Play - lost in transition? Teacher beliefs about pedagogic continuity across the transition to formal schooling

Linda Bellen
The University of Notre Dame Australia

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

“There is a growing impression among practitioners, researchers, and the media that in the past two decades, preschool and kindergarten classrooms have rapidly become more academically oriented and less focused on exploration, social skill development, and play”

(Bassok, Latham, & Rorem, 2016, p. 1)

Introduction

The quote which begins this study highlights the tensions and pressures that currently exist across the transition to formal schooling around the globe. The statement also underlines the dilemma of locating a place for play-based pedagogy much beyond the prior-to-school years. This study is timely because of the changing landscape of early years education in Australia, particularly the current spotlight held on improving effective transitions for children. The transition to school is a significant milestone in young children’s lives and a successful transition paves the way for future academic success and positive social outcomes. The move from prior-to-school settings into the first year of school in Australia (called Kindergarten in the state of New South Wales where the study took place) marks a change from a play-based learning environment to a more formal academic classroom and the challenge of adjusting to a new setting.

This qualitative case study explored prior-to-school and Kindergarten teachers’ educational beliefs about play-based pedagogy and constructs of pedagogic continuity in the context of children’s transition to formal schooling. The focus on transition to school was chosen because this is the critical point in the pedagogic divide and the Kindergarten year would be the initial link to familiar play experiences that children first experience between the two contexts. The study also investigated how the different pedagogies and curriculum documents that exist in prior-to-school and Kindergarten settings contribute to teachers’ constructs of continuity in teaching and learning, and determined their pedagogic practice within the transition to formal schooling. There was a specific focus on teachers’ perceived
roles in play-based learning and teaching to understand whether they believed this to be an effective means to promote pedagogic continuity in the transition process. Also, systemic factors that influence teacher decisions whether to use play-based pedagogy were examined and detailed what continuities exist between the two sectors to develop an understanding of the relationship between prior-to-school and school settings. The review of the literature on the transition to school undertaken for this thesis revealed mounting concern around the loss of play-based pedagogy in early years education and the impact of this phenomenon on pedagogic continuity across the transition process. The literature also supported the concept that achieving effective transitions is dependent on the degree of pedagogic continuity between the two sectors of education and it is this issue that was investigated in the current study. Additionally, the bi-directional connections and forces of the various environmental ecosystems in which the child exists strongly influence the effectiveness of the transition to school.

1.1 Background and justification of the study

Traditionally, in early childhood education, the dominant pedagogy is play-based and is used to support and facilitate children’s learning, while in schools learning is more formalised, directed and structured with the presence of a mandated curriculum. A key difference in Australia now seems to be that although play-based learning for four year olds predominates in prior-to-school settings, that pedagogy is less well established in the first year of schooling. This ideological divide in pedagogical approaches between the two contexts is first evident as children begin the transition toward their first year of school. The transition to school not only marks a shift to a more formal education context but also a change in curricular documents.

In the Australian state of New South Wales (NSW), the education system is governed by various curriculum documents underpinned by differing philosophies. Curriculum documents impact on teachers’ perceptions of pedagogical practice and so their understandings may transform the context in which children learn (Synodi,
2010). The use of different curriculum frameworks in the two sectors can be an impeding factor for teachers in supporting pedagogical continuity. A close analysis of such documents is necessary to determine if there is a separation of play from pedagogy, to ascertain whether they are unified and have a shared meaning of play as a valued pedagogy or whether there is a work-play dichotomy.

For the purposes of the current study, transition is defined as the process of moving from one educational setting to another. The notion of transition extends beyond a narrow view of the process in terms of current orientation programs offered and encompasses the year leading up to, and including, the first year of school. This situates transition to school as a process occurring over time and as an extended pathway. The transition from prior-to school settings and entry to Kindergarten is a significant event in many children’s lives during which demanding changes may be experienced. In recent times it has become a topical issue and there is a growing awareness of the importance of this period in early years education both internationally and nationally (Alatalo, Meier, & Frank, 2016; Broström, 2005, 2013; Dockett & Perry, 2008, 2013, 2014; Fisher, 2011; Huser, Dockett, & Perry, 2015; Mirkhil, 2010; Mortlock, Plowman, & Glasgow, 2011). Research evidence suggests that a successful transition from a prior-to-school setting to the first year of formal schooling is very important for children’s adjustment and subsequent academic achievement (Dockett & Perry, 2007a; Duncan, Claessens, Huston, Pagani, Engel, Sexton, et al., 2007; Schulting, Malone, & Dodge, 2005).

