

GENDER AND SCHOOL:

POLICY DIRECTIONS,

PRACTICE

AND

LEADERSHIP

Submitted by

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STATEMENT OF SOURCES

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis. This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution. All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the Australian Catholic University Ethics Committee.

Anne Maria Wenham

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ABSTRACT

Since the mid 1970s student experience of gender at school has been the focus of intense media scrutiny, academic research and policy development for schools in Australia. This study took as its focus the role of the school principal as a leader for gender equity in schools. It set out to determine the response of 35 Catholic K-6 schools to gender policy directions as contained in gender policy documents published for Australian schools between 1975 and 1997 and to use these findings to determine implications for school leadership for gender equity.

The study encompassed three interlinked research phases which contributed to specific learnings about leadership for gender equity. The first research phase entailed a critical analysis of gender policy documents for Australian schools leading to the development of a Policy Analysis Template. Utilisation of the template resulted in a synthesis of gender policy implications which formed the basis for examination of school practice in a sample of K-6 Catholic schools in the next two research phases. The second research phase examined student experience of gender at school using a questionnaire and the third research phase studied teacher and principal experience of gender reform utilising questionnaires.

Data analysis methods included content analysis of policy documents, statistical analysis of questionnaire responses to determine particular connections and to identify emerging trends in the data and analysis of the qualitative responses to provide validation and further insights. The research tools developed for this study provide possibilities for future work in gaining insights into policy implementation in schools.

The research results confirmed the findings of the implementation literature in terms of leadership. The response of schools to gender policy directions was strongly influenced by a principal who could not only articulate a vision of gender equity but who also had a commitment to translating this vision into practice. The findings also demonstrated a clear link between a school's commitment to its proclaimed values, formed and shaped by its Catholic ethos and its response to gender equity issues through actual practice. Thus

school responses to gender policy directions were seen to be informed and influenced by their articulated vision and mission.

Furthermore, results demonstrated that specific gender policy directions had been adopted by schools whereas others had resulted in little or no impact at all. It was beyond the scope of this study to investigate the factors that enabled or inhibited school response to particular gender policy directions although specific gender policy reform priorities were signalled for principal attention.

The focus of this study was on the emerging connections and relationships between gender policy directions, student experience of gender at school and teacher and principal experience of gender reform. The recommendations of the study addressed the role of the principal in fostering school commitment to equity practices.

The study which utilised a sample of 35 Catholic K-6 schools demonstrated the significant role of the principal in gender reform. The impact of gender policy directions on actual school practice was seen to be dependent on the vision for gender equity and commitment to implement this into practice that the school principal brings to the role of leadership for gender equity.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

From my own experience it has become apparent that of all the sectors in education, it is the primary field which is most resistant to addressing the 'gender question'... the primary years are crucial in the formation of attitudes towards the question of gender. (Thompson, 1989, p. 69)

INTRODUCTION

In 1975 the first major Australian government sponsored report in the area of gender and school, *Girls, school and society*, (Committee on Social Change and the Education of Women), was published. The concerns it raised about girls' educational disadvantage echoed those raised in broader social arenas about girls' and women's disadvantage within the context of 1975, International Women's Year. This report heralded recognition of the role that schools play in addressing gender disadvantage and since 1975 gender has been a specific focus for educational policy and practice in Australian schools.

Gender issues in schools have prompted significant research, both in Australia and overseas, which has resulted in various system and school responses and strategies as seen in the following comment by Weiner (1990, p. 3):

Thus, initiatives promoting equal opportunities have taken different forms in different countries. They have focused in varying degrees on the importance of legislation and 'official' support, on the work of feminist teachers, on the value of in-service work and the production of resources, and on the importance of research.

Although there is a body of work that focuses on gender and the primary school in Australia, (Alloway, 1995a; Clark, 1990; Evans, 1988; Porter, 1992), studies on the response of primary schools to gender policy directions are lacking. This is despite the fact that in many gender policy documents for Australian schools there are numerous implications for practice which are relevant to K-6 schools, and in particular, to the upper

primary years. This study has thus developed from a perceived need to consider the development and impact of three decades of gender policy directions for Australian schools.

The focus of this study was the response to gender policy directions in a sample of K-6 schools. The aim was to develop understandings for leadership for gender equity in schools. It was anticipated that the examination of the impact of gender policy directions on school practice would highlight specific directions for school leaders who are charged with the responsibility of creating gender inclusive school communities.

BACKGROUND

During the last three decades, gender politics in Australia and in many parts of the globe have experienced upheaval, challenge and change. There has been a focus on the differing and changing roles of men and women in both the public and private domains, a rise in the power and influence of the Women's Movement and in more recent times a surge in prominence of Men's Movements. These shifts are reflected in the different focuses of the two books written by Greer two decades apart. *The Female Eunuch* (Greer, 1970) awakened the world to female disadvantage and oppression whilst in *The Whole Woman*, Greer (1999) critiqued the perception that women's oppression had been redressed and called for women "to get angry again" (p. 3).

Men's issues that have captured attention have focused on the oppression, aimlessness and feelings of being "homeless in the heart" (Close, 1996, p.1), experienced by men (Biddulph, 1994; Webb, 1998), captured in the arresting headline, "The male eunuch" (Arndt, 1996, p. 1). This attention to gender issues in society has been reflected in the attention given to gender issues at school level. Indeed, the gender reform story in schools over the past three decades has been a telling portrayal of this social concern.

Education policy in Australia has mirrored different gender agendas and perspectives as theorists and practitioners have addressed the role that education plays in constructing gender. This can be seen in the changing directions of two gender policies published 22 years apart. *Girls, school and society* (Committee on Social Change and the Education of Women) was published in 1975 and highlighted significant disadvantage experienced by

girls in schools and in society and its implications for school practice aimed at redressing these disadvantages. *Gender equity: A framework for Australian schools* (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs), published in 1997, with its focus on the needs of both girls and boys, signalled new directions for Australian schools to follow to achieve gender equity as they prepared to enter the new millennium.

An important contribution to the development and critique of gender policy during these three decades has been that of feminist research. Different feminist discourses around the construction of gender have impacted on the development of gender theory, on research directions and on practical policy outcomes. An example would be the work of Spender (1982) on the invisibility of girls in the classroom such that policy directions were prompted in response to this.

Over the three decades since 1975, gender has been a specific focus for educational policy and practice in Australia. Gender reform directions for Australian schools have been extensive and policy documents have been prolific. In its broadest sense, this study provided insights into the development and impact of gender policy directions on Australian schools. Its specific focus was the impact of these gender policy directions for school practice on the gender experience at school of K-6 students and on the experience of gender reform of teachers and principals. It was envisaged that this study of gender reform processes and outcomes in schools would address the main research question which called for the development of learnings for leadership for gender equity in schools.

Policy was a critical dimension of this study. The following section provides an overview of the context of the development of education policy and specifically, gender education policy, in Australia.

THE POLICY CONTEXT

Education Policy Development in Australia

Policy initiatives reflect different and changing social and political contexts. They also reflect different objectives, different understandings of the perceived issues and different assumptions about the means to address them. It is important to situate the development of gender policy directions in Australia within the broader educational policy framework.

Some analyses of Australian educational policy have placed significance on the Karmel Report (1973) as the policy that first signalled an attempt to influence the outcomes of schooling by focusing on the different needs of the disadvantaged and compensating for them in educational provision (Crittenden, 1988; Johnston, 1983). In this report, Karmel made specific reference to the necessity of using school processes to address perceived disadvantage, “more equal outcomes from schooling require unequal treatment of children.” (Karmel, 1973, p. 22).

As the Federal Government became increasingly involved in education, committees, consultants, advisory groups, and commissions were consulted to provide input into policy development. The Schools Commission, established in 1973, produced a number of documents on educational issues which provided directions for schools such that they “grappled with issues of the moment, they have been critical and objective and have been followed up by action.” (Steinle, 1982, p. 13).

Within the broad context of the development of Australian educational policy there is agreement from analysts that there was a movement from a focus on ‘equality’ in the 1960s and 1970s, based on the assumption that schooling could provide “equality of opportunity for individuals in all social groups” (Crittenden, 1988, p. 291), to a concern for ‘efficiency and effectiveness’ in the 1980s and 1990s, (Dudley & Vidovich, 1995) and a shift in focus to “equal average outcomes among groups” (Crittenden, 1988, p. 291). This can be seen as a movement from an emphasis on the needs of individuals in all social groups in the 1970s to attention to equal average outcomes for all groups in the 1980s to a focus on education as a tool for economic reform in the 1990s (Crittenden, 1988).

Kennedy (1988) described the development of education policy in Australia as a movement from concern with individuals and groups in the 1970s to a broader concern in the 1980s for the “well-being of the nation as a whole which was blended with a concern for individuals” (p. 360), thus to a more instrumental view of education, serving as a means to an end. An important observation in terms of this study was that of Dudley and Vidovich (1995), who noted that the focus on education reform in the 1990s was on goals and outcomes, with little attention given to actual implementation processes.

This movement in education policy directions over three decades can be seen to be mirrored in developments and changes of focus in gender policy documents as outlined in the following sections on gender policy development in Australia. They highlight the actual attention given to specific school gender concerns as well as the policy response developed to assist schools in addressing the issues.

Gender Policy Development in Australia

The stated aim of *Girls, school and society* (Committee on Social Change and the Education of Women, 1975) was to enhance the educational opportunities for girls and its recommendations sprang clearly from the research and statistical data that informed the document. The writers of this report made the link between the necessity for research and the formulation of policy directions, commenting at particular stages of the report on the lack of research data about the extent of sexism in schools.

