always interested in a project but are always worried about how much work is involved and will there really be sufficient time given to make this come about, and so that was I guess the main focus of discussion among the four of us. (Jane)*
Our discussion right at the beginning was how effective was this going to be for our children and for ourselves or would it be an add on that would be really impractical and a lot of extra work for teachers. But it turned out, because I really believed in Jean and because I have worked with Jean before, I know she is a hands on realistic person and understands where teachers are coming from. (Debra)

Practical support was seen by the teachers as evidence of moral support. When they were provided with relief time to plan and to attend workshops, and when they were provided with resources and assistance, the teachers in this study felt that administration genuinely supported their involvement in the Green Schools Project.

Impact of Insufficient Support

As discussed above, teachers experienced different levels of support from different members of the change facilitating team. In some cases, teachers received active support, that is support in terms of resources and assistance, mainly from one member of the change facilitating team. It would be misleading, however, to assume that active support from one source was all that was necessary. On the contrary, participants spoke with as much fervor, if not more, about supports which they did not receive and how it influenced their experiences. Sandra, for example, discussed at length the detrimental effect that the lack of active parent and community support had on the project.

The other thing that we wanted to introduce was countertop composters - just little mini, tiny countertop ones. Never did anything with that either. Nobody was
interested into very much at all. . . We had ‘do you want to buy this lunch kit?’

And we got a good $8, and you know, one person wanted it. It was so sad. . . . Oh yes, and then we did this awesome display and we had presenters to talk to the parents, you know, for the PTA, and I think there were six presenters and four parents came. You know, like what can you do? It was just horrible. . . But there were lots of initiatives, and you know, you don’t mind having the Earth Academy out when there’s forty people going to turn out. But they don’t.

Debra did not feel that support was offered or available from the project initiators.

We visited them once when they introduced it and they really did not participate any further and did not follow up with us. We never saw them again. . . . But as far as a follow up, I am not sure if it was something in their life that they were doing as a project, because as far as relating to teachers or coming in and helping teachers in our ethos issue they were not present, [name of consultant] was. So whether she was the ambassador for them, I am not sure.

Beverley felt that there was not enough follow-through on promised resources, such as books and activities, guest speakers, and computer programs.

They did provide, and I know Jean was pretty good with providing some good resources, but not - we didn’t end up with enough. . . . If it was set up ideally, films would be there and would be available. I would have picture story starters for a unit. I would have a contact already on the internet to link up with and time to do that.

Books, activities, you know, that whole kind of thing. You don’t have time to search through a binder to find a film. Like if there’s one that already exists, what is it? . . .
Or resources were available, but they didn’t come through. That I did find frustrating, not just the technology part, but whether it was activities, pictures, a contact.

The amount of support offered and available to teachers in terms of planning and relief time, resources, consultants, as well as moral support and commitment from administration and the community is obviously a critical factor in how teachers experience change initiatives. Adequate support must be offered and available. Teachers get frustrated when promised resources and assistance do not appear. Three of the four teachers interviewed felt that they did not receive adequate support from one source or another and this had a great impact on their experiences with the Green Schools Project. Teachers also spoke extensively of their frustration with the fact that the support that they did receive was relinquished too soon. They felt that they needed those support structures in place for much longer than one school year if the project was to become imbedded in the school curriculum. This was a major frustration for the teachers. If something is worth doing in the first place, why would the support for it end? The comments that follow illustrate the participants’ feeling regarding this issue.

That is another problem that we have with projects is that they come and all of a sudden they stop, instead of a continuance, especially of things that work. . . . The second year that team stayed together [and] we carried on with some of the same kind of curriculum objectives together looking at world issues and global problems and debates and so forth. But the Children’s Hearing didn’t take place. . . . Didn’t have
the resource support. Didn’t have Jean, didn’t have the release time, so it was up to yourself to carry it on. . . . So again, if I were to say anything about these projects, they are great for the time they are run, but they really, if they are that worthwhile, it needs to be part of the curriculum and it needs to be continued and polished. (Debra)

Definitely you need some continuity from the people who initiate it, or somebody from their camp kind of thing. . . . It has to be a longer term because then if your assignment changes, and the administration changes, and your circumstances change, you take the philosophies and you adapt them, and you move them on, and it's facilitated for you to do that. (Beverley)

So it had - it was a super sounding thing, and at the time, it was like a buzz word, that’s what everybody wanted to be. But that’s sort of gone now because now it’s, you know, budget cuts, and you’re not talking about environmental things now. . . . But then I mean at the same time too, Jean phased out too. She went back, she went to half-time and then it was like zzzuup, you know I’ve seen her once, don’t know what she’s doing, but that sort of thing too. So it was sort of like, uhm, a flash and then a fizzles. (Sandra)

It is one thing to get an initiative implemented, but continuation of that initiative, particularly once the funding and other external supports disappear, is quite another. As Fullan (Ibid., 88) notes, only a minority of projects that are well implemented are continued beyond the period of funding. Unfortunately, there
were a lot of factors going against the continuation of the Green Schools Project in this school. At the end of that school year, the principal left, the consultant was reduced to half time, the project initiators left the scene, teachers were given new assignments and so lost their teaching partners from the project, the Superintendent who had been instrumental in bringing the project to the Board left, and funding for the project ended. Huberman and Miles (1984) stress that continuation of innovations depends on whether or not procedures have been established for continuing assistance, especially relative to supporting new teachers and administrators (as cited in Fullan, Ibid., 89). Unfortunately, the school board did not see fit to make sure that the new principal was committed to the continuation of the Green Schools Project, suggesting it was not a key criterion in making the appointment. For participants, the departure of the original principal was perhaps the most significant factor in the project’s lack of continuation.

*I think it was the principal’s baby. Yeah, I really do. . . . And then because of the administration change - I never really thought about that being such a big factor, but I really do believe that it is - he left and so did it. I mean with anybody, new management comes in anywhere and they’ve got their own ideas and their own way to do things and the other ways get phased out, and I think that’s what happened.*

(Sandra)

*The principal had changed as well. I think it had, it definitely had an impact. . . . It is just too bad that funding is withdrawn and so forth. Administration changes, all of*
sudden something doesn’t get the attention that really it’s a global issue that is not going to go away. . . . And I think more people would come on board if it had gone on. (Debra)

It - the continuity wasn’t there because you didn’t have the staff continuity. . . . We had a change in principal that year as well. It’s too bad, there was a lot of changes, and I think that it would have been nice to have an action plan - a long term plan so that it could be picked up and carried on. (Beverley)

For these teachers, continuity of administration was necessary in order for them to carry on what project initiators had begun. Although the new principal had been the vice-principal at Northside when the Green Schools Project was initially proposed to the school, continuation of the project was obviously not a priority for her. Participants suggested that this was partly due to the fact that it was her first year as principal and she was struggling to meet the new demands of principalship. They also suggested that she was trying to establish herself and her own way of doing things. As a result, when the original principal left, so did the school’s emphasis on global education. As Fullan (Ibid., 90) notes, “one of the most powerful factors known to take its toll on continuation is staff and administrative turnover.” In their research on factors affecting implementation and continuation of change initiatives, Berman and McLaughlin (1977) found that “the principal was the key to both implementation and continuation. . . . It was extremely difficult for teachers to
go on using project methods or materials without the principal's explicit support”

Overall, the teachers I interviewed felt positive about the support they received from the principal and the change facilitation team, and this led to successes in implementation of the Green Schools Project. Unfortunately, however, all of the support that the teachers had come to rely on abruptly ended after the "implementation year", and as a result the project lasted only the one school year. Participants felt that if those supports had remained in place, the project would have had a greater chance of survival. When consultant and administrative support for the project ended, the immediate pressures of teaching and new administrative priorities took precedence, and the project fell by the wayside. As discussed in chapter four, even those teachers who wanted to see the project continue, felt too overburdened by other responsibilities to keep the project going without the administrative and consultant support.