Much research has been undertaken in this area and it is clearly recognised that a positive transition involves carefully planned and managed activities in consultation with all of the key stakeholders and a strong emphasis on building collaborative relationships (Ashton, Woodrow, Johnston, Wangmann, Singh, & James, 2008; Dockett & Perry, 2004, 2008; Petrakos & Lehrer, 2011; Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 2003; Wildenger & McIntyre, 2011). Effective transitions are those that build on children’s previous experience and involve reciprocal communication between educators in both sectors (Alatalo et al., 2016; Boyle & Grieshaber, 2013; Chan, 2010;
Connor, 2011; Fabian, 2007; Henderson, 2014). Nevertheless, some children still find the transition daunting, stressful and negative.

Teachers in both sectors understand the implications of their pivotal role in providing assistance and support to help children experience effective transitions. A crucial factor that has emerged in recent literature is the role of the teacher in successful transitions (Ackesjö, 2013a; Dockett, 2011; Dockett & Perry, 2007b; Harrison, 2015; O’Kane & Hayes, 2006; Petriwskyj, 2013). Teachers in both sectors who facilitate the transition process have the potential to influence the outcome of transitions, positively or negatively. Differences in beliefs and practices held by teachers in prior-to-school and Kindergarten rooms may result in creating stressful challenges and discontinuity for children across the transition process (Fabian & Dunlop, 2007; Timperley, McNaughton, Howie, Robinson, 2003). There is some emerging research that suggests that a major contributing factor in children’s difficulties in adjustment and subsequent success in school is the discontinuity in pedagogy between the two contexts (Grieshaber, 2009; Harrison, 2015; Kauerz, 2006; Kelman & Lauchlan, 2010; Petriwskyj, 2005, 2013). Teachers’ pedagogical thinking and views about how they implement play-based pedagogy are vital to understanding pedagogic continuity across the transition process. This study therefore investigated this area.

The challenges that teachers and children experience across the transition process, particularly in terms of pedagogic continuity, can result from the existence of different pedagogies and curriculums in the two sectors of education. To assure continuity of learning for children, it is important that teachers in the early years of education carefully consider and question their pedagogy and pedagogical practices when organising, managing and implementing transition processes. Giving voice to teachers is an important first step so that we can listen to those in the field and understand some of the influences on their pedagogical decision-making across the transition process. It is essential that teachers reflect on their understandings about play-based pedagogy, particularly within the context of the transition to school, since this would be expressed in their teaching practices. When teachers’ voices are
foregrounded within rich descriptive studies it may be possible to examine the intricacies of their views about pedagogic continuity and the transition process and extricate factors that contribute to supporting more seamless, effective transitions for children. More research needs to be done in exploring where play-based pedagogy and curriculum divides meet. As Petriwskyj (2013) remarks, “limited attention has been given to the pedagogic changes associated with the transition from play-based programs into formal school classes” (p. 45). If efforts to improve successful, smooth transitions are to be realised, teachers’ voices in future research need to be foregrounded. The present study extends the current limited literature on the transition process from the perspectives of those who experience and implement it.

Calls from families and government departmental policies, together with the introduction of high-stakes testing in many countries such as Australia, all place pressure on teachers to provide a stronger focus on academic skills (Curwood, 2007; Wesley & Buysse, 2003). In Australia, the recent push-down effect of academic curriculum has resulted in the ‘schoolification’ of early years learning, with less emphasis on play-based pedagogy (Jay, Knaus, & Hesterman, 2014; McGregor, 2010; Petriwskyj, O’Gorman, & Turunen, 2013). These demands have undermined traditional developmental approaches to education such as play-based learning (Goldstein, 2007). This presents a dilemma for educators who do not consider such pedagogy to be the fundamental focus of learning in children’s first year of school. To resolve this dilemma, one strategy that has emerged from the related literature is to promote greater continuity in pedagogy between the two contexts (Harrison, 2015; Smith, 2015). The issue of pedagogic continuity in transitions is one that necessitates further attention from policy makers, schools, families and particularly educators involved in developing transition processes. Given that processes are implemented at the teacher level, the idea of using the discourse of play as a valued pedagogy to promote continuity of learning and teaching is of vital importance to the present research. Therefore, this raises the question of whether the use of play-based pedagogy to support continuity of learning and teaching is key in this process.
Although substantive research (Alatalo, Meier, & Frank, 2016; Broström, 2005, 2013; Boyle & Grieshaber, 2013; Dockett & Perry, 2004; 2007a; 2008, 2013, 2014; Fisher, 2011; Petriwskyj, 2013) has been carried out on the topic of the transition to formal schooling, few studies to date have attempted to establish the association between the transition process and teacher beliefs about play-based pedagogy and pedagogic continuity, particularly in the Australian context. This study drew upon research that explored the phenomenon of pedagogic continuity within the context of the transition to school process.