In the time since the publication of *Girls, school and society*, a large number of gender policy documents have been published, 11 of which have been referred to in detail in this study (Appendix A). The importance of this policy development was noted by Collins, “Australia has led the English speaking world in policies and programs for improving the schooling of girls.” (Collins, 1997, p. 1).

It was not the intention of this research to undertake either an historical or a contextual analysis of all these documents. Yet the analysis of specific gender policy documents to ascertain implications for school practice provided the foundation for examination of school practice. It was in establishing the link between stated policy and actual practice that leadership implications for gender equity in schools could be recognised and shaped.

Because a critical dimension of this study was that of gender policy for Australian schools, it was deemed important to examine the broad themes raised by successive documents and to trace their interpretation of and response to the meaning of ‘equity’. The following brief overview of gender policy directions during this time demonstrates the movements and shifts of emphases and anticipated outcomes which have been taken up in more detail in the literature review.

Gender Policy Directions Since 1975

In the 1970s the focus of gender reform in Australia was the disadvantage experienced by girls in schools and by girls and women in society. Gender policy directions for Australian schools in the 1980s continued a stated concern with disadvantage experienced by girls at school whilst expanding the critical educational issues to include consideration of the impact of gender experiences at school on post school life and to an examination of the conditions necessary to create a gender inclusive school. In the 1990s Australian gender education policy directions reflected a recognition that gender equity must embrace the needs of both boys and girls through addressing the construction of gender.

Critical Catholic education gender policy documents published during the same period took a particular stance on the values that were to be reflected in the response of Catholic schools to issues of gender. In the Foreword to *Gender and equity: Some issues and perspectives for Catholic schools K-12* (Jones, 1987), Canavan referred to gender equity as an integral part of realising the goals of Catholic education. The foundational values of Catholic education, equality and justice, were described as being informed by a particular belief in the dignity and potential of each person, created equal in the eyes of God. Elimination of any form of discrimination against either girls or boys and ensuring provision of equal opportunities for all students were seen as essential to the role of the Catholic school.

A more recent Catholic education document (National Catholic Education Commission, 1997), focused on an exploration of the meaning of 'equity'. In this document, 'equity' was taken to mean equitable and just provision of education to all students, male and female, so that all have the opportunity to attain the same educational outcomes and thus all students are able to realise their potential. Essential to this understanding of equity was the expectation that students would adopt and live out the values of equality and justice and thus be able to influence and where necessary, transform society.

In tracing the development of gender policy for Australian schools, there are some key initiatives and studies that contribute to an understanding of this movement. These are described in the following section.

KEY GENDER INITIATIVES AND STUDIES SINCE 1975

Key Developments in the 1970s and 1980s

A significant number of studies and reports in Australia since 1975 have focused on gender difference in schools. In the 1970s and 1980s these specifically addressed the needs of girls and examined the factors contributing to schools not meeting these needs. Two areas of response from this period illustrate the breadth of disadvantage considerations.

First is the range of literature focusing on school structure and its impact on girls' educational experience and outcomes through an examination of the perceived merits and disadvantages of single sex and coeducation (Gill, 1988). This included single sex schools and their effect on girls' academic achievement (Carpenter & Hayden, 1987), effects of single sex and coeducation classes on achievement, confidence and participation in specific subjects (Rowe, 1988) and the effects of moving from single sex to coeducation structure (Jones, Kyle, & Black, 1987; Marsh, 1989).

Second is the publicity and attention given to a documented case of female educational disadvantage known as the Melinda Leves case (Bailey, 1990). In 1984 Melinda Leves, a student at a NSW government secondary girls' school, brought two complaints to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal (EOT) claiming discrimination on the basis of her sex in terms of the Anti Discrimination Act (1977) because she was unable to access Industrial Arts subjects available to her twin brother at a neighbouring boys' school. Her complaint was upheld by both the EOT (1986) and by the Court of Appeal (1987).

There was a clear acknowledgement of the need to demonstrate the link between non-sexist policy as outlined in the government's (1979) *Non sexist education policy* and actual practice:

The Tribunal then went on to make an observation which encapsulates the whole absurdity of the case – all Melinda wanted, and all the Tribunal would be able to enforce, was the implementation of the Department's own 1979 Non-Sexist Education Policy. (Bailey, 1990, p. 115)

This was a landmark decision for gender education reform and foreshadowed immediate and long term changes in provision of secondary education in NSW. Key gender policy focuses in the 1990s which are highlighted in the next section moved from gender disadvantage to gender equity.

Key Developments in the 1990s

In the 1990s the focus of gender policy moved to a broader one of equity – of structures, of relationships, of educational outcomes. This can be seen in the diversity of research focuses which have been addressed in the review of literature and which included post school pathways, sexual harassment, and the construction of gender.

In the 1990s and beyond there was also a noticeable shift in perception of disadvantage as calls were made for consideration of the needs of boys. The popular press analysed poor performance of boys in final examinations and called upon policy makers to redress the disadvantage caused to boys of decades of reform efforts for girls. This concentration on the specific concern, that boys were being bettered by the girls, is reflected in the following newspaper headlines:

“ Boy you’re in big trouble” (Maslen, *The Bulletin*, 1995)

“ ‘Crisis’ as girls outperform boys” (Garcia, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1998)

“Girls outshine boys, but why?” (*The Catholic Weekly*, 1997)

 [11] “HSC lists confirm the rise of girl power” (Noonan & Baird, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1999)

At the same time conferences, workshops, seminars and professional development programs were undertaken to address what was perceived as a serious and urgent problem (*Leadership in boys’ education – A national forum*, May, 1999, University of Newcastle; *A whole school approach to boys’ education*, June/July 2000, Scholastic Seminars, Gosford). In 2000 the *Inquiry into the education of boys* was established (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training, 2002).

Research in Australia reflected contrasting perceptions and different approaches to addressing concerns about boys' disadvantage. Biddulph (1994, 1998), Brown and Fletcher (1995) and West (1999, 2000) developed responses based on accounts of boys' disadvantage. In contrast, Connell's (1994, 1997, 2000) work utilised social research on masculinity and explored the potential in conceptualising masculinities whilst Kenway (1995) addressed this issue from a feminist perspective and pointed to directions for response from a focus on the construction of gender that would serve equally well the needs of both boys and girls. Caution was also sounded that the needs of both boys and girls would not be met through adapting simplistic responses to what Cox (1995, p. 304) termed "the competing victim syndrome".

Whilst there has been no shortage of studies that have attempted to demonstrate gender disadvantage, many of which have contributed to the development of gender education policy in Australia, there have been relatively few studies that have examined the specific gender reform process undertaken by schools in response to gender policy directions.

Key Studies on the Gender Reform Process

A small number of research studies, both quantitative and qualitative, have attempted to track the impact of gender education policies and to gauge the response of schools to gender policy directions and these are examined in detail in Chapter 2. One research study that clearly linked policy and practice was the Collins, Batten, Ainley and Getty (1996) report which was commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Training and Youth Affairs on behalf of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs as a sample study for the *National report for schooling in Australia*.

The focus of this nationwide study was an evaluation of school response to the issues addressed in the *National action plan for the education of girls* (1993), and results were reported in terms of 12 groups of indicators related to the six priorities of this plan. The current study utilised one of the research tools developed for the Collins et al. (1996) study, the results of which demonstrated that:

Attention to gender issues by systems, schools and individual teachers does make a difference to the gender experiences of students in schools. (p. xiv)

Research on Leadership for Gender Equity

Of particular relevance to the study was reflection on the role of the school leader, the principal, in gender policy implementation. The review of literature focused on the development and implementation of gender policy directions for schools and of interest in this examination was the focus on the principal as it emerged in the gender policy documents themselves. Also of relevance to this study were the specific findings that emerged in the implementation literature about the role of the school leader in implementing school policy implications for practice as outlined in gender policy directions for schools.

UNDERSTANDINGS OF GENDER EQUITY

A principal theme in the history of educational reforms in Australia and elsewhere has been the attempt to ameliorate social disadvantage. (Angus, 1991, p. 255)

The intent of this study was to develop implications for leadership for gender equity in schools from studying the response of a sample of schools to gender policy directions. It was therefore important to acknowledge the different understandings and changing responses to the language of 'equity' in order to provide a framework for analysis of gender policy documents and school responses to gender issues.

In education policy documents and gender policy documents in particular, the term 'equity' has been used with different emphases, with different meanings, in different contexts, and with different understandings of intended outcomes. Whereas Johnston (1983) discussed equity discourse in terms of a distinction between two competing equity logics, compensatory logic and equality of respect logic, and demonstrated the predictable tension arising from these "conflicting ideological fields" (p. 23), Griffin and Batten (1991) questioned whether 'equity' refers to educational opportunities or the outcomes that arise from these opportunities. Sturman (1997) also discussed confusion around the term because it referred to both processes and outcomes. Crittenden (1988) questioned

how much schools could actually achieve in attempting to redress disadvantage that is reflective of the broader social order, a concern echoed by Angus (1991) who saw that rather than achieving equity, education has served as a means of social control.

These writers demonstrated that gender policy documents published in Australia since 1975 were informed by various equity discourses which reflected contested understandings and means of response around particular issues including equity as process and equity as outcome, sameness and difference, equal treatment and special treatment, education for the needs of the individual and education for the needs of society. Because of the differing and contested meanings given to this term, an operational definition was developed for this study.