**Participants' Sense of Ownership over the Project**

The fact that the principal leaving the school had such a detrimental effect on the continuation of the project says much about the level of ownership that the teachers themselves had over the Green Schools Project. It would appear that administrative continuity becomes increasingly important for the continuation of initiatives when ownership of the change initiative is lacking on the part of the staff. This was unfortunately the case for the Green Schools initiative, and such a
magnitude of transition and change (principal leaving, teams changing, consultant leaving) led to the demise of the project. Despite the intentions of the project initiators, the participants I spoke to did not have a real sense of ownership over the Green Schools Project. Participants did seem to feel a sense of ownership over certain aspects of their involvement, such as over the curriculum units they designed; but overall, they did not take ownership over the project as a whole. They were but one cog in the wheel. This is evident through the participants’ comments regarding how they became involved in the project, and their level of understanding or ‘knowing’ of project goals and long-term objectives.

When asked about how they became involved in the project, participants’ responses indicated that the project was something that was conceived of outside of their school walls, was then brought to the principal to see if he and his staff would be interested, and, upon the principal’s agreement, the project was then proposed to the teachers. Although teachers supported it and most became involved willingly, they were implementing someone else’s mandate. The following comments serve to illustrate.

*I believe Jean [consultant] approached the staff at a meeting and was saying, ‘this is what we want to do; do you want to?’* (Sandra)

*We were approached as a Junior Division that there would be - through Jean - that there would be an opportunity to become involved because our school had some technology and some programs, already existing programs, that sort of fit into the*
mold and that our school had been selected, and 'would there be any team interested in pursuing some work with them?' And that's how we heard about it. (Beverley)

Initially, I believe it was Jean who came to our staff meeting to talk to us one lunch hour. . . . basically, she came to the staff meeting and some people agreed. . . . So my focus in terms of this particular writing was with the grade six team, and I wasn't involved in the rainforest one cause [name of teacher] was, okay - I don't know how they picked who was doing what. (Jane)

My hearing about it was from Jean, and she was doing a project on doing green schools due to funding that was given by a London family, I can't think of the name, and the two men who were really the people orchestrating this project money for the green schools plan. So when they asked Jean if she would be interested in implementing this into different schools, she asked if Northside wanted to participate. . . . And then she [consultant] would provide us with resources and tell us about a process she sees and what her objectives were and then we would try to fill in.

(Debra)

A conversation that I had with Jane serves to illustrate her perception of the amount of choice teachers were given as to whether to become involved in the Green Schools Project.
I - You said at one point when I asked you, I don't know if you remember this, but I asked you in the staff room about your involvement and you had said that you were just sort of told that you had to do it. In what sense was that?

J - Well, like I said, we had a very keen principal at the time and he was very keen that this project should come to the school, and it was strongly suggested that we would be the ones to do that, so we ended up doing that. Well, kind of asked-told, you know, uhm -

I - Strongly recommended that you get involved.

J - I think the grade six team would agree that it was strongly recommended that they better do it - so they did [laughs].

Participants also indicated that they had little knowledge of the overall goals and objectives of the Green Schools Project, and for some this led to feelings of uncertainty over what they were trying to accomplish and when they would know if they had been successful. When asked if there was anything they wish they had known before becoming involved with the project, participants stated that they would have liked to have known more about the overall goals and objectives that administration and the project initiators had for the Green Schools Project.

What would have helped me understand the project would have been the total picture of how the Ontario Green Schools Project would infiltrate our school. As well we needed to know the school's plan for the project, what they [administration] were hoping to get out of it. Internal meetings where goal statements for all parts were made should have happened. The project needed to involve all participants in every
aspect of the planning and follow through, if not the actual projects themselves.

(Sandra)

I wish that I had known more of the long range objectives and how they would be implemented. (Beverley)

It would have been helpful to have had, in writing, our rationale for involvement in the program with expectations clearly laid out. (Jane)

The above comments show that participants were not involved in the initial conceptualization and planning of the project, and that they were in effect implementing someone else’s mandate. Although most of the teachers who became involved did so willingly because they believed in the ideals and the philosophy of global education, the fact that the teachers did not initiate the project themselves limited their sense of ownership over the project. However, as Fullan (Ibid., 92) observes, the issue of ownership is a complex one. An individual can have differing levels of ownership over different aspects of an initiative. Such was the case with the Green Schools Project. Participants had a limited sense of ownership over the project as whole, but they did have a distinct sense of ownership over their particular area of involvement. This was in large part due to the fact that the project allowed teachers to become involved in a “strand” (i.e., school yard naturalization, school plant, ethos, curriculum) of their choosing, and they were wholly involved in the development and implementation of their particular strand of the project.
Unfortunately, this did not translate into a sense of ownership over the project as a whole. Instead, participants knew little about aspects of the project in which they were not involved, and knew less of what they described as the administration’s and the project initiators’ goals and objectives for the project.

The Innovation

As Marvin Wideen (1992, 144) observes, “the literature on school improvement often remains silent on the substance of changes that become the subject of study.” It is often assumed that the nature of the change is irrelevant to how the change process unfolds. However, in a case study of a successful school change initiative, Wideen (Ibid.) found that “the very change being attempted . . . became influential in determining its success.” Similar findings emerged in the present study. During interviews with participants it was revealed that the innovation itself, because of its multi-stranded and process-oriented approach, was a significant factor in their experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project. The project’s multi-stranded approach allowed for a variety of meanings and interpretations concerning the nature of the project, and individuals were able to tap into an area which they perceived as important and meaningful to them. The project’s process-oriented approach necessitated a rather intense collaborative process, which on the whole proved to be a very positive experience for many of the participants, but also somewhat overwhelming in that it was a very time-consuming and at times frustrating process for participants.
Multiple Meanings and Interpretations

As discussed in chapter one, the Green Schools Project involved a multi-stranded approach to effecting change through the areas of school ground naturalization, school plant, school ethos, curriculum, community, and telecommunications. In effect, the project did not simply involve the implementation of a single innovation, but rather, it involved the simultaneous implementation of multiple innovations. While participants did seem to have a shared set of meanings concerning the nature of the project, the multi-stranded approach seemed to provide something for everyone, both in terms of their own professional development and in connection to their own beliefs and values. Teachers were able to choose the strand or strands which best fit their personal and professional context.

So we did the school yard thing, and it was quite funny because I’m not a gardener you see, so Susan did all the gardening. She did all the planning, the decorating, the acquiring, all the labour. She did all of that because I don’t like worms and dirt and yuck. But Susan is a die hard gardener, so that was her baby, and my baby was the waste audit... it fit in with my classroom and my teaching wonderfully. I mean, it was just great. (Sandra)

I really thought the ethos issue was important because it was something at grade eight they are ready to grab and understand and are interested in. . . . So we chose the one [strand] we wanted, really because we felt the ethos strand really fit in with our
personal objectives. . . . And what I think is really important, as a grade eight teacher, for our kids to go away with at the end of the year. (Debra)

Well, I really like doing more ‘real time’, and if you’re gonna have a curriculum it has to be meaningful. Meaning the opportunity to actually implement something that’s real life. . . . But the whole, just the whole idea - the holistic approach. . . . I see that a lot relating to the whole philosophy that the environment has to pull in the child to make it meaningful. And I really did enjoy that. . . . because it was more my thing, my style. . . . it was great. (Beverley)

It was an exciting opportunity for me because I go to lots of workshops and try to get information that I like to bring back and if possible get it going in the classroom, either through demonstration or planning with others, and it was really an opportunity to bring out some of those resources that I’ve been wanting to use and be able to inject some of that into what we were doing. . . . I just wanted to see more of an awareness around multiple intelligence. . . . Basically, where I was coming from is that if we could as much as possible adjust our strategies to meet more of their [students’] needs - so that was the method in my madness. (Jane)

What existed was a general concept of change, but one which carried with it a variety of meanings and interpretations for participants. The fact that the teachers were able to focus their involvement in an area which they perceived as important
and meaningful to them resulted in participants feeling positive about their involvement in the Green Schools Project.