1.2 My personal perspective and rationale for the study

The impetus for this research has evolved from a three-fold interplay of various professional and personal experiences throughout my life: my previous work as an early childhood teacher, my current position as a university tutor and professional experience advisor in early years education, and my role as a parent of two children who have both transitioned to ‘big school’.

It is this last role that has particularly provided me with a pressing concern and motivation to instigate this study. I felt a strong sense of anxiety and concern for my youngest daughter as her orientation period to her first year of school approached. Whilst I sat throughout the various family information sessions of the school’s home-link transition program and listened to detailed explanations of the school’s literacy and numeracy approaches and statistics, I could not help but wonder: “where was the place for play within all this academic learning?” How would my child, one who thrives in the world of play, cope with all these new challenges? Indeed, how would many other children manage such expectations?

In the early weeks of my daughter’s first year in school, as I sat and reviewed her Best Start Kindergarten Assessment (see 2.3) and deliberated if indeed this document was describing her accurately, I recollected my many years of supporting prior-to-school children transition to school. This process, I felt, had never truly been a collaborative partnership between the two sectors of education.
As an early childhood educator, I never felt that I was a valued or equal partner and was very rarely consulted or considered by teachers in the schools receiving the children I had taught. I diligently completed detailed summaries of children’s learning and handed them over to anxious parents to deliver to the entrant school but rarely received feedback as to whether these had been read or considered by the new school teacher.

I also reflected on my twelve years’ experience as an early childhood practicum supervisor and mentor of teacher education students in two Sydney universities. It became apparent to me that the once prominent status of play as the prevailing medium for learning and teaching in our early years settings has itself shifted. Student teachers placed in rooms with children who were about to transition to school often complained of their struggle to implement meaningful and authentic play experiences in settings that obliged them to plan exercises using writing stencils and other tightly scheduled ostensibly school readiness activities. What I had observed was an academic push-down effect into our early childhood landscape. Educators in these centres struggled to reconcile their personal beliefs in play with expectations from corporate administrators and family expectations of structured, visible academic content in the programs. What had crept in to many corners of early childhood centres in the rooms of older prior-to-school children were worksheets and stencils, teacher-directed alphabet-learning approaches, and ‘school readiness’ programs. The educators had made decisions as to whether or not to implement play-based experiences in their rooms and also to what degree. Why do some educators vehemently believe in play as a legitimate pedagogy and others do not? In order to further understand the basis for such decisions, particularly in the context of the transition to school, I felt I needed to probe further into research about play-based pedagogy and explore teacher beliefs and understandings of pedagogic continuity across this process. Additionally, as a reflective educator, I considered it vital to explore the impact of pedagogy on successful transitions. I began to think, have we swung the focus from child experiences to child outcomes? Have we lost our ability to defend the value of play and its role in children’s learning? I pondered…has play been ‘lost in transition’? Miller and Almon’s (2009)
words began to ring strongly in my ears that, "the traditional kindergarten classroom that most adults remember from childhood – with plenty of space and time for unstructured play and discovery, art and music, practicing social skills, and learning to enjoy learning – has largely disappeared" (p. 42).