DEFINITION OF GENDER EQUITY

For the purposes of this research, the following definition of ‘gender equity’ was developed. It was seen to embrace the key understandings and beliefs about gender equity in school. It encapsulates a vision for the school community where policies, structures, and practices for students and for staff are informed by gender awareness. It reflects a belief in the right of all students to be educated without gender being a barrier to recognising and striving to attain their potential.

Gender equity will be achieved in and by a school when students’ access to resources, curriculum opportunities, quality of social interactions, classroom experiences, academic outcomes, extra curricular involvement and post school pathways is not determined by their gender and staff experience of school structures and organisation is not determined by their gender [2].

Gender equity has been the focus of policy development in Australia for many years. The research aim focused on the relationship between policy development and policy implementation and the implications of this for school leadership for gender equity.

RESEARCH AIM

There is a relative dearth of literature on what actually happens when real people in real situations undertake the work of gender reform in education. (Willis, Kenway, Rennie & Blackmore, 1992, p. 3)

After three decades of gender reform efforts in Australian education there was seen to be a need to examine the response of schools to gender policy directions and to determine the effect that this level of response has had on school practice. In particular, it was seen to be possible for future directions for school leadership to be determined through an examination of the role of the school principal in both the gender reform process and the outcomes of this process. The broad aim of the study was thus to examine school responses to gender policy directions in order to determine implications for leadership, specifically that of the principal, for gender equity in schools.

The parameters of this study involved determination of the implications for school practice contained in gender policy documents written for Australian schools and a critical examination of the impact of these gender policy reform directions through a study of Year 6 students' experience of gender in a sample of Catholic K-6 schools and through a study of the response to gender policy directions by teachers and principals in these schools. The research aimed to investigate this experience of gender at school from both a policy context and a leadership perspective and this is reflected in the major research question.

MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

What implications for leadership for gender equity in schools can be developed from an examination of the response to gender policy directions in a sample of Catholic K-6 schools?

RESEARCH APPROACH [3]

In order to address the main research question, there were three distinct and separate research phases. Each research phase addressed a research sub question:

Research Phase 1: Gender Policy Directions for Australian Schools

The first research phase addressed the question, ‘What have been the significant policy directions for gender equity in Australian schools?’.

The object of analysis in Research Phase 1 was to produce an overview of gender policy development for Australian and specifically NSW schools. This was achieved through a critical analysis of 11 gender policy documents published since 1975 utilising content analysis. This resulted in the extraction of implications for school practice.

These implications for school practice were then ordered into a structure for further analysis, particularly to gain understandings about the extent and focus of policy directions for schools and about the specific leadership directions given in these documents. The synthesis and analysis of the gender policy implications for school practice also served as the basis for the development of research tools utilised in Research Phase 3.

Research Phase 2: Student Experience of Gender at School

The second research phase addressed the question, ‘What is the experience of gender at school of a sample of Year 6 students in Catholic K-6 schools?’.

This research phase utilised the student questionnaire from the Collins, Batten, Ainley and Getty [14](1996) research (hereafter named The Collins Report). The object of analysis in Research Phase 2 was to produce data on the experiences of gender at school of Year 6 students in participating schools and, where appropriate, to use these data for comparative analysis with the results of The Collins Report. The focus was the connection between specific policy directions and the outcomes of these as reflected in students’ responses in order to gain insights into the role of the school leader in the process of implementing gender reform.

Because the student questionnaire developed for The Collins Report was developed from the 1993 policy document, *National action plan for the education of girls*, student responses could be directly linked to specific policy initiatives.

Research Phase 3: Gender Practice in Schools

The third research phase addressed the question, ‘In participating schools, what has been the experience of teachers and principals of gender reform and to what extent has policy impacted on practice?’.

The object of analysis in Research Phase 3 was examination of teacher and principal response to critical gender policy directions in order to gain information on their experiences of gender reform efforts. Specific attention was paid to their perceptions of the role of the principal in the gender reform process. Data gathering in this research phase entailed the use of two survey tools developed from the results of policy analysis conducted in Research Phase 1.

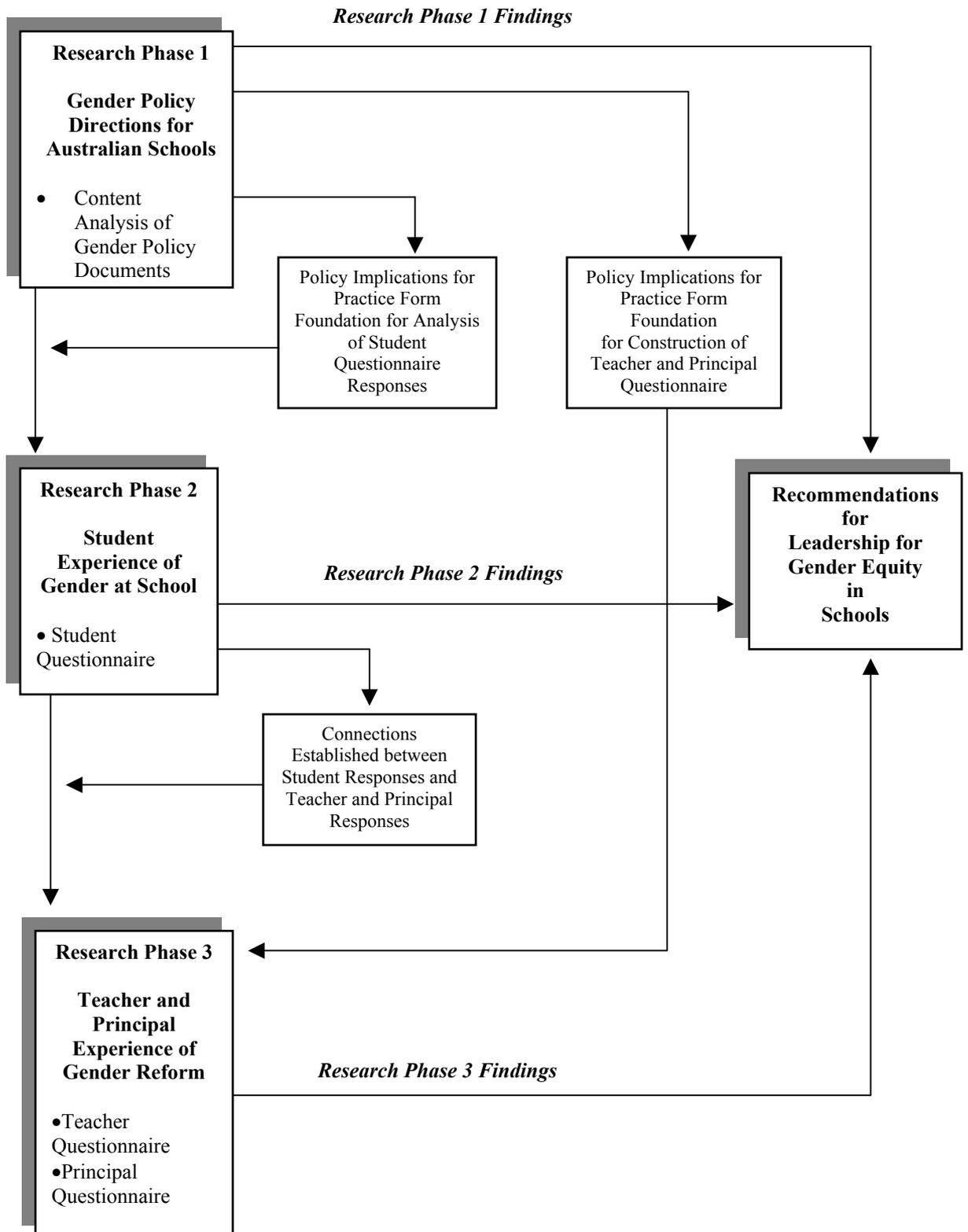
RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Figure 1.1 provides an overview of the research and demonstrates how each of the three research phases was interlinked. In utilising three distinct research phases for this study, the intent was to determine implications for school leadership for gender equity from an examination of the outcomes of each separate phase. Through analysis and discussion of the detailed examination of the gender policy reform process and its outcomes in schools, directions for school leadership in terms of the role of the principal were formulated.

This research can be viewed as policy oriented in that judgements were made on the relationship between policy and practice with the intent to make recommendations for action. Nisbet (1988, p. 142) outlined the importance of this research approach:

The essential feature of policy oriented research is that it is designed to contribute towards a solution either by producing recommendations for action, describing as fully as possible the complexity of implications and complications or by establishing conceptual frameworks which enable decisions to be made with fuller insight and understanding.

Figure 1.1 Overview of Research



Research Conclusions

The findings from each of the three research phases were analysed separately. They were then synthesised and ordered utilising the framework developed for the policy analysis. These findings were then addressed and developed into specific learnings for leadership for gender equity in schools.

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The Catholic School Context

The context of this study was practice within coeducational Catholic K-6 schools. The official position of the Catholic Church on gender, conveyed through Papal teachings, is primarily one of “different but equal” (Paul, 1999, p. 112). Different papal encyclicals have expressed a view on the differences and complementary nature of men and women which would influence the role that they are able to play in the Church. These same documents have called for greater equality for women in the broader contexts of work and public life (Paul, 1999).