While the multi-stranded nature of the project proved to be one of its strengths, it was also a weakness. Although the multi-stranded approach allowed participants to focus their involvement in a particular area of their choosing, it also allowed participants to lose sight of the whole, as is indicated by the fact that participants knew little about aspects of the project in which they were not involved. Not surprisingly, participants defined the project largely in terms of their particular area of involvement. This may not have been such an issue if Northside had more of a collaborative culture. However, as discussed in chapter four, the fragmented nature of the school made it difficult for the Green Schools Project to spread from isolated pockets of teachers to a whole school initiative. With the multi-stranded approach, there was little pressure to collaborate outside of one's particular Green Schools Project team. Without collaboration and discussion between the various project teams, the project remained fragmented and a shared vision was confined to individual groups rather than spreading throughout the school, making it difficult to achieve a critical mass of change within the school.

**Group Process**

The process-oriented approach necessitated intense and elaborate discussions amongst the various teams of teachers as they struggled to reach consensus about how to approach the initiative and attempted to understand each others'
interpretations and meanings of the project. In this respect, the Green Schools Project provided a forum for teachers to discuss and reflect on their fundamental philosophies of teaching. Through this process participants learned about themselves and each other and were exposed to new ideas and philosophies. One participant describes the process as she experienced it.

_I probably had some [reservations] in the dead centre in June when I guess I thought I knew what I had in my head, and maybe what I was thinking about it wasn’t the same as what other people were thinking about it. We spent a lot of time talking trying to get kind of a common thinking around what we thought we’d do and there was a certain amount of excitement or, you know, ‘if we’re going to do this project then I really want to do this cause I’ve always wanted to include this in something I’ve done.’ So you’ve got individuals expressing their ideas and concerns, and then there was a need to try to focus that in some way._ (Jane)

Despite the initial reservations that some participants had about this process, for many, it was a very positive aspect of their experiences with the Green Schools Project, as the following comments indicate.

_I thought it was a positive focus for a group of people to take as a project. To have a team work on a project I think is very positive because there’s so much valuable discussion that goes on. There’s a lot of informal sharing and sharing of ideas and teaching of others, and you can’t really put a price on that kind of activity but it’s very fruitful._ (Jane)
It was a positive opportunity to work with such a big team, and to provide an opportunity for everybody to share their individual philosophies and differences and to really pull in, because sometimes if you’ve got a strong, too strong people, you don’t hear from everybody. And I really enjoyed that - that aspect of the process oriented. And for me, I think it’s left a lasting impression. (Beverley)

As a team of teachers we really bought into it and did a good job as a team. There was a real consistency with that team and we all followed through. . . . It really - you know that whole, you know, where a team really has to work well together to really accomplish anything. (Debra)

The process-oriented nature of the Green Schools Project necessitated a very collaborative group process in which everyone participated in defining what the team’s role in the project would be and how they would put their ideas into practice. This led to the development of a shared set of meanings and understandings concerning the team’s focus of involvement in the Green Schools Project, and was a significant factor in the development of participants’ sense of ownership over their particular area of involvement. In a sense, the project put all of the teachers onto a level playing field, in that they were starting something from scratch in which no one was considered an expert, and therefore, there was equal consideration given to all points of view. As Jane noted:
I thought as a group we were - like nobody was really an expert in this multi-intelligence thing, so we were just kind of wading through it together... So I think we all got some awareness and learning out of that.

For Beverley and Jane in particular this was a very empowering experience in that it gave them the opportunity to implement some of their own ideas and teaching philosophies.

I would say that on the particular team that I was working with, some units had been developed and over the year you bumped through one unit and into the next one, into the next one, and they were already pretty well written and planned, and had been used for some time, so it was hard to inject a lot of new strategies into something that was already planned. So the big opportunity that I saw with the Green Schools Project was that we were starting with a reasonably clean slate and this would enable us to maybe free up our thinking to include some other kinds of things. (Jane)

It was an opportunity for me to break in with some of my own ideas and to have us do process-oriented planning, because before it had been pretty, not dictatorial, but 'this is the unit, this is how we've done it before, blah, blah, blah.' So I really enjoyed it. (Beverley)

The social context in which the grade six team in particular developed and implemented their green schools curriculum units provided for Jane and Beverley a situation in which they felt it was safe to take risks. As a result, they voiced some of
their teaching ideas, beliefs, and philosophies which they had up to this point largely kept to themselves.

It must be noted, however, that while the collaborative process and the process-oriented nature of the project has been cited by participants as one of the Green Schools Project's strengths, it also proved to be somewhat overwhelming in that the process was very time-consuming and draining. Beverley in particular spoke extensively of this during the interviews.

_It was pretty exhausting. We ended up doing almost a complete year of new units, new planning, new themes, with a different approach - all based on Green Schools philosophies and ideas, and it was more than I think we should have bitten off. We should have taken a smaller chunk. It was overwhelming. The process alone was very time consuming. . . . when you're process-oriented and you have to go through every - to accept everybody's philosophies and input and output - it takes a lot longer, and you're not talking about three or four, you're talking about eleven of us in total. . . . It was an organizational nightmare. It really was over - too much._

Despite the fact that collaboration can be an overwhelming process for teachers, given the right conditions, contexts, and processes it can be positively related to teacher development and the successful implementation of changes. In their study of global education and school change, Barbara and Kenneth Tye (1992, 19) concluded that the opportunity for teachers to meet and share with their colleagues was one of the more important factors related to teachers' positive experiences with a project. In a study of effective staff development programs,
Judith Warren Little and colleagues (1984) found that the most successful staff development programs involved teachers working collaboratively in groups in both the training and implementation phases of the project. Little and colleagues (Ibid., 87) observed that the collective participation of teachers on some scale (even four members of a single department or two-person grade level teams) eased the burden of the complexity of mastering and implementing new practices. Teachers participating in the study described "group discussions of ideas, shared work in preparing written materials and designing lessons, and collaborative review of progress" as positively related to the successful implementation of new programs. In Wideen's (1992, 142) case study of a successful school change initiative, he found that the group process was a powerful determinant in the success of the innovation: "that the [change] process was characterized by constant and intense interaction among the teachers, and that the principal did not direct the project from above, but instead was part of it, was significant to its success."

The above studies clearly show the significance of the collaborative process to teacher development and the successful implementation of new programs. As Fullan (1991, 132) asserts, "significant educational change consists of changes in beliefs, teaching style, and materials, which can come about only through a process of personal development in a social context." Although the collaborative process was time-consuming and at times frustrating for participants, it is evident that a great deal of personal and professional development occurred through the group process as participants articulated and reflected on their own teaching philosophies.
and became aware of those of their colleagues. As such, the opportunities for group planning and discussion that the project afforded was a very positive aspect of the project for participants.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have discussed three aspects of the change process which played a significant role in how participants experienced the Ontario Green Schools Project: the support available to participants, the amount of ownership participants had over the project, and the nature of the initiative itself. Overall, participants felt that the support they received from their principal, the consultant, and the project initiators was adequate and that their implementation successes were directly related to the support they received. In particular, participants appreciated the significance of the support of their principal. Participants did notice, however, when support from certain sources was lacking. For example, Sandra felt the impact of the lack of active parent and community support. Debra was disappointed with the minimal amount of contact her team had with the project initiators, and Beverley's experience was keenly affected by inadequate resources. For these participants, the absence of total support influenced the quality of their experiences. Participants also felt frustrated with the fact that the support that they did receive was prematurely relinquished. They felt that they needed support structures in place for much longer than one school year if the project was to continue. In particular, participants felt that the loss of administrative support with the departure of their principal had the
greatest impact on their ability to continue to implement the change initiatives. A new administration brought with it a new focus and a new school growth plan. Participants felt too overburdened with new administrative directives to keep the project going.