1.3 Reflexivity and my role as a researcher

Patton’s (2015) definition of reflexivity as the “ownership of one’s perspective…a critical self-exploration of one’s own interpretations” (p. 70) has guided me throughout this study so that my aim has been to be aware of the beliefs and values that I bring to the research process. Additionally, in order to come to know myself within this continual, relational process, Lincoln, Lynham and Guba’s (2011) explanation of reflexivity as “the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher” (p. 124) so that there is “a conscious experiencing of the self as both inquirer and respondent” (p. 124) has directed me. This relational premise implies that “inquiry is intervention…in this sense, inquiry draws from and can contribute to the daily lives of participants” (Hosking & Pluut, 2010, p. 68). Thus, the multiple identities we bring to the research process are essential to acknowledge and interrogate throughout to impart clarity to how the research is shaped and presented. It is important to be conscious that, as the sole researcher of this project, I have direct access to all aspects of the construction of the study and that this can influence the nature of knowledge produced within it (Sarantakos, 2013). I have tried to be mindful of the possible bias that I may hold toward this research topic. As an early childhood trained educator, I have a vested interest in play-based pedagogy and particularly the notion of promoting pedagogic continuity across the transition process. Throughout this study, I remained resolute in being focussed on my role as a researcher.
1.4 **Aim and purpose of the study**

The primary aim of this qualitative study was to explore educational beliefs concerning pedagogic continuity and the use of play as a medium for learning and teaching from the perspectives of Australian prior-to-school and Kindergarten teachers. The intention was to examine this notion in such a way to facilitate the participants to offer rich, deep personal insights. Hearing teachers’ opinions and getting a sense of their beliefs and views about play-based pedagogy and pedagogic continuity can be a meaningful and insightful way to understand their pedagogical thinking and hence their pedagogical aims. The fundamental idea of whether these teachers considered play-based pedagogy to be a significant factor in supporting pedagogic continuity in effective transitions was central to this study. Internal and external influencing factors were also investigated as they can influence whether or not individual beliefs can be implemented, and highlight the tensions and dilemmas that teachers regularly face. Data were collected through two sources, in-depth interviews and document sources with the intent that they would provide a vivid, detailed understanding of the research topic.

Another goal of this study was to situate the transition to school in a theoretical framework that fittingly acknowledges and accommodates the complexities of this process. The investigation of this phenomenon steered to the selection of a comprehensive ecological system model, which became the theoretical framework of the current study and centred on the role of a vital stakeholder within this. Whilst transitions involve many key stakeholders (children, families, teachers, administrators, community organisations) with significant research about their views, this study was not focused on children’s or families’ perspectives of transitions, but on teachers’ perspectives of the transition process and their use of play-based pedagogy within this. Additionally, the term ‘educator’ will generally refer to professionals working in prior-to-school settings and ‘teacher’ will denote those working in the school sector. However, in discussions that includes both groups of participants throughout the study, the term ‘teachers’ will be used. Whilst teachers do not hold complete control over transitions, they are critical players and
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... contributors who implement the process, and so were the key participants of my research. A key stage in the study was to listen to educators in the field to understand how they viewed and whether they implemented play-based pedagogy in the two educational contexts. My aim was to probe beneath teachers’ personal constructs of play-based pedagogy and pedagogic continuity so that they could articulate their own views and beliefs. Despite the significant body of research that exists supporting the value of play for young children’s learning, teachers who work with these children often have difficulty articulating their rationale for a play-based approach or explaining how learning and teaching is facilitated through play within the curriculum (Aldridge, Kohler, Kilgo, & Christensen, 2012; Myck-Wayne, 2010). Educators’ beliefs on play and play-based learning largely determine whether such approaches become part of the pedagogy of play in the discourse of transitions. Transitions are complex, and given the diversity of teachers and their varying pedagogical practices, they have differing experiences of their roles in the facilitation of the transition process (Lickess, 2008; Peters, 2002) and this, I feel, was important to explore.

1.5 The research questions

The overarching research question was:

How do teachers’ beliefs about play-based pedagogy contribute to their constructs of pedagogic continuity across the transition to school?

Three subsidiary research questions were developed to provide a framework for the study, to guide the interview procedure with teachers and to support the presentation and analysis of data.

1. How do prior-to-school and Kindergarten teachers view play-based pedagogy and how do they describe their role in play-based pedagogy?
2. What do prior-to-school and Kindergarten teachers believe about pedagogic continuity in the transition process?
3. What factors influence prior-to-school and Kindergarten teachers’ decisions related to using play-based pedagogy in the transition process?