Catholic Church teachings reflect ongoing attempts to define the place of women in a Church committed to the belief in the dignity of the human person. An extensive research project commissioned by the Catholic bishops in Australia in 1999, *Woman and man: One in Christ Jesus*, described the pain, alienation, anger and hurt felt by women as they called for more equal participation in their Church. The Catholic Bishop of Parramatta reflected on his understanding of the importance of this project:

The cry of women who call upon the Church to stand by them in their struggle for equality and dignity, wherever they are denied, must be heeded. In the light of evangelisation we cannot afford to dismiss such a rich body of personnel willing to cooperate in family, educational, cultural and social fields. (*Catholic Outlook*, 1998, p.1)

The Catholic Church seeks to give witness to its beliefs and values through action, as emphasised by Dorr (1991) who stated that, “The primary way in which the Church teaches about justice is not by proclaiming a list of principles. Rather it is by its lived witness to its beliefs, its values and its opinions” (p. 39).

Catholic schools are viewed as integral to the lived vision of the Church; they are seen to stand for what the Church stands for. Flynn's (1993) research on the culture of Catholic schools highlighted the fact that it was in its core beliefs, symbols, rituals and traditions that a Catholic school community finds its meaning that then helps shape the lives of the people within that community. Catholic schools are established to undertake the educational mission of the Church and as such, their distinctiveness comes from its core values and foundational beliefs (Treston, 1997). Key understandings of gender in Catholic schools focus on the value of promotion of human dignity and on the empowerment of all to create a just society. The culture of the Catholic school is seen as a living out of these values and beliefs:

The dominant school culture, in our case Catholic, is built on its values. These shared values define the fundamental character of the school and give it the attitude which distinguishes it from all others and so we have our ethos – the fundamental spiritual characteristic of our culture – the external recognition of our beliefs. (Duncan, 1998, p. 57)

Within this context, the principal of the Catholic school is seen to have a responsibility to work with the school community in order to “construct a social reality in the school that is distinctly and uniquely Catholic” (Duncan, 1998, p. 57). Role statements and criteria for appointment to the role of principal in Catholic schools articulate an understanding that this leadership role draws its inspiration from the Gospels and serves the mission of the Church. One such document states that principals are expected “to exercise a spiritual and prophetic leadership which is grounded in Catholic faith and personal witness” (Parramatta Diocesan Schools Board, 1994, p. 6).

Core documents of Catholic schools articulate the values to be lived in the culture. In the Vatican document, *The Catholic school on the threshold of the third millennium* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1999), there is an emphasis on the integration of faith, life and culture where “knowledge set in the context of faith becomes wisdom and life vision” (p. 17). There is a call to Catholic schools to live out the values proclaimed and lived by Christ in the Gospels. This document affirms the dignity of each individual, “finding fulfillment and unity in Christ” (p. 12).

Gender policy directions for Catholic education are grounded in the core value of promotion of the human dignity of each student as created in the image and likeness of God. There is an acknowledgement in these documents that gender is a social construct to be addressed in policies and practices in schools:

Gender issues are implicated in the relational life of a school because femininity and masculinity are socially negotiated constructs. (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 1999, p. 6)

There is recognition also, of the central role of Catholic education in transforming society and creating a better world. It is acknowledged that this must begin by ensuring that Catholic schools provide socially just educational outcomes for all students. Recognising the synthesis between beliefs and practice in relation to critical gender issues is at the heart of gender policy documents for Catholic schools.

Specific Research Context

The schools utilised in the research belonged to one system of Catholic schools in one Catholic Diocese in the State of New South Wales. This Diocese is served and led by a Bishop and the schools are part of a leadership and administrative structure served by the Catholic Education Office under the leadership of the Executive Director. It spans a large geographic area from sizeable rural estates to high-density urban living. It also serves people from a broad socio economic range and from many different cultural and language backgrounds.

All the schools participating in this study were coeducational schools. They varied in size, gender of principal and socio economic, language and cultural backgrounds of parents. In terms of tradition, it is noteworthy that some schools were relatively new, some were well established and others had a long history in the Diocese.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A limitation of the study is that the researcher was principal of a secondary school belonging to the system of schools participating in the research. Hence, some of the

primary principal participants were known to the researcher. Response to this particular limitation has been addressed more fully in Chapter 3 in discussion of research methodology.

A further limitation is that the study did not set out to investigate causation. Thus, where apparent connections emerged between gender policy directions and actual school practice, the findings were limited to addressing the implications for school leadership for gender equity. Similarly, where apparent connections emerged between specific school practices and student experience of gender at school, these were examined in terms of their implications for leadership for gender equity in school.

Furthermore, although school results demonstrated different student experiences of gender at different schools as well as varying understandings and experiences of teachers and principals of gender reform at different schools, there was no intent to investigate the reasons behind these differences of response between schools.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This study has addressed a particular gap in the knowledge about gender policy reform in Australian schools. There are numerous studies that focus on student experience of gender at school and the findings of these have impacted on the sizeable number of gender policy documents that have been produced for schools. The dearth of research is that which examines the impact of these policies on practice. Specifically, there has been identified a need to examine the impact of gender policy on the process of gender reform in schools and to formulate implications for leadership for gender equity in schools. In a particular way, this study addressed the role that the school principal is called to play in leadership for gender equity.

This study adopted an original approach to this issue. It directly linked policy and practice through a series of three research phases. Each phase was planned to provide data that contributed to an understanding of the relationship between gender policy directions and the implementation and outcomes of these in schools. At the heart of this study was the utilisation of these findings in order to develop specific understandings about the role of the school principal in leading a school community in the process of gender reform. In the

gender policy literature the school principal for the most part has been on the periphery, with the role more implied than actually specified. In addition, there has been little examination in the implementation literature of the role of the principal in leading the school community's response to gender policy directions. As very little research attention has been given to the role of the school principal in gender reform, the research outcomes of this study were seen to be able to contribute to the body of knowledge about gender and school: policy directions, practice and leadership.

The policy lens adopted for this study was critical. It demonstrated the extent to which gender policy development for Australian schools has attempted to address issues of gender discrimination and gender disadvantage over the last three decades. Whilst the attention of policy makers has clearly been directed to providing directions for the achievement of gender equity, a critical outcome of this study was the findings around what has occurred in schools as a result of the development of gender policy.

The analysis of gender policy directions also provided a methodological direction for the study in that it enabled examination of the relationship between the development of gender policy directions and actual gender reform practice in schools. Establishing this connection between stated policy and actual practice was facilitated by the use of a specific research tool developed for this purpose. This tool, developed for analysis and synthesis of policy directions, could serve as the basis for ongoing work in policy development and evaluation as well as for school review and planning.

This study focused on gender reform in specific K-6 schools with detailed attention given to the role of the school leader, the principal, in implementation of gender policy implications for practice. There has been little research attention given to examination of the relationships between gender policy development, gender reform practice and specific student outcomes and even less so in the primary school context. Of particular interest for this study was the ways in which the role of the school principal underpinned these relationships. This study explored these relationships from different perspectives – those of the students, the teachers and the principals. It was in examining the background to these gender reform experiences and gender reform outcomes that learnings for leadership for gender equity were developed and clarified.

The particular Catholic school context was also of significance to this study. The participation of 35 Catholic K-6 schools in the one Diocese has contributed to unique understandings about the interplay between gender policy directions, practice and leadership within this specific context. The connection between the foundational values of these Catholic schools and student, teacher and principal understandings and experiences of gender equity in practice emerged as a critical theme of the study.

Underpinning this study was a belief in the role of education in shaping our future. What schools teach students about gender relations can have an impact not only on their individual lives but also on the society which they will help create in years to come. This responsibility is jointly shared by all members of the school community but the principal has a specific role in ensuring that the vision of equity is understood, shared and lived out in daily practice.

This study therefore, has attempted to utilise the findings of each of the three research phases in order to consider the role of the school leader, the principal, in responding to gender reform as suggested by policy directions. In studying the response of schools to gender policy directions, a critical area addressed was the extent to which this response was influenced by the principal. It was anticipated that findings from this research could well lead to directions for future action for school principals as they work towards responding to gender equity needs in their schools.

SUMMARY

This chapter has described the aim of the research, to understand more fully how the process of gender reform has operated in the participating schools in response to gender policy directions and to formulate directions for future leadership practice. The research has been described briefly, with an outline of the three distinct research phases given, each of which contributed to the building of data on the role of the school leader in responding to gender equity issues in schools. This chapter has also provided an overview of the historical context of Australian gender education policy reform within the context of changing gender agendas in school and society over the last three decades.

The following chapter, review of the literature, examines in detail the links between policy and practice. It had three specific focuses:

1. Examination of the development of gender policy for Australian schools.
2. The reception of gender policy directions in schools through a study of the implementation literature.
3. Formation of understandings from the policy literature and from the implementation literature about the role of the school principal in leadership for gender equity.

The remaining six chapters provide a detailed insight into the conduct of the research, examination of findings and development of recommendations. Chapter 3 provides information on the chosen methodology of the study, in particular the different methodological approaches utilised for each of the three research phases. Chapters 4 to 7 present in detail the procedures and outcomes of the three research phases and Chapter 8 summarises the research findings and presents the recommendations for leadership for gender equity in schools.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter a review of the literature in the field of Australian gender education policy and gender reform in schools is undertaken. Because the dual focuses of the study were those of gender policy directions for Australian schools and the response of schools to these gender policy directions, there was an intertwining of the two themes of policy and practice. Because the aim of the study was to determine implications for leadership for gender equity, it was important that the role of the principal be examined as it emerged in both the gender policy literature and in the school implementation literature.