That the principal's leaving the school had such a detrimental effect on the continuation of the project was a strong indicator of the amount of ownership that the teachers had over the Green Schools Project as whole. Administrative continuity seems to become increasingly important to the continuation of initiatives when the teachers lack deep ownership over such projects. Although participants had ownership over their particular area of involvement, this did not translate into a sense of ownership over the initiative as a whole, as is indicated by the fact that participants largely defined the project in terms of the particular strand in which they were involved. That participants were not involved in the initial conceptualization and planning of the project, and that their involvement was to a certain extent a result of pressure from administration, are also indications of the teachers' lack of true ownership over the project. Although most of the teachers who became involved did so willingly because they believed in the ideals and the philosophy of global education, they were implementing someone else's mandate, and this had consequences for the continuation of the project.

Finally, the nature of the innovation itself was a factor in how participants experienced the Green Schools Project. The project's multi-stranded and process-oriented approach proved to be one of its strengths. The multi-stranded approach
provided an opportunity for participants to tap into their personal areas of interest. The fact that the teachers were able to focus their involvement in an area which they perceived as important and meaningful, resulted in participants feeling positive about their involvement in the Green Schools Project. However, the multi-stranded approach also proved to be a weakness in that participants narrowed their focus of involvement to the extent that they lost sight of the project as a whole. This had repercussions for successful whole school change. The process-oriented approach provided an opportunity for participants to engage in a collaborative process of discussion and reflection on their fundamental philosophies of teaching. It also led to the development of a shared set of meanings and understandings concerning the team’s focus of involvement in the Green Schools Project, and was a significant factor in participants’ sense of ownership over their particular area of involvement. While the process-oriented approach and collaborative process proved to be somewhat overwhelming at times, participants cited the group collaboration as one of the most positive aspects of the change process.

The factors discussed in this chapter as influences on the participants’ Green Schools Project experiences reveal that some of the educational change issues that are important to teachers include: the amount and duration of support received, the amount of ownership that teachers have over the initiative, the meaning that the initiative holds for teachers, and the existence of opportunities for collaboration and sharing. These issues are discussed in detail in the following chapter.
Chapter Six

Interpretive Analysis and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to develop a deeper understanding of issues surrounding teacher and educational change through an analysis of four teachers’ experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project and the contextual variables which influenced those experiences. I have attempted to do so through the voices of the teachers themselves, honouring their narratives and their interpretations, in the hopes of highlighting the significance of the teacher’s perspective to successful change. In this concluding chapter, I summarize what can be learned from this study in terms of factors associated with the success and failure of educational change. The chapter begins with a brief review of the factors that influenced the participants’ Green Schools Project experiences. I then explore the connection between the participants’ experiences and the overall meaning that the project had for them, specifically in terms of its impact on their professional development. Following that, I examine what Sandra, Beverley, Jane, and Debra’s experiences have to tell us about some of the issues surrounding teacher and educational change and the sustaining of innovative programs. Finally, I discuss some further areas of research that are necessary for an even more complete understanding of educational change.
Contextual Variables Revisited

Personal Context

Participants’ beliefs, values, and life experiences significantly influenced their involvement and experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project. In each case, it was the fact that the initiative coincided with their personal beliefs, values, and philosophies which led to participants’ interest and involvement in the Green Schools Project. Each participants’ personal context also influenced how they experienced various aspects of the change process. For example, Jane’s appreciation of the collaborative process was in large part due to her past experiences with group planning, both positive and negative. Perhaps most importantly, however, the fact that participants were involved in a project which they perceived as important and meaningful resulted in positive feelings about their involvement in the Green Schools Project.

Work Context

Two main aspects of the participants’ working contexts, the realities of teaching and the school culture, were important influences on their experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project. The degree to which participants felt that project initiators acknowledged and incorporated their working realities into the change initiative had a significant impact on how participants experienced the Green Schools Project. Sandra, Jane, and Debra felt that the Green Schools Project initiators were sensitive to their current teaching demands and responsibilities, and this had a
positive affect on their experiences. Beverley, however, felt that project initiators were not particularly sensitive to the pressures and demands of teaching, and that the project demanded too much of teachers in terms of time and energy. This resulted in her having mixed feeling about the Green Schools Project. Although she enjoyed many aspects of the project and believed in its goals and ideals, the complexity and demanding nature of the project served to negate many of the positive aspects of her involvement.

Participant’s experiences with the Green Schools Project were also influenced by the project’s impact on their students. Because they saw the project as beneficial for their students, participants felt positive about their involvement in the initiative. Indeed, this factor seemed to have more of an impact on participants’ assessment of the project than any inconveniences involvement in the project may have caused them. Even Beverley, who perhaps felt the most overwhelmed by the project, generally felt positive about it because it was so beneficial to her students.

The school culture, in particular, the fragmentation between the primary and junior/junior intermediate divisions had serious implications for the quality of participants’ Green Schools Project experiences. It was in part due to the divided school culture that the project failed to become a whole school initiative, and this was very frustrating for participants. Because collaboration and discussion was confined to the project teams and there was very little interaction amongst participants outside those teams, a shared vision for the Green Schools Project failed to develop throughout the school, making it difficult for the project to become whole
school initiative. Participants felt that whole staff meetings around the project and opportunities to share what they were doing with other staff members might have improved the situation.

The Change Process

Three aspects of the change process emerged as important influences on the participants’ experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project: the amount of support participants received, the amount of ownership that participants had over the project, and the nature of the innovation itself. The amount of support participants received was a predominant factor in how they experienced the Green Schools Project. Overall, participants felt that they received sufficient support from a variety of sources and this was a positive aspect of their experiences. They felt that they would not have been successful in implementing the project without that support. However, when support was missing from one source or another, or when promised resources failed to materialize, it had a negative impact on their experiences. Participants also felt that the support ended too soon, and this was very frustrating for them. They suggested that external support must be left in place for much longer than one school year if a change initiative is to become embedded in the school curriculum.

Participants’ experiences with the Green Schools Project were also influenced by the amount of ownership they had over the project. Perhaps the best way to characterize participants’ level of ownership over the Green Schools Project is to say
that it was limited to their particular area of involvement. That participants were involved in the development and implementation of their particular strand of the project led to feelings of empowerment and a sense of ownership. However, participants did not seem to have a sense of ownership over the project as a whole, and this had implications for their experiences with the project. Participants felt “in the dark” about the administration’s and project initiators’ goals for the project, and as a result, at times felt uncertain about what they were trying to accomplish and when they would know if they had been successful.

The nature of the innovation itself, in terms of its multi-stranded and process-oriented approach, was also a significant factor in the participants’ experiences with the Green Schools Project. The multi-stranded approach was a very positive aspect of the project for participants in that it allowed them to become involved in an area which they felt was meaningful and interesting. However, the multi-stranded approach also proved to be a weakness in that participants narrowed their focus of involvement to the extent that they lost sight of the project as a whole. As a result, the project remained fragmented and a shared vision was confined to individual groups rather than spreading throughout the school. The process-oriented approach was also very positive for the teachers as it led to a collaborative process of discussion and reflection, which teachers felt was particularly valuable. The group process also served to generate an enthusiasm and a consistency within the project teams as they implemented the initiative.
While the collaborative process proved to be somewhat overwhelming at times, overall it was a very positive aspect of the Green Schools Project for participants.

**Impact on Participants’ Professional Development**

*Sandra*

As a beginning teacher in her second year of full time teaching, Sandra was still in the early stages of defining her philosophies of teaching when she became involved in the Ontario Green Schools Project. As such, the Green Schools Project played an important role in Sandra’s early development as a teacher.

> Well again, I think it’s because I was such a neophyte at teaching and everything that I did everyday was new and different. And I’m still just a sponge ready to take anything. So I mean, I’d never done anything like that before, but then again I’d never taught before either, so everything I did was new. And I mean, it - those first two years were really significant for me because of my program and because of the Green Schools Project. You know, it gave you a bigger focus, and I mean the whole ‘green school’, that’s such, I mean that is - it’s a status that we were hoping to achieve, not just to be called a green school but to be a green school.