The findings from the answers to these questions have implications and relevance for teachers working with children in early years education and who are involved in the transition process.

1.6 Theoretical framework

Teachers who implement and manage children’s transition to school operate as part of a wider system and the external associations within this have the potential to influence and impact teacher beliefs in various ways. Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological systems model of child development, later renamed the bio-ecological systems theory, provides a theoretical framework for understanding the complexity of the transition process. It recognises that the transition process is context bound and frames the theoretical basis for this study. Whilst this was designed to embrace an individual’s entire life span, I use this framework to specifically examine the transition to school. In Bronfenbrenner’s earlier construction of the ecological model, a major contributing factor to children’s learning and development was their environment and the interactions they have within this. He viewed this environment as being made up of four different interconnecting systems, which impact on children’s development either directly or indirectly. Children belong to and have links with these various systems and these links can change at any level (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Just as Bronfenbrenner proposed that the child is influenced by these four ecological systems, so too is the teacher. A graphic representation of the key elements within each of the nested four ecological environments in Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model as related to the current study is presented in Figure 1.1.
Bronfenbrenner (1995, 2001) and Bronfenbrenner and Morris’s (1998) reworked bio-ecological system theory proposes an inter-related four component Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model. This newer conception emphasises more dynamism, a clearer distinction between environment and process, whilst continuing to recognise the effect of relationships between the ecosystems, as well as the introduction of the impact of time. Bronfenbrenner (2001) himself notes that “the element of time has special importance” (p. 7, italics in original). For the current study, all four elements of this model are present. Hence, the revised model stresses the interplay of multiple factors and can be used to develop a deeper understanding of the elements at play across the transition process. These include: the proximal processes in the immediate microsystem and between microsystems – or the quality of interactions in the classroom and the role of relationships between teachers in the different sectors; the characteristics of the individual – thus the quality of transition experiences can be determined by ‘person’ factors which include teacher beliefs; context-based factors in more distal ecosystems; and the

Figure 1.1 The transition to school as related to the current study (adapted from Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological systems theory)
temporal broader context which recognises the crucial time of educational transitions as a long term process. This model is valuable in determining the quality of proximal interactions associated with the individual and others as it emphasises the manner in which the interactions can be improved. The higher the quality of interactions within the microsystems and across the mesosystems, the better and more effective the transition experience will be for children. Figure 1.2 illustrates the PPCT model as relevant to the current study.

Figure 1.2  Adapted PPCT model for the current study

1.6.1  Process

The microsystem is located in the inner core of the bio-ecological model and it is here where the progressively complex, interpersonal interactions that are sustained over time exist and are known as proximal processes. While these proximal processes are considered the core of the PPCT model, Bronfenbrenner (1995) also reminds us that an individual’s personal aspects can lessen or intensify the power of those processes to influence development, behaviour and learning. In terms of the transition to school and the current study, such processes therefore
include the reciprocal interactions between the child and teacher in play-based learning and also those connections between teachers involved in the transition process across the two settings which can affect the degree of pedagogic continuity.

1.6.2 Person

Person characteristics relate to individual variables such as dispositions, beliefs, knowledge, and skills required for the effective functioning of proximal processes, and these can directly or indirectly influence the proximal processes. It is in this later model that Bronfenbrenner made clearer the individual’s role in changing their context and for the current study, the exploration of teacher beliefs and their impact on pedagogic continuity in the transition to school is significant.

1.6.3 Context

Context refers to the different environmental layers or ecosystems, ranging from the increasingly encompassing levels of the micro- to macrosystem. Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) original model was conceptualised and structured as a series of nested systems called: the microsystem; the mesosystem; the exosystem; and the macrosystem.