The literature review commences with an overview of the theoretical underpinnings of the term ‘policy’ and their application to this research. It then takes up in detail an examination of the literature in two specific areas, the development and critique of gender policy for Australian schools followed by studies of the implementation of gender policy directions in Australian schools.

The literature review is therefore divided into three main sections:

Section 1: Theoretical Understandings of the Meaning and Purpose of Policy

Section 2: Development and Critique of Gender Policy for Australian Schools

Section 3: Studies of the Implementation of Gender Policy Directions in Australian Schools

SECTION 1: THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE MEANING AND PURPOSE OF POLICY

As this study utilised policy oriented research, this introductory section of the literature review examines different understandings of the term ‘policy’ and the broad parameters

attached to it. Policy studies reflect different emphases and understandings of the form and function of policy and these varying stances influence the approach taken to policy analysis.

Some particular approaches to policy analysis and policy critique [11] are policy making issues and process (Ball, 1990; Dudley & Vidovich, 1995), the ideology/values that underpin the policy (Millikan, 1987; Wirt, 1987), the response process (Hocking, 1984; Shaw, 1997), and the individuals responsible for implementation (Lieberman, 1982; Sharpe, 1993; Shaw, 1997). Definitions of policy vary in emphases, philosophical underpinnings, purpose and scope. They range from a focus on specific purpose, seen in the following definition, “education policy is a means whereby commitments to particular values inform attempts in the schooling industry to allocate resources to achieve desirable goals in an ethically accepted manner” (Haynes, 1997, p.1), to the broad and general as described by Dye in Prunty (1985, p. 133) “whatever governments choose to do or not do”.

Prunty’s (1985) critique of directions in education policy analysis highlighted the ambiguity around the use of the term itself and the problems associated with adopting a narrow understanding of its purpose. He proposed an alternative understanding and approach to analysis, based on critical theory, that recognises the role of the school in the education process and that essentially seeks to examine the values that underpin the policy. This particular policy understanding was of importance to the current study in that it provided the basis from which to examine the responses that participating schools made to gender policy.

As the primary aim of this study was to develop implications for leadership for gender equity from an examination of the response of schools to gender policy directions, Prunty’s (1985) approach to analysis provided a platform for this examination. This understanding informed the study in that in determining directions for leadership for gender equity in schools, the study sought to establish what each school had set out to achieve in gender equity and to gain insights into an understanding of this process by its participants, principals, teachers and students [12]. The intersection of these experiences

and understandings with the stated values of the school communities was a particular dimension of this examination.

An important direction for policy analysis was provided by Kenway (1990, p. 5) who divided the field of policy analysis into two parts:

1. Analysis *of* Policy which includes examination of the content of the policy from an historical, contemporary or comparative focus, from textual analysis and ideological critique and from identification of specific policy contexts and consequences.
2. Analysis *for* Policy through which information, based on particular ideological stances, is provided that will influence the development of policy.

For the purposes of this study, both understandings were important in examining the genesis, purpose and function of gender policy directions for Australian schools. Kenway (1990) argued that despite significant gender reform in education at both State and Commonwealth level,

There has been little attempt to map, analyse and theorise the general territory or specific characteristics of gender equity work in and for Australian schools. (Kenway, 1990, p. 40)

This study commenced with an examination of gender policy directions for Australian schools. The primary focus of the policy analysis undertaken in the study was specifically on the implications for action springing from policy and on the actual responses made by participating schools to policy directions. Thus, within the research context, Shaw's understanding was seen to serve as a useful operational definition of policy, "Policy is a broad and general direction given to someone to carry out or implement." (Shaw, 1997, p. 64)

This understanding of policy allowed for analysis of gender policy documents focusing on process and thus on implications for practice. Its broad parameters allowed for inclusion of policy directions contained in documents called policies, reports, statements, plans of action and working documents. This understanding, that policy directions could be

contained in associated documents, was reflected in Haynes' (1997, p. 82) discussion on the role of reports in policy implementation:

The report may propose changes which will directly affect the school and the work of the educator...the report may set out arguments, evidence and conclusions which are directly relevant to issues being faced by the school and educators.

Official reports are not the only means of policy-making but they do have some impact on policy as it affects schools...the official reports often set out and make explicit the process of policy-making which normally occurs unnoticed in bureaucratic or other official structures.

The considerations of Haynes (1997), Kenway (1990), Prunty (1985) and Shaw (1997) were all important to this study. They provided a basis for examination of the literature and they underpinned the textual analysis of gender policy detailed in Chapter 4.

This approach to policy analysis as adopted for the research allowed for examination of different ideologies that frame gender policy development, the macro level influence of policy making bodies and the micro level influence of the school itself, including an examination of the contested agendas that influence the capacity of the school community to respond in a particular way to gender reform agendas. Underpinning this framework for analysis was an examination of the role of the principal at all stages of the gender policy implementation process. The usefulness of this framework for analysis was that it provided a direction for the literature review. It allowed for an examination of the relationship between research on and critique of gender policy development and also it allowed for a connection to be established between policy formation and development and studies of the implementation of gender reform in schools in the Australian context.

SECTION 2: DEVELOPMENT AND CRITIQUE OF GENDER POLICY FOR AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS

Gender reform is still about social change through changing education. It is about re/forming the gender regime of the school and the gender order of society. (Kenway, 1995, p. 29)

There exists a breadth of understandings, philosophical stances and methodological approaches to the analysis of gender education policy. In order to understand the context of gender policy directions for Australian schools, the following section explores the historical perspectives, the changing discourses and the different frames of reference that have informed the development of gender policy for Australian schools as well as the response that gender policy analysts have made in framing critiques of policy directions for gender reform.

CRITIQUE FOCUSING ON CHANGING ASSUMPTIONS AND EMPHASES

A particular approach to critique of gender policy for Australian schools has been to focus on specific policy emphases and to unpack their underlying assumptions. One important theme has been that of the changing terminology of gender policy directions as an indicator, not only of changing policy directions, but also of changing understandings about the nature of the gender issue being addressed. The work that has been undertaken in this field, which will be examined in different sections of this chapter, has specifically examined the changing discourses and competing agendas of gender policy reform.

The gender policy reform movement is seen to have progressed through three distinct phases, characterised by changing terminology and indicative of changes in the underlying assumptions that framed the problem to be addressed. These semantic shifts are seen to reflect “fundamental moves in theorising gender and in available frameworks of reform” (Alloway, 1996, p. 17), as well as “uncontested understandings of the needs of girls and women by the policy makers” (Yates, 1992, p. 105). These three distinct phases are characterised by their different focuses:

Gender Policy Phase 1 (1970s): Focus on girls’ education through equal opportunity

Gender Policy Phase 2 (1980s): Focus on gender inclusive education

Gender Policy Phase 3 (1990s): Focus on the social construction of gender

This particular understanding was critical to the current research. It provided the structure for the overview of policy directions and provided insights into specific gender policies that were analysed in detail in Research Phase 1, Gender Policy Directions for Australian Schools, in order to extract implications for school practice. In the following sections,

each of which addresses one of the three gender reform phases, there is an examination of the gender assumptions and approaches to reform as well as an overview of the nature of one specific policy from the gender reform phase.

Gender Policy Phase 1: Focus on Girls' Education through Equal Opportunity

In the 1970s, the focus of gender policy directions for Australian schools was on differential provision to address the specific needs of girls (Hayes, 1996) who were perceived to be in deficit (Henry & Taylor, 1993) as well as the elimination of sexism/gender bias in schools (Gilbert, 1996; Yates, 1990) by elimination of perceived discriminatory practices against girls. Girls were viewed as a single category and differences arising from socio economic status or ethnicity were perceived as additional disadvantage (Yates, 1990).

“Equal opportunity” approaches such as career kits and examination of sexism in textbooks were developed as a means to enable girls to enter traditional male domains and there was a focus on increased retention rates and on increased participation and success in fields of education traditionally dominated by boys. It was a given that “gender inequities can be resolved when boys and girls are guaranteed equal access to resources and equal rights to participate in activities” (Alloway, 1996, p. 17).

Education policy directions were formed in response to a deficit theory which “assumed that there was a norm and the norm was male. Thus the goals that were established were assumed to be necessary to achieve gender parity” (Cox, 1996, p. 227). Gender reform directions were based on a theoretical orientation to a biological construction of gender (Alloway, 1996).

In the 1970s and early 1980s there was commitment to equal opportunity by both State and Commonwealth Governments and legislation “outlawed direct discrimination” (Yates, 1993, p. 103), approaches to gender reform were not compulsory and financial support was given by Commonwealth funded bodies (Schools Commission, Curriculum Development Centre). However, this influence was indirect in that “the States still formally channelled the approaches and developed their own policies” (Yates, 1993, p. 104).

The language of policy focused on equality of opportunity, of provision, of access in order to address girls' inadequacies and oppression as seen in the following comment by Gilbert (1996):

It was argued through these discourses of equal opportunity and non sexist education that women and girls needed to break through barriers that discriminated against them in educational contexts so that they could be treated equally with boys and men. (Gilbert, 1996, p. 12)

Yates (1996) viewed the emphasis on elimination of sexism/equal opportunities in the 1970s as politically powerful, widely understood and enshrined in discrimination legislation and, because of its emphasis, having a direct impact on resources for girls. However, not only did this approach limit consideration of girls to membership of an homogenous group, but also its emphasis was on messages to students about equal opportunity rather than on the processes that created the situation of disadvantage.