Because Sandra’s first few years of teaching occurred in schools which had a strong environmental focus, she came to see environmental education as an important component of the curriculum. The fact that those experiences were very positive both for her and her students led to Sandra’s desire to continue to develop professionally in this area. The Green Schools Project helped her to do so in that she
was given the support to expand her program to include more aspects of
environmental education and she began to collaborate with other teachers with
similar interests.

They [students] really bought into the whole environmental thing. I think that too
helped me see where I wanted to go with it. So then the second year I was in grade
five I thought, 'this is not bad you know. I'll do what I did last year.' I mean some
things I changed, like the garbage unit the second year was because I wanted to do
this because I saw how it connected everything together.

Her interest in environmental education has continued to influence who she is as a
teacher and has also had a lasting impact on her actions outside of the classroom.

They [students] know I'm environmental. It doesn't come out all the time, but it does
when I nag at them. Like I'll take the garbage and put it on their desk and say 'excuse
me!' That sort of thing. I won't let them print more than once. They were making
these books today, and I had so many kids end up with them in pieces because they cut
them wrong - 'too bad, glue it.' [laughs] You know, I can't, in all good conscience I
can't give them more. You can't do that. . . . And I do that at home too. I can't just
throw things out. Everything that has to be reused is reused. . . . I would take
garbage home if I'm out, 'sorry, that can, put it here.' . . . Anyway, there's a use for
everything. I think that's really neat. But part of it too is the kids have to know that,
you know, the most important 'R' is the reduce. So, I try to bring that through.

Although Sandra did not stretch much beyond a focus on environmental
education, the Ontario Green Schools Project has provided a starting point for her
professional development in at least one area of global education. Hopefully, with opportunities for future involvement in similar initiatives she will continue to develop professionally in this area, making connections between environmental education and other areas of global education, such as peace, development, and human rights.

**Beverley**

Like Sandra, Beverley's involvement in the Ontario Green Schools Project began at a formative stage in her teaching career. When she began participating in the project, Beverley was still in the process of consolidating her teaching philosophies and practices. Up to this point, Beverley had felt that she was unable to teach in the way that she preferred. She had come to her first position with certain ideas about what she thought teaching was all about and what she wanted to accomplish. However, largely due to the demanding nature of her first few teaching assignments, she had been unable for the most part to put these ideas into practice. Instead, she felt limited to a more "traditional" teaching pedagogy in which the students sit in rows and the focus is on knowledge and comprehension. The Green Schools Project, however, offered Beverley the opportunity to share her ideas and philosophies with her colleagues, and provided her with support in implementing some of them. In this respect, the Green Schools Project helped Beverley to resolve some of the incongruence between her teaching philosophy and her practice, thus supporting her professional development.
And I really enjoyed some of their [project initiators’] philosophies and their whole - the ideas, because it also got into multiple intelligence . . . and we really got into some of the kinesthetic and how we tend to forget that part of it . . . And I really did enjoy that. It was probably one of the first opportunities that I had to plan using the kinds of things that I like. And I know I was very vocal, and I really enjoyed it, because it was more my thing, my style. To put up the multiple intelligence, a major cross-classification chart, to go from ideas to pulling them into the unit, to back and forth, to see it being put on computer at the same time, to using templates - that whole - it was great.

In this sense, involvement in the Green Schools Project was very empowering for Beverley, in that it gave her the confidence to voice and to implement some of her teaching ideas, beliefs, and philosophies.

The Green Schools Project not only provided Beverley with an opportunity to refine some of her own educational theories, but it also helped her to expand them. She learned various ways of putting her ideas into practice, and she became aware of connections between her own ideas and the philosophy of global education. For example, she sees a connection between fostering students’ global awareness and her own interest in helping students to develop a sense of personal awareness.

A lot of the philosophy I really liked personally, because learning that the Green Schools Project was not solely about the ‘green’ environment, but about the total environment of the student, the teacher, the classroom, which is really what I really loved about it, tying in the whole child . . . What I really got out of it was how you
can conduct that whole awareness in your classroom, that the environment has - you have to involve the student, that you have to make them reflect and look inward, and always relate on a personal level. So real time, and how to sort of work that into every day curriculum.

Beverley also expanded her beliefs about the nature of environmental education to include a more holistic view of it, which encompassed everything from the individual’s personal environment to the global environment.

Initially I would have said environmental education was what are you doing to reduce, reuse, recycle, like the three R’s, if you want to look at it that way. Now, I wouldn’t say that as much any more. When I look at environment, I think of a learning environment what did you do in the environment of your classroom to have these kids internalize the philosophy and then what do you see a couple of years down the road - are they showing it? Like it’s one thing, for example, to have an awareness of the rainforest. It’s another thing to voluntarily donate your milk money towards an aspect there. So, you know it’s a - did they internalize it, within the environment that you provide. So, environmental education means a little more to me now because of the whole approach of the Green Schools Project.

Overall, the Ontario Green Schools Project facilitated Beverley’s professional development in that it provided her with the opportunity to develop her teaching ideas and philosophies and put them into practice. That she was able to do so in a safe and supportive environment was particularly significant to her professional development.
As discussed in chapter three, since her beginning years as a teacher, Jane has viewed collaborative planning with her colleagues as a positive means of professional development, and as a necessary element of effective teaching. For Jane, the Ontario Green Schools Project provided an opportunity to professionally develop through collaboration with colleagues.

Any time teachers, as a working team, are given the opportunity, time, and support to participate in a project of this nature is, from my point of view, a very positive learning and teaching opportunity. It is a great way to develop professionally and come together as a team.

Jane also noted that the project offered teachers an “opportunity to hear what each member of the team thought about with regards to teaching strategies, philosophies, evaluation, and the project itself.” The process of group planning, discussing and reflecting on philosophies of teaching was a very significant and positive aspect of the Green Schools Project for Jane. As she put it, “you can’t help but learn something.” Through this process Jane felt that she learned about herself and her colleagues, was exposed to new ideas and philosophies, and as a result, developed personally and professionally.

The Green Schools Project also provided Jane with some new strategies and ideas as a special education teacher for reaching those students whose strengths fell outside the realm of pure academics. She was able to work with other teachers to
look at the concept of multiple intelligence, an aspect of global education, and incorporate it into her planning.

I thought as a group we were - like nobody was really an expert in this multi-intelligence thing, so we were just kind of wading through it together. I had put some things together on charts that I thought would help kind of focus what we were trying to figure out, but certainly wasn’t a huge expert in the area, and so I think we all got some awareness and learning out of that.

This, she felt, benefited her in her role as a special education teacher.

At least if you know what’s going on in the classroom and you’ve helped do all the planning it’s easier to work with the students. You can also plan with certain students in mind. It’s a lot easier that way because then you can imbed the kinds of activities right into the planning that you know certain students are going to need, or would benefit from having a certain approach as opposed to another one, so that, that was - as a SERT [Special Education Resource Teacher] it was a very positive opportunity for me to share what I knew and to plan around you know some of those kids that I had in mind, and it’s the way I think it’s really probably supposed to work, in an ideal and perfect world, but that doesn’t happen all the time.

The Ontario Green Schools Project, then, supported Jane’s professional development in that it gave her the opportunity to expand and develop her teaching philosophies and practices in several areas of global education. That she was able to do so in collaboration with her colleagues was particularly significant to her professional development.
Debra

As one who was already very interested in incorporating global issues into the curriculum, the Ontario Green Schools Project offered Debra resources, ideas, and support for professional development in that area. She learned various global education activities and ways of helping her students to develop a global awareness.

"The product [activity] was really great, you know, bringing in a product that was made in another country, going into the shopping center and looking at goods and what is made in Canada and what is made in the Caribbean or Thailand. They actually made a product where they used labels. They had to find as many global labels as they could and they covered the product with these labels to show a global product. And it was really an eye opener for them because they couldn't believe the number of things that come not just from the United States, but that come from all over these third world countries. And of course the Children's Hearings. Looking at different groups. In a cooperative group kind of setting [they] looked at issues, one would look at war, one would look at famine, one would look at child labour, women's rights, that kind of thing. And then they would produce like a mind map of images and words and then all the groups would share those ideas and it went up on the bulletin board.