The microsystem encompasses the child’s most immediate environment, such as the classroom, and is “a pattern of activities, social roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 39). It is within this most central layer that proximal processes operate to produce and support development and the “form, power, content, and direction” (Bronfenbrenner, 1995, p. 621) of proximal processes in shaping human development is influenced by context. It is the level where teachers operate and where teaching and learning occur. According to this theory, children will experience difficulty in exploring other levels, or parts of their environment, if the relationships in the proximate microsystem break down (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). A particular issue relevant to the current study is the change between microsystem contexts as experienced by children as they move across the different educational settings.
The mesosystem consists of the linkages and processes between the microsystem settings, such as prior-to-school and school contexts. As Bronfenbrenner (1994) explains, “a mesosystem is a system of microsystems” (p. 40). The relational networks that exist in this level can impact directly on children’s transition. If the transition process is to be effective and successful, rich mesosystem links that embrace communication and collaboration between the key participants are essential. If strong connections are not present between teachers in both sectors, this will affect how transitions are enacted and so the degree of pedagogic continuity evident. Similarly, if microsystems favour divergent pedagogies, tensions arise; as a consequence the child may experience pedagogic discontinuity while trying to manage the opposing microsystem values.

The exosystem is “an extension of the mesosystem embracing other specific social structures, both formal and informal, that do not themselves contain the developing person” (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 515). Thus, this refers to the external environments – the larger community and how these indirectly influence the individual. This ecosystem incorporates decision making and events that transpire outside of the sphere of the individual’s immediate environment, but the outcomes of which impact on his or her experiences directly or indirectly. In relation to the transition to school, the media, the regulatory government bodies and their directives, educational administrators, and national curriculum documents that reside within this level all influence teacher beliefs and the quality of children’s transition experiences.

The macrosystem forms the most distal, overarching environment of a given culture and encompasses the values, customs, beliefs systems and bodies of knowledge “that are embedded in each of these broader systems” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40). This outer level envelops the other ecosystems, influencing and influenced by all of them. It can be considered as the societal blueprint. Bronfenbrenner (1977) notes “what place or priority children and those responsible for their care have in such macrosystems is of special importance in determining how a child or his caretakers are treated and interact with each other in different
types of settings” (p. 515). If we wish to gain deep insight into teacher beliefs and children’s experiences of transition, consideration must be afforded to the central, prominent ideologies of a society.

This nested framework, with an emphasis on the significance of context, positions the individual at the centre of a complex web of interactions that occur across diverse social and cultural contexts. The relationships between the different contexts, or ecologies, in which children participate are central to this model, and transition experiences and opportunities are affected by the connections between these settings. Thus, teachers will play a significant role. Bronfenbrenner (1979) emphasises that it is important to bear in mind that all the interactions and relationships are bidirectional and reciprocal. His proposition of reciprocity (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) is useful to understand the interrelationship between the settings and is valuable when examining beliefs. Beliefs are subject to internal and external influences as well as having an effect on immediate and more distal settings. Thus, teacher beliefs shape the pedagogy and learning environment in which they work but also are affected by the beliefs of families, administrators, government directives, and societal attitudes and values.

1.6.4  Time

The time concept incorporates the fifth system that was added later by Bronfenbrenner (1986), called the chronosystem (the evolution of the external systems over time). This dimension acknowledges the time episodes in which the proximal processes take place (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), including time during specific episodes of proximal processes (microtime), broader time intervals of proximal processes (mesotime), and time changes in terms of expectations and events in the broader society (macrot ime). A focus of a simple chronosystem could be on a particular point in historical time such as the transition to school in the current study.

This study captures the beliefs of key stakeholders in that transition, the prior-to-school and Kindergarten teachers, and to determine if their beliefs are associated with the pedagogical practices they use across the transition process.
Hence, this study further pursues to identify the relationships between their beliefs about play-based pedagogy and their constructs of pedagogic continuity in the transition to formal schooling in Australia.

1.7 Summary and outline of thesis

The thesis comprises seven chapters. This preliminary chapter introduced the research problem and research questions together with the background and impetus for the study. Also, the rationale of the study was described and Bronfenbrenner’s bio-ecological model was examined as a useful theoretical framework to demonstrate how his PPCT model informs our understanding of the transition process on a number of levels. Chapter Two presents a critical review of the literature and provides the scope of the extant research base underpinning the research topic. The methodology is described and justified in Chapter Three and puts forward the rationale for the case study design for this research, while Chapter Four presents the findings of the interviews together with the document analysis to introduce the resultant categories and themes. Chapter Five depicts the case study reports grounded in the voices of the teachers. The cross case analysis forms the basis for a critical discussion within the context of the literature and theoretical framework in Chapter Six. The thesis concludes with Chapter Seven where the significant findings, recommendations and limitations are considered.