This particular policy focus addressed gender as two distinct, separate categories – the boys and the girls – and the specific policy emphasis was on addressing the disadvantage experienced by girls. The following section provides an overview of how the specific policy reform focus of the 1970s on girls' education through equal opportunity was translated into a specific gender policy document.

Specific Policy Directions Arising from the Focus on Girls' Education through Equal Opportunity

Girls, school and society (1975) demonstrated how the focus of the first gender reform phase, girls' education through equal opportunity, was embodied into a specific policy document. This report to the Commonwealth Schools Commission was framed in the language of inequality; it addressed inequality of outcomes i.e. the place of women in Australian society and inequality of treatment i.e. the school curriculum (Yates, 1992). It highlighted 'sexism' of school experience whereby:

Females and males not only progressively learn that different things are required and expected of them because of their sex, but also learn these things in an unexamined way. (*Girls, school and society*, 1975, p. 17)

This was the first major Australian government sponsored report in this area and it detailed women's inequality, citing statistics and research evidence as well as changing social patterns. Significantly, it made the link between girls' experience of education and

women's position in society and in the workforce. The policy was framed in liberal education discourse, "education could give access to real knowledge about the world" (Yates, 1992, p. 100), as opposed to distortions and stereotypes, and the traditional focus of liberal curriculum was emphasised through the examination and response to issues of domestic labour and reproduction.

Gender reform in the 1970s was within the context of increased attention to women's inequality in that 1975 was International Women's Year which commenced the United Nations Decade for Women. Thus education gender reform was influenced by 'outside' agenda which was seen to question "what schooling should be achieving" (Yates, 1993, p. 9). Of importance is that the document *Girls, school and society* drew attention not only to "traditional measures of inequality" such as employment patterns and retention, but "also to the question of curriculum or the content of what students learn in school" (Yates, 1993, p. 9).

The policy focus on girls' education through equal opportunity was replaced in the next decade by one which focused on gender inclusive education. This movement is detailed in the next section.

Gender Policy Phase 2: Focus on Gender Inclusive Education

The focus on inclusive education influenced the development of policy directions in Australia in the 1980s. It was concerned with "expanding traditional liberal education so that it no longer excludes and denigrates women" (Yates, 1993, p. 89). The terminology emphasis was on the education of girls and the anticipated outcome was the "inclusion of girls' needs within educational agendas" (Gilbert, 1996, p. 13) through the integration of the knowledge and experience of women and girls in curriculum. The policies and processes of this focus "signalled a clear acceptance that girls' needs would require a particular and deliberate attention in educational systems that were both explicitly and implicitly geared to the education of boys and the promulgation of male knowledge" (Gilbert, 1996, p. 13).

The Australian Curriculum Development Council's definition of inclusive curriculum reflected a focus on policy as process; specifically one that addressed the interests of those previously excluded by curriculum:

(Inclusive curriculum) describes processes by which curricula and schooling can adequately provide for groups whose interests may have been subordinated or marginalised on such grounds as differences in gender or cultural background. (Foster, 1992, p. 60)

The broad parameters of this policy focus were described by Suggett (1987b) in terms of having three characteristics. First, it was seen to have a social justice perspective. Second, it was seen to require the curriculum to reflect the culture as it is known and lived, embracing all aspects and experiences. Third, the approach was focused clearly on teaching and learning with an examination of the role of pedagogy in promoting inclusion or exclusion.

The particular understandings of this term had implications for policy directions, as its focus was on the curriculum itself rather than on strategies for reform. 'Sexually inclusive curriculum' (Blackburn, in Yates, 1990) focused on a broader approach to gender reform that moved from 'add ons' for girls to existing school structures and curriculum to a perceived need to reconceptualise the school as sexually inclusive. The emphasis on inclusive curriculum reflected an understanding that "Girls and women are as much a part of school and society as boys and men" (Yates, 1990, p. 38) and therefore girls' and women's knowledge, experience and achievements needed to be acknowledged and valued.

There was acknowledgement too, that girls were not an homogeneous group and that therefore there was a need to examine the experience of girls in relationship to other categories of disadvantage (Henry & Taylor, 1993; Yates, 1990). Approaches to 'girl friendly schooling' (Yates, 1993) addressed "hidden patterns of difference that could continue even within a common curriculum" (Yates, 1993, p. 76).

There were criticisms of the inclusive curriculum approach with its focus on curriculum quality rather than access, because it had the potential to divert attention away from the

need to examine unequal distribution of schooling resources (Suggett, 1987). Suggett (1987) made a distinction between the concrete curriculum responses to this focus which included such approaches as designing new subjects, designing new units to add to existing courses and redesigning existing courses, and the belief that in order to reshape the curriculum, two concerns had to be addressed, the control of the curriculum and the knowledge to be included in the curriculum. The movement from an emphasis on the contribution of the schooling process to inequality of women in society to one concerned with the experiences of girls in schools was seen by Yates (1993) as a shift from seeing women and girls as a single category to addressing the differences among girls, reflective of shifts in feminist theory.

The mid 1980s framework for reform was ‘girl friendly schooling’. Its emphasis was specifically pedagogy and there were attempts to uncover and understand the experiences of girls who were still viewed as a single category, described by Foster (1989) as sharing an “equality of inequality” (p. 27). In the late 1980s, the reform agenda moved to a focus on listening to girls and to understanding their differences. There was a developing sensitivity to race, ethnicity and class and the response to these issues was within the educational reform framework of ‘inclusive curriculum’.

Yates (1993) raised a concern with this approach in that its complexity could lead to a lack of clarity about translation of policy directions into practice. Foster (1989), too, expressed concern with the ‘inclusive curriculum’ approach, seeing that it still left girls at the periphery of educational structures and processes, not at the centre. She viewed the term as “vague” and “elusive” (p. 27) attributable, in some part, to its lack of implementation strategies.

The following section provides an overview of how the specific policy reform focus of the 1980s on inclusive curriculum was translated into a specific gender policy document.

Specific Policy Directions Arising from the Focus on Inclusive Curriculum

One particular document, *The national policy for the education of girls in Australian schools* (1987), demonstrates how the focus of the second gender reform phase, inclusive curriculum, was embodied into a specific policy document. In the introductory prologue,

the broad focus was given as being about “education for a society where women and men relate to each other as equals, unconstrained by factors relating to gender” (*The national policy*, p. 1).

A major aim of this policy was to establish mechanisms for evaluating and reporting progress on improved educational outcomes for girls. Girls’ educational needs were embodied in its aims and it reflected the view that curriculum “should be differentiated according to the ‘needs’ of learners” (Yates, 1992, p. 102), and as such it needed to be “appropriate” and “inclusive”.

The emphasis of this policy was on girls and their differences as compared to the emphasis of the 1975 policy on girls as an homogeneous group. Both Kenway (1990) and Yates (1992) in examining the ideology on which the policy was based, showed that it drew on feminist research. Yates (1992, p. 101) described it as being “challenging of traditional assumptions about liberal education”. Kenway (1990) described it as relying more on changes to existing practice than on undertaking lasting structural change. This policy reflected the movement in language emphasis from ‘equality of opportunity’ to ‘equity’ to ‘social justice’ corresponding with “some movement beyond a deficit model of disadvantage towards some recognition of structural discrimination via the curriculum and other school practices” (Kenway, 1990, p. 64).

This policy was criticised for not developing detailed strategies for action and for doing little more than raising awareness (Byrne, 1987; Henry & Taylor, 1993; Kenway, 1990; Yates, 1992). Recommendations for action were in terms of statements of values and principles that could serve as a framework of reform and the implications for practice were framed as “illustrative implementation strategies” (Kenway, 1990, p. 68).

Although *The national policy for the education of girls* (1987) signalled a move to State accountabilities for gender reform as well as a move to “make ‘gender equity’ an ongoing and institutionalised part of schools’ work” (Yates, 1993, p. 104), Byrne (1987) and Henry and Taylor (1993) highlighted procedural concerns in that the policy could not be enforced in the States without their agreement. Henry and Taylor (1993) argued that because of the competing political/economic/social agendas of the time, the outcomes of gender reform

were tenuous and this could be seen in the dismantling of established gender reform support structures in some States. Differences in the reception of this policy across the different States were predicted with clear connection between State approaches to reform and teachers' response. Henry and Taylor (1993) considered that in gender reform, State policies rather than the *National policy* would have the greater impact on the education of girls.

The framework of this policy differed from earlier ones in that there was a new emphasis on "supportive school environment" which grew out of research findings and school based projects which had highlighted the issue of sexual harassment of girls. This policy also acknowledged that girls were not a single, homogeneous group so that factors such as ethnicity, disability and economic background were viewed as integral to who a girl was seen to be rather than as an additional experience (Yates, 1993).

There was also reflected in this policy an acknowledgement that action needed to be taken at the primary level and that differential provision needed to be considered for some time in order to achieve equality of opportunity and outcomes for girls and boys. This was an important departure from previous policy (Yates, 1993). At the end of the 1980s there was a shift in policy emphasis to that of the social construction of gender. This movement and its implications for policy formation and development are examined in the next section.

Gender Policy Phase 3: Focus on the Social Construction of Gender

The reform approach in the 1990s had as its central focus the construction of gender, with consideration of the need for boys and girls to be taught how to deconstruct their worlds and to experience safer gender relations. This focus was viewed by Gilbert (1996) and Lemaire (1994) to be an appropriate approach to address social relationships. Gilbert (1996, p. 15) considered that it was particularly suitable for boys as it enabled exploration of how social constructions of masculinity "limit and restrict boys' options and activities both at school, in their family lives, with their peers, and in workplaces".