Debra felt that the process of planning the Children's Hearings (a proceeding in which students discussed global issues which were important to them with various members of the community, such as the mayor, the minister of the environment, a representative from industry, and so forth) was the most significant
aspect of her involvement in the Green Schools Project. She learned a great deal about planning a conference and was most impressed with the positive impact that it had on her students. She also felt that now that she had more of an understanding of how to go about putting a conference together, she would have liked to have done it again the following year, but this time allowing the students to take more control over the planning of the conference.

Probably the best was the Children’s Hearings . . . they [students] loved the reality of it, the experts were actually going to come and talk to them and listen to their issues . . . So it was very real for them. . . . But I think I would have liked to, for instance the next year a good way it could have been carried on with the time and resources and energy, was that children could have run a conference and actually invited people to participate and actually run a conference like a conference is run - sending out an itinerary, sending out invitations, asking for conference money. You know, doing a full scale conference that would have looked at the whole environmental area and people you know.

Overall, it was the opportunity to plan and develop global education curriculum in collaboration with others, and in particular the opportunity to plan the Children’s Hearings, which supported Debra’s professional development.

All in all, the Ontario Green Schools Project had a significant impact on the professional development of each participant. Not surprisingly, each participant was affected in different ways, depending on their personal context, the stage of their teaching career, and their previous experiences, if any, with global education.
For those teachers who had little global education experience, involvement in the Green Schools Project has provided a starting point for development in that area. Beverley, for example, began to make connections between her teaching philosophy and that of global education, giving her a focus for her professional development. Sandra made strides in the area of environmental education, expanding her teaching philosophies and practices to include an environmental focus. Thus, for Sandra and Beverley who were just beginning their teaching careers, the Green Schools Project was very significant in that it gave them a focus for their professional development. Jane and Debra, who were both already very interested in global issues and how to incorporate them into the curriculum, found the Green Schools Project to be a wonderful opportunity to do so in an atmosphere of support and collaboration. Thus, for Jane and Debra, each with more than twenty years of teaching experience, the Green Schools Project was significant in that it offered them the opportunity to continue to develop in an area of education that they had come to see as important throughout their teaching careers.

**Issues Surrounding Educational Change**

Sandra, Beverley, Jane, and Debra's experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project reveal a number of issues surrounding educational change that are important to teachers, including: the amount and duration of support, the amount of ownership that teachers have over the initiative, the meaning that the innovation holds for teachers, opportunities for collaboration and sharing, the current demands
facing teachers, and the culture of the school in which teachers work. Many of these issues are not new to change theorists and researchers, and have already been discussed at length in the change literature. What is important here, however, is that these issues were raised by the teachers themselves. These issues are not discrete; instead, they form a complex system of interacting variables. They overlap and flow into one another, influencing each other in complex and intricate ways.

Participants' experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project indicate that a major issue for teachers involved with change initiatives is the amount and duration of support received. The amount of support available to teachers in terms of planning and relief time, resources and assistance, as well as moral support and commitment from administration is a critical factor in how teachers experience change initiatives. In addition, the duration of that support is significantly related to teachers' ability and willingness to continue implementing the innovation. When support is available, teachers' experiences with innovations are more likely to be positive and initiatives stand a greater chance of success. However, when support is unavailable, or is promised and fails to materialize, teachers' experiences are likely to be characterized by frustration and discouragement, and the implementation of initiatives limited. Further, when support is relinquished abruptly, teachers are apt to discontinue implementing the innovation.

The tendency for support to end almost as quickly as it begins was cited by participants as a particularly frustrating aspect of educational change for teachers. Of course, time and funding are always going to be in limited supply, but given this
reality, it only makes sense for those proposing the changes to put procedures in place which ease the transition from a dependence on external support to a reliance on internal support. For example, a committee of teachers who are committed to sustaining the innovation (preferably teachers from a variety of grade levels) could be established, their role being to provide resources and assistance to other staff members, and to act as liaisons, keeping the staff apprised of the progress of the initiative. In addition, project initiators might organize and facilitate a staff meeting at the beginning of the new school year, during which teachers share their implementation plans for the year and develop a plan for continuing the project. Such a process might provide an opportunity for teachers to regroup and might also help to rejuvenate interest in the innovation. A participant in the present study stated that this may have been just what was needed to get her re-focused on the Green Schools Project.

Like, I'm getting more rejuvenated about it just re-living the experience. It's too bad that we didn't do that as a staff at the beginning of the year, because now I start, you know, you get that resurgence, and I think, 'hey, you know, I can pull this back in, or yeah this', and I reflect and it was a good feeling and it was a positive. So, just even discussing it again is a good opportunity to mesh out the philosophy. (Beverley)

Such a meeting could also serve to bring any new staff members up date on the progress of the initiative.

If the school has a new administration, a staff meeting could also provide an opportunity to find out where the project lay for the principal in terms of priority
and how it could be worked into any other plans or priorities the principal had. Of course, if the project is no longer a priority for the school board, it might make it difficult for a new principal to set it as their own priority. And if a principal does not wish to support a project, this can create difficulties for teachers in their attempts to continue implementation, given the fact that they may well be facing a variety of new demands and priorities which take up most of their time. However, a group of teachers and external change agents working together to show administration that the project is important to them may help to influence the decisions of a new principal. Project initiators may even consider a similar type of meeting with the school board as a means of rejuvenating interest in and support for the initiative.

It is essential that such procedures are a part of the process, and change initiators must make sure that time for this is built into their funding proposals. As the situation at Northside indicates, continuity of external support in any way possible is critical, especially in the face of high staff and administrative turnover. Whatever the original plan of the Green Schools Project initiators, the experiences of the teachers at Northside indicate that there was a rather abrupt end to external support, and this combined with the loss of support from administration led to the demise of the Green Schools Project at Northside. What this tells us is that external support must not end abruptly; rather it must fade out gradually while internal support for teachers is being established. This is going to be particularly important for a change initiative such as the Ontario Green Schools Project which "goes against the grain" of the educational system. Given the fact that the Green Schools
Project was promoting a philosophy of education that is radically different from the one that schools tend to practice, the chances of the school’s new administrator supporting these ideas is going to be minimal.

Participants’ experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project also reveal that the development of ownership over an initiative is not a simple process. As discussed in chapter five, although participants developed a distinct sense of ownership over certain aspects of the Green Schools Project, this did not translate into a sense of ownership over the project as a whole. Thus, ownership over particular aspects of a project does not necessarily lead to ownership over the initiative as a whole. Indeed, it can impede it, in that teachers can end up so focused on one aspect of the initiative, that they lose sight of the whole. And it is ownership over the initiative as a whole that seems to be the critical factor associated with the sustaining of innovations. In the case of the Green Schools Project, participants’ focus was primarily on the successful implementation of their individual projects (i.e. Children’s Hearings, waste audit, writing curriculum units). They did not, however, take any responsibility for the implementation and continuation of the project as a whole. This is not to say that ownership over a particular aspect of the project had no significant impact on participants. On the contrary, it affected them quite deeply, and participants continue to incorporate much of what they learned through involvement in the Green Schools Project into their teaching philosophy and practice. However, efforts to collaborate with other teachers and continue the change process are virtually non-existent. There are no longer small groups
working together to create a "green school", let alone a whole school initiative to do so. Participants now mainly work on implementing global education in isolation.

What factors, then, facilitate the development of ownership over a change initiative as a whole? Participants' experiences indicate that when teachers are able to find personal meaning in change initiatives, they are likely to develop a sense of ownership over at least some aspects of the initiative. The fact that participants involved with the Green Schools Project were able to focus their involvement in an area which they perceived as important and meaningful led to a distinct sense of ownership over their particular area of involvement. However, although the ability to find personal meaning in an initiative is an important factor, participants' experiences also reveal that a shared vision across the school community is critical to the development of ownership over change initiatives. A delicate balance must be achieved between the innovation having personal meaning for participants and the existence of a shared meaning amongst all involved. The more of a shared vision that exists, the deeper the level of ownership over the initiative as a whole.

How one achieves this shared vision is in large part going to be dependent on the particular school involved. Given the fragmented nature of Northside, however, formalized opportunities for teachers to share what they were doing on the project with other staff members might have enhanced teachers' sense of ownership over the Green Schools Project as a whole and helped the project to become a whole school initiative. Organized occasions for sharing are particularly important to achieving a "critical mass of change" in schools such as Northside where such
sharing does not normally occur. Without collaboration and sharing between the various project teams, a shared vision remains confined to individual groups rather than spreading throughout the school. Without a shared vision, the chances of shared ownership over an initiative as a whole are minimal. Ideally, the principal would be in a position to coordinate such occasions for sharing in the form of staff meetings. If the principal does not seem to be doing so, however, as was the case at Northside, the external change agents may have to play a larger role in this by organizing meetings in which teachers share their work, helping teachers to see interconnections between the various aspects of the initiative, and drawing more teachers into the project.

It takes time, support, and effort to move from individualized meaning to a shared meaning, and depends upon continued support as deep ownership develops. As Fullan (1991, 92) points out, true ownership develops gradually over the course of one’s involvement: "ownership in the sense of clarity, skill, and commitment is a progressive process. True ownership is not something that occurs magically at the beginning, but rather is something that comes out the other end of a successful change process." Thus, it is important that external support remains in place as long as possible, and fades out gradually as teachers progressively develop deep ownership over the innovation and take responsibility for the implementation of the innovation.

As indicated in the discussion above, strategies for dealing with the above issues are intricately related to the culture of the particular school involved, as well
as the roles of the various players, such as administration, teacher leaders, consultants, and so forth. In a fragmented school such as Northside, where the administration was either not willing or able to do so, project initiators needed to take more of a directive approach to bringing the different project teams together and encouraging the flow of ideas between the various project strands, so as to facilitate whole school change. Given the situation at this school, project initiators also needed to take more of an active role in establishing procedures to help teachers to make the transition from a dependence on external support to a reliance on internal support, in order to aid the continuation of the project.

Chapter Summary

As we have seen, the change process is inherently complex. The success or failure of change initiatives depends upon the interactions of a wide variety of factors, such as the availability and duration of support, the amount of ownership teachers have over the initiative, the meaning the initiative has for teachers, the number of opportunities for collaboration and sharing, and the current demands facing teachers. The significance of each factor will of course differ depending on the individual teachers involved, the culture of the school, and the nature of the innovation. It is difficult, therefore, to predict what is necessary for successful change, as it is so dependent on individual and situational factors. What this study does tell us, however,
is that these factors must be taken into consideration during the planning of change initiatives, and one of the best ways to do so is through the involvement of the school community as a whole. Involving teachers and other members of the school community in the conceptualization, implementation, and evaluation of changes ensures that the change process is compatible with the beliefs, values, and experiences of individual members of the school community and the school as a whole. It also ensures that the planned changes are continually updated and adapted to meet the ever-changing needs and priorities of the local situation.

This study also brings to light the fact that change can be successful at some levels, but not at others. In the present study, for example, there were many successes associated with the Green Schools Project. The Children’s Hearings, the waste audit, the development of curriculum units with a focus on global education were deemed a great success by the teachers involved, both in terms of their benefits for the students and in terms of the benefits to the teachers’ own professional development. Many of these teachers continue to incorporate the activities, curriculum units, and practices associated with the Green Schools Project into their daily teaching. However, in terms of the Green Schools Project becoming a whole school initiative, one of the primary goals of the project initiators, the initiative was less than successful. As previously discussed, the initiative failed to move from isolated pockets of involvement to a whole school initiative, and as a result, a critical mass of change within the school was not achieved. Perhaps the best way to summarize the impact of the Green Schools Project is to say that it achieved
successes during the "implementation year", but its impact was limited to those teachers and students who were directly involved. There has been little lasting impact on the school as a whole, as is evident by the fact that many teachers consider the Green Schools Project a thing of the past that is no longer relevant to the goings on of the school (as discussed in chapter one).

The purpose of the present study was to gain a deeper understanding of issues surrounding teacher and educational change from the perspective of the teacher. This inquiry was guided by two main questions:

1. How did four teachers experience the Ontario Green Schools Project and what factors influenced those experiences?

2. What do the teachers' experiences have to tell us about some of the issues surrounding teacher and educational change and the sustaining of innovations?

Through an analysis of four teachers' experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project and the factors that influenced those experiences, this study has provided a deeper understanding of issues surrounding teacher and educational change and the sustaining of innovations from the teacher's perspective. Several issues emerged as important for teachers involved in change initiatives, including: the amount and duration of support, the amount of ownership that teachers have over the initiative, the meaning that the innovation holds for teachers, opportunities for collaboration and sharing, and the context in which teachers work. An understanding of some of
the issues that are important to teachers provides a starting point for those interested in bringing the teacher's perspective into the change process, which, as I have tried to convey, is critical if change is to be successful.

Teachers, however, are not the only group whose perspectives have been traditionally excluded from the discourse on educational change. Students and parents and other members of the school community (caretakers, secretaries, and often principals) have also been rarely heard from. And as Michael Fullan (1991) suggests, significant and lasting school change involves collaboration amongst as many teachers, parents, students, and administrators as possible, shared ownership of both the content and process of change, and a multi-directional flow of information and ideas across the school community. An appropriate addition to this study, then, would be an analysis how others members of the school community experienced the Green Schools Project, such as students, parents, caretakers, administration. Such an analysis would provide an even deeper understanding of issues surrounding educational change and the sustaining of innovations, from a variety of perspectives. It would also provide a more complete picture of the impact that the project had on Northside as a whole, and the factors that both hindered and supported the successes of the Green Schools Project.

Research is ultimately a learning process filled with both satisfactions and disappointments. Despite the valuable information that this study afforded, the research did have its limitations. Time, as it often is, was the major problem. Given more time and resources, this study could have been greatly improved upon
through interviews with a larger sample of teachers who were involved in the Green Schools Project, and with a greater number of participant observation sessions. Further, transcribing and analyzing the transcripts of each interview before the next one would have giving both myself and the participants the opportunity to review the transcripts, thereby bringing more meanings to each subsequent interview. This, I believe, would have elicited richer data. As it was, I found that as I analysed the data, further questions arose which I would have liked to ask the participants. Unfortunately, by this time, data collection was finished and I was not able to ask those questions.

Despite the limitations of the study, however, the opportunity to speak with and listen to teachers on a subject which they are rarely heard was an extremely satisfying aspect of the research for me, and I learned a great deal from the participants in terms of teacher and educational change. My hope is that those who read this study will also be enlightened by the narratives of these four teachers, and that they too will be impressed by the insight that these teachers bring to the field of educational change.
References


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Appendix A

Letter to Participants

Dear Prospective Participant,

Thank you for your interest in my study on teachers' experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project (OGSP). Specifically, I am interested in gaining an understanding of four teachers' experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project and what meaning those experiences had for them. I would like to share with you a little bit of the rationale for my interest in this topic, and what your participation in my study would involve.

Educational change research over the past thirty years has by and large been initiated from and focused on the perspectives of the reformers themselves. There has been little or no regard for the perspectives of those who are supposed to implement the changes - the teachers. Accordingly, interpretations and analyses of the success or failure of educational reform initiatives have largely come from the program initiators. Only rarely are teachers' voices a part of that analysis. Even when teachers are given a voice, it has most often been used to reinforce existing theory, rather than to create new theory based on what teachers say. Although interviewing teachers is often part of follow up to initiatives to see whether project is being implemented and perhaps what teachers think and feel about it, such interviews still tend to be conducted from the researcher's theoretical perspective, rather the teacher's practical perspective. If, however, we are truly interested in educational change that is significant and lasting, then teachers must be included in
all stages of the process - from the conceptualization of the problem to the
evaluation of the initiative. By talking with and listening to teachers about their
experiences with change initiatives, we can deepen our understanding of issues
surrounding educational change and the sustaining of innovative programs, from a
perspective that is far too scarce in the literature - that of the teacher.