In the 1990s gender reform moved to a focus on 'gender equity' (Alloway, 1996; Hayes, 1996) and social justice (Alloway, 1996) with an emphasis on 'equitable provision'. Policy directions addressed sex-based harassment and violence as well as dominant

constructions of gender and how these could be influences for restricting or increasing school and post school possibilities. The reform frameworks were underpinned by a theory based on the social and historical, as distinct from biological, construction of gendered identity (Alloway, 1996) and there was a growing recognition that the vision of and for gender equity had to embrace both genders (Davy, 1995).

There emerged an understanding that girls' issues and boys' issues should not be responded to as competing interests but indeed, were two aspects of the same goal as seen in the following comments by Vardon (1995):

There's a growing awareness of the need for us to work together as men and women to improve programs and practice for both boys and girls in an integrated and sensible way – recognising that, in different ways, systems have disadvantaged boys just as they have disadvantaged girls. (Vardon, 1995, p. 1)

Lemaire (1994) demonstrated that the response to the need for gender equitable education needed to be one of teaching girls and boys about the construction of gender and about understanding the nature and effect of power relationships that operate at many levels in society. She highlighted the need for a gender equity policy based on social justice principles with a clear understanding of the interplay between power and privilege by quoting Eleanor Ramsay, Pro Vice Chancellor of Adelaide University:

Many of us feel we treat kids the same way, that we treat them neutrally. But when we have a close look at education and the way schools are organised, the way we teach and what we teach, we find that this education system is actually discriminatory...The curriculum itself constructs a world view in which the privileges of some are seen as natural and the disadvantages of others are also seen as natural. (Lemaire, 1994, p. 17)

Policy reform with a focus on construction of gender was seen to take place within the complexities of a changing political/social context within which boys and men were being named as the 'victims'. There was also an acknowledged urgent need to address violence and sex-based harassment (Yates, 1993).

Policies with a focus on gender equity acknowledged “that the social construction of femininity and masculinity within Australian culture contributed to specific ‘gendered’ forms of educational inequality” (Gilbert, 1996, p. 14). Policies with this focus reflected recognition of the influence of the construction of gender as well as a commitment to critique and challenge gender stereotypes. Policy approaches in the 1990s moved from the local level to attempts to make them “more systematic and incremental” (Yates, 1993, p. 106), within a framework of “corporate management, with ‘action plans’, objectives, strategies, collection and collation of data, identification of responsible personnel, and the beginnings of the measurement of performance in achieving specified objectives” (Yates, 1993, p. 107).

The following section provides an overview of how the specific policy reform focus of the 1990s on social construction of gender was translated into a specific gender policy document.

Specific Policy Directions Arising from the Focus on the Social Construction of Gender

One specific policy document, *National action plan for the education of girls 1993-7* (1993) (hereafter referred to as *National action plan*), demonstrates how the focus of this particular gender reform phase, social construction of gender, was embodied into a specific policy document. It was the view of Gilbert (1996, p. 3) that this policy “could develop a framework for action at national, system, authority and school levels, to maintain a focus on girls’ needs within general equity programs”.

The introductory comments supported the theme taken up in this document that “gender issues are an integral part of all that is done in education.” (*National action plan*, p. 5).

The first two priorities of the *National action plan* concentrated on the orientation to the construction of gender as a means by which the needs of boys could also be addressed through the policy. Gilbert (1996) saw reflected in the *National action plan* the view that equitable outcomes for girls could not be attained without a change to society’s attitudes and values, in particular those of men and boys:

It (*National action plan*) argues that girls will continue to be educationally, socially and economically disadvantaged without this shift. (Gilbert, 1996, p. 9)

Gilbert contrasted the focus of these first two priorities on construction of gender with the focus of the second two priorities, the lives of girls at school and how schooling contributes to the experience of inequity of girls, and argued that both were essential policy emphases:

“Equity” programs that do not accept as a basic premise that gender relations in schools disadvantage girls, or that the cultural construction of gender works very unfavourably for young women’s lives, are obviously problematic. By the same token, “education of girls” programs, which do not work with the cultural construction of femininity vis a vis masculinity, or with the power relationships that operate between women and men, are similarly problematic. (Gilbert, 1996, p. 17)

The move from the policy emphasis on ‘girls’ to one of ‘gender’ was seen as critical in avoiding competing agendas that would operate against a movement to build more positive relationships between girls and boys (Gilbert, 1996).

Both Kenway (1995) and Welch (1996) critiqued the *National action plan* from an economic/political perspective, seeing imperatives for reform reflecting changing political emphases in a time of fiscal restraint and being driven by a concern for best and strategic use of resources rather than by a concern for social justice. Kenway (1995, p. 30) suggested that it was all the more “astonishing” that within this context the policy was able to address the new agendas of examination of the construction of gender and the elimination of sex-based harassment. The context of the *National action plan* was seen, therefore, to have influenced the reform focus itself which was “the economically rational dimensions of gender equity, such as girls in maths and science, the establishment of databases, and enhancing employment prospects of girls” (Welch, 1996, p. 179).

Other concerns about the *National action plan* focused on the implications for professional development (Gilbert, 1996) and on the ongoing tension between positive messages given to girls about future pathways and the economic and social reality of their post school lives (Poiner, 1995). Both these concerns were also framed within the context of the mid 1990s,

acknowledging that social/political/economic realities had significant impact on gender reform outcomes.

The paradox lies in the belief of girls that they have the freedom to exercise their own occupational choices at the same time as indirectly acknowledging the social limitation imposed on that choice. They have learned the language of equal opportunity and may even be equally educated and educationally equal but the attitudes, structures and processes of the wider society circumscribe opportunities and the preparedness to seize them. (Poiner, 1995, p. 30)

Alongside the specific gender reform focus on social construction of gender, there was one other movement for gender reform that emerged in the 1990s – that of a specific focus on the needs of boys. The background to this development is described in the next section.

Policy Focus on the Education of Boys

In the 1990s growing concern began to be expressed about the needs of boys and throughout the decade and into the new millennium there were calls for gender policy directions to respond to the public agenda around the needs of boys. This concern was supported by statistical and anecdotal evidence which demonstrated how the experience of schooling was not meeting the social, emotional and educational needs of boys (Biddulph, 1994, 1998; Brown & Fletcher, 1995; West, 1999, 2000).

Examination statistics were used to demonstrate how girls were outperforming boys and that the girls' reform agenda had succeeded, an approach termed by Walkerdine (in Bagnall, 2000, p. 27). as “the celebratory discourse of girls' attainment in the 1990s”. Submissions to the House of Representatives Employment, Education and Workplace Relations Committee (2000) *Inquiry into the education of boys*, reflected differing and sometimes conflicting perspectives on this new educational agenda. There existed a divergence of opinion about how to address this situation (NSW Secondary Principals' Council, 2000; Elson-Green, 2000) which continued to be played out in the media demonstrated in the following headlines:

“Another beating for boys in top HSC list” (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1998)

“Girls again outstrip boys in top 5,000 exam honours” (Raethel, 1997, *The Sydney Morning Herald*)

“Girls have always been at the top of the class” (Noonan, 2000, *The Sydney Morning Herald*)

“HSC wins and losses” (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1999)

Submissions to the *NSW government inquiry into boys' education* (1994) outlined a range of problems and concerns, some of which were seen to be the result of the gender policy emphasis on redressing girls' disadvantage. This perception was critiqued by a number of researchers, reflected in the following response:

Underlying these arguments is the suggestion that we have offered girls the opportunity to do the things boys have done so now it's time to offer boys the opportunity to do the things girls have done. The flaw in this equal opportunity model is that it suggests that society equally values roles perceived to be masculine or feminine. This is simply not the case. (Lemaire, 1994, p. 17)

This agenda resulted in a range of critical responses (Kenway, 1994; Walpole, 1995) which demonstrated the limitations of an approach that had a focus on girls and boys as competing categories. Not only was it seen to be divisive in its search for the more needy victim but the separating of boys and girls into single entity categories provided no indication of how gender intersected with race, class, disability, and socio-economic status. These responses also questioned the gains that had been made by girls in terms of post school pathways and the perception that girls had achieved significantly because of their participation and achievement in such traditionally male subject domains as higher level Mathematics and Physics.

Respondents to this agenda focused attention on a broad understanding of gender equity in the context of gender relations in the wider society including a need to understand gender power whereby “Men as a group hold more power than women at a systemic level, even though individual men and boys may feel that they have limited personal power” (Walpole, 1995, p. 8). Some researchers acknowledged the place that boys have had in the

gender reform agenda and how this focus had shifted from boys on the margin to a focus on the educational disadvantage of specific groups of boys and specific groups of girls whereby attention to boys was seen to have the potential to enable men and boys to “reinvent what it means to be male” (Kenway, 1994, p. 7) in a way that could further the cause of gender justice.