In order to understand how teachers at your school experienced the Ontario
Green Schools Project, I have chosen an in-depth phenomenological interview
approach. I have chosen such an approach because it is designed to ask participants
to reconstruct their experience and to explore the meaning of that experience. The
approach follows a three-interview format, with each interview lasting about 90
minutes. The purpose of the first interview is to provide contextual background
from your life history, and to understand you as a person. In this interview I will be
interested in exploring some of your experiences (family, schooling, work) prior to
becoming a teacher with regards to what led you to teaching. I will also be
interested in exploring your development as a teacher, from your beginning years
until the present, as well as your experiences with other educational innovations
over the years. The second interview will be concerned with the details of your
experience with the Ontario Green Schools Project. The purpose of the third
interview is to allow for reflection on the meaning that the experience has had for
you. I would also like to use the third interview to come back to anything from the
first two interviews that I would like to explore further. The interviews will be very
open-ended, following the basic question that establishes the purpose and focus of
each interview (which I have outlined above). Although I will have some guiding questions, my questions will largely emerge from your narrative. The time frame which I am currently suggesting for the interviews is during March and April, 1997.

If you consent to being a participant in this study, I would also like to use the observational field notes that I have taken while volunteering in your classroom. These field notes will help me to create a more complete picture of you as a teacher in terms of how you incorporate environmental education into your curriculum, and how you have chosen to implement the Ontario Green Schools initiative. I will negotiate with you any use of observational notes that I have taken, as they pertain to your teaching and classroom activities, and you will have the final word on their use. You are assured every confidentiality with regards to all aspects of the research. I would also like to clarify that during the course of my study, I consider the participants to be the experts, and that my role is that of the learner. Thus, I am engaged in a process of learning about teachers' experiences, and not in evaluating the decisions, teaching practices, or narrative style of the participant.

The following principles of procedure will guide my research:

I will undertake to:

1. inform the office of my presence in the school,
2. negotiate the time and place of each interview,
3. negotiate the time of each classroom participant observation,
4. negotiate the audio taping of interviews with each participant,
5. identify the participants and school with pseudonyms,
6. submit all interview materials to participants for comments, revisions and/or censorship, and allow such comments, revision, and/or censoring to be the final word,

7. negotiate with each participant the use of classroom observation field notes,

8. hold in confidence anything that the participants say to me (informally or during formal interview and classroom observation sessions), and to discuss that material only in the anonymized context of the research or in general terms.

    I will provide you with a formal letter of agreement and consent at the first interview. Please also understand that you are free to end your participation in this study at any time, and free to decline response to any interview question. If you would like to participate, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can set up an interview schedule. I can be reached at (416) 534-8763 (evenings).

Thank you very much for considering participation in my research.

With best regards,

Tracey Smith

Master’s Student

OISE/UT
Appendix B

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Interviews with Teachers

The following questions are to serve as a guideline only. The interviews will be very open-ended, following the purpose and focus of each interview. Although I have some guiding questions concerning information I would like to obtain, my questions will largely emerge from the participant's narrative.

Interview One: Life History

The purpose of this interview is to help me to develop an understanding of you as a person and a teacher, in order to provide a contextual background for your experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project. I am interested in exploring some of your experiences (family, schooling, work) prior to becoming a teacher, as well as what led you to teaching. I am also interested in exploring your development as a teacher, from your beginning years until the present, as well as your experiences with other educational innovations over the years.

1. Please tell me as much as you can about yourself and your experiences (family, schooling, work) prior to becoming a teacher.

2. What led you to teaching?
3. I would now like to discuss your development as a teacher. What I am interested in here is any significant learning moments, incidents, or transformational experiences in your development as a teacher.

4. Is there an issue that has been important for you as an educator, throughout your career?

5. What is it like to be a teacher?

6. What kinds of things do you like to see happening in your classroom on a given day?

7. Is there an image or metaphor that would describe you as a teacher and/or your experiences as a teacher?

8. Can you tell me about some of your experiences with other school improvement initiatives throughout your career (positive and/or negative experiences)?
Interview Two: Experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project

The purpose of this interview is to help me to understand, as fully as possible, the details of your experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project.

1. Please tell me as much as possible about the details of your experience with the Ontario Green Schools Project, from the time you first heard about it, through the implementation process.

2. What in your view was the Green Schools Project trying to accomplish?

3. Did you have any reservations about the Green Schools Project?

4. How did Green Schools Project fit into your personal philosophy of teaching?

5. How did the Green Schools Project fit in with your particular classroom and teaching situation?

6. Tell me about this school. How well did the ideals of Ontario Green Schools Project fit in with the particular culture of this school.

7. Can you describe any significant learning moments or transformational experiences during your participation with the Ontario Green Schools Project?
8. What does environmental education mean to you?

9. Have you been involved in any other environmental education initiatives? If so, can you tell me about them?

**Interview Three: Reflection on Meaning of Experiences**

The purpose of this interview is to allow for reflection on the meaning that the experience with the Ontario Green Schools Project has had for you.

1. Looking back, what are your feelings about the Ontario Green Schools Project?

2. What meaning does the Ontario Green Schools Project have for you?

3. Given your experience, is there anything that you wish you had known before becoming involved with the Ontario Green Schools Project?

4. Would you consider becoming involved in such a project again? Why or why not?

5. What advice would you give a teacher considering becoming involved in a curriculum innovation?
6. Now that you have had a chance to reflect on your experiences with the Ontario Green Schools Project, is there anything that you would like to add? Any other stories, reflections, or critical incidents that you would like to recount?
Appendix C

Letter of Informed Consent

I, ____________________, do hereby agree to participate in the research for Tracey Smith’s qualifying thesis for a Master of Arts at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at University of Toronto, and consent to Tracey Smith making use of information volunteered (orally and/or in written form) by myself to her for the purpose of collecting data for a Master’s Thesis.

I understand that all information from the interviews will be made available to me for reviewing, comments, and revisions, and that I will have the final word on any such changes.

I understand that all information gathered from the classroom observations will be shared with me for the purposes of coming to a consensual agreement with Tracey as to their use in the ensuing thesis.

I understand that Tracey will keep all materials gathered during the course of the study (audio tapes, diskettes, field notes, transcripts, etc.) in a secure place, and that at the conclusion of the study audio tapes of interviews and hard copies of interview transcripts will be either given to me or destroyed.

I understand that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained by deleting all names from the raw data and through the use of pseudonyms and that Tracey will hold in confidence anything that I say to her (informally or during
formal interview and classroom observation sessions), and will discuss that material only in the anonymized context of the research or in general terms.

I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time, and am free to decline response to any interview question.

I further consent to the additional use of information volunteered by myself, where initialed, as follows:

Quotation in academic publications ___________

Quotation in papers presented at academic conferences ______

Quotation in general publications ___________

Quotation for general educational purposes __________

Signed on this day of ______________, 1997.

________________________________________

Tracey Smith, researcher

________________________________________

participant
Appendix D

Participant Information

This form constitutes Confidential Information when complete

Please provide the following information about yourself and your teaching experience:

Full Name: ________________________________
Chosen Pseudonym: __________________________
Teaching Experience in Years: ________________________
Grade Level(s) Taught: ____________________________
Subject(s) Taught: ______________________________
Position(s) Held Within Education System: __________

Age at Commencement of Teaching Career: __________
Age at Present: _________________________
Number of Years at Present School: ________________
Current Grade Level(s): __________________________
Current Teaching Subject(s): ______________________