An important perspective on the boys’ agenda was provided by Connell (1994, 2000) who considered that at the heart of the issue was the need to address the actual construction of masculinity and that reform approaches had to begin with this as a consideration. His discussion of this issue was framed around a social justice perspective and is widely quoted in order to place this agenda in a broader context of social justice for all:

A good education is founded on social justice. If we are not pursuing gender justice in schools then we are not offering boys a good education, though we may be offering them some privilege. I take it that education, not privilege, is the purpose of schooling. (Connell, 1994, p. 17)

One response to this gender reform movement (O’Doherty, 1994) demonstrates the attention given to boys’ agenda. This report reflected the move to a focus on construction of gender and to a reform movement based on gender equity in which all students would be taught about gender construction and gender stereotypes (Kenway, 1995; Welch, 1996). This was demonstrated in the call for strategies for boys and girls to be complementary, not competitive. The report was criticised because of its potential to divert much needed resources from girls’ education during a time of fiscal restraint (Welch, 1996) and acknowledged by others for resisting the call for a separate boys’ strategy (Kenway, 1995).

SPECIFIC THEMES ARISING FROM GENDER POLICY OVERVIEW

There are a number of critical themes that emerged from the analysis of the three distinct gender policy phases and the emerging boys’ agenda that have implications for the current study since it aimed to develop understandings about leadership for gender equity through establishing links between policy and practice, specifically through an examination of how

a sample of Catholic K-6 schools have responded to gender policy directions. These specific themes were explored and developed in the three research phases of the study.

Unitary Categories of Gender

Responses to gender reform directions signalled a concern around the creation of an “ideology of sameness” (Foster, 1992, p. 60) whereby an orientation to gender equity and gender inclusivity resulted in a perception of and response to boys and girls as “gender neutral participants in schooling and therefore the same, and if given the same treatment, the results should be the same”. This was reinforced by Alloway (1995b) who stated that the first two policy phases, equal opportunity and inclusivity, reflected an understanding of gender as simple, binary categories of all girls and all boys and therefore approaches to reform were dependent on ‘top down’ reform and on close monitoring and surveillance of teachers, some of whom may not have shared the same commitment to reform.

Education Based on a Male Norm

The second theme highlighted a concern with framing the gender ‘problem’ in terms of a male norm in which critical questions about the relative values placed on specific aspects of the curriculum and the relationship of boys and girls to these were not addressed by policy makers (Bacchi, 1996; Foster, 1992). In particular, it was perceived that “there has been little questioning or challenging of the masculine paradigmatic value system running through the content and teaching of male-dominated subject areas” (Foster, 1992, p. 61). In addition, there was the observation that there had been very little understanding of the consequences for women of constructing them as the ‘other’ whilst formulating means to extend boys’ education to girls and little understanding about how this approach was connected to economic imperatives around women and the labour market (Bacchi, 1996, p. 13).

This concern was captured by Foster (1992) who critiqued “the educational philosophy underlying efforts to gain equality of educational outcomes for girls” (p. 53) through utilising theoretical perspectives drawn from philosophy and political theory. She took one reform direction, increased participation by girls in non traditional subjects, and adopted this theoretical perspective to explain reasons for its lack of success and to question its basic premise. She traced the assumptions behind this particular reform strategy and

concluded that, “I believe the assumptions of liberal individualism underlying this entry as the major strategy for sexual equality in education are problematic” (p. 55). In particular, Foster drew out the problematic attempts to bestow equality on women and girls from “within masculine paradigms” (p. 57) and demonstrated the restrictions on any possibility of absolute equality when little understanding was clear of the public/private domain and of women’s place within both domains.

With little acknowledgement of this distinction in gender policy reform, “efforts have been concentrated in the public realm of masculine concerns...and have ignored the private domain of women’s lives and work which centre on domestic life and interpersonal responsibilities and concerns” (Foster, 1992, p. 57). Foster saw this distinction reflected in “epistemological assumptions of educational philosophy” (p. 57) which were then implicated in schooling projects.

The Boys’ Agenda

The third theme focused on the agenda of boys’ education. The movement from the term ‘girls’ in policy literature to a focus on the broader term ‘gender’ ideally allowed for an emphasis on the education of both boys and girls and thus avoided the potential for divisiveness based on competing demands for gender reform resources. This was particularly important during a time of increased questioning of the educational needs of boys within a specific framework, “that understands the way in which social constructions of femininity and masculinity impact upon boys’ and girls’ lives, and affect school environments, and schooling outcomes” (Gilbert, 1996, p. 7).

It would seem that an understanding of the potential of the third policy focus area, the social construction of gender, provides for directions for implementation of policy into practice that move from the narrowness of focusing on boys as a group competing with girls as a group. The social construction model “offers teachers the opportunity to move beyond surveillance as together, teachers and students grapple to understand how gender relations are embedded in the ways that they talk about and practise their gender relations” (Alloway, 1996, p. 18).

The possibilities of this approach were reflected in Alloway's two research projects (1995a, 1996) looking at the ways that preschool boys and preschool girls access a computer. The results of these studies demonstrated how an understanding of the third framework could be harnessed as a research approach that concentrated on analysis of the micro politics of early childhood schooling. When the approach moved beyond seeing gender as a binary division, teachers and students were able to work together to contest existing relationships of power which could then lead to "personal empowerment of teachers and children who understand the dynamics" (Alloway, 1996, p. 20).

Gender Justice

The fourth theme emerging from gender policy critique was that of gender justice. The need to critique gender reform and to work for gender justice was seen by Kenway (1994, p. 2) as one important reason for understanding the construction of gender. She saw an implication of a "sense of agency" in describing gender construction as a means to "re-vision", "unpack", and "rebuild". Her message was that teacher work is not knowledge neutral and that the role of teacher and the role of education needs to be deconstructed and understood in terms of helping to "shape, build and craft children's gender identities" (p. 2). Kenway considered that this understanding "suggests that teachers as a whole are a powerful force in shaping the gender relations of society and thus a powerful force, also, for changing them" (p. 2). She expressed a belief that teachers should ask questions about how they influence their students' perceptions about what it means to be a girl and a boy and what indeed girls and boys do.

The School Leader in Gender Policy

The review of gender policy critique revealed little attention given to the leader in gender policy formation and/or implementation. Indeed, the focus of critique was concentrated on philosophical underpinnings and intended outcomes rather than on the reform process itself.

This was an important observation for this study. There was a clearly stated intention of the study to focus on directions for gender reform and on its actual outcomes in order to inform the role of the school principal in initiating and leading the school community in gender equity efforts. Policy was seen as the lens through which to examine this process.

It would appear from the literature on gender policy that directions for school leadership for gender equity were implied rather than specified. It was surmised that implications for school leadership for gender equity were likely to be clearer through analysis of the policy implementation process itself as distinct from being addressed as a discrete area in gender policy critique.

SUMMARY OF CRITIQUE OF GENDER POLICY DIRECTIONS FOR AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS

Approaches to education policy analysis and specifically, gender policy analysis, have traced the contextual story through a focus on the socio/political/economic issues impacting on policy development. These critiques reflected a concern with the actual text of the document and the meanings and assumptions implicit in the language used.

Kenway (1990) encapsulated concern with the lack of attention given to the impact of these policies. She reflected that it was difficult to know which aspects of State and Commonwealth policies had been adopted by schools:

We do not know which schools are responsive and supportive about what and why. Neither do we know the reverse. Equally remarkable is the fact that very little research has been conducted with regard, firstly, to the specific ways in which various staff, students and parents respond to such interventions and the differences in response between and within these groups. The reception and rearticulation of these policy initiatives at the levels of the education system is a significant silence in the literature. (Kenway, 1990, p. 41)

In an overview of equity in policy, Suggett (1987a) drew attention to the need for discussion on equity reform to focus on practice, “Policy delineates formal principles and procedures whereas school practice is the substance of school life” (p. 6). In order that policy on equity be able to be translated into practice, there needed to be an “official conceptual framework” and “action plan” and a statement as to “whether its outcomes can be measured and what the indicators of success will be” (Suggett, 1987a, p. 18).

The directions of this study responded to the challenges expressed by Kenway (1990) and Suggett (1987a). The three research phases were developed with the clear intention of commencing with an analysis of gender policy directions which then informed the examination of gender practice in schools. This direct link between policy and practice was integral to the research aim of developing implications for leadership for gender equity in schools.

The next section, *Studies of the Implementation of Gender Policy Directions in Australian Schools*, takes up the challenge to focus on practice. It examines research on the evaluation of the implementation of gender policy directions in schools and it highlights the specific implications of these findings for the current study.

SECTION 3: STUDIES OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GENDER POLICY DIRECTIONS IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS

Beyond anecdotal reports we have little sense of the short-term and long-term outcomes of gender justice activities in schools. (Kenway, 1990, p. 42)

In the last three decades, significant research has addressed issues around gender and school in Australia. A significant proportion of this research has documented difference and disadvantage and this research has had implications for and influence on policy directions. The breadth of these studies and their changing emphases is exemplified by tracing the shifts from Spender's (1982) work on the hidden face of girls in classrooms to recent work by West (1999, 2000) demonstrating how boys have been disadvantaged by the gender reform process.

However, for the purposes of this research, which focused on directions for and outcomes of gender reform in schools which could inform leadership directions, the important body of work to be reviewed in this section is that which has attempted to establish what has happened in the implementation of policy directions in Australian schools. In examining the relationship between gender policy, gender practice and gender outcomes in schools,

specific attention was given to leadership implications that emerged. In the following section, findings about the process of gender reform in schools and around learnings about gender reform outcomes are detailed. Not as much research attention, however, appears to have been given to the specific role of the principal in the gender reform process but where this was apparent in the literature, the specific findings were extracted for analysis and discussion.

TOWARDS A THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE OF THE RECEPTION OF GENDER REFORM

Kenway (1990, p. 42) discussed the research literature on gender policy reform using Yates' (1984) term "a movement in progress...it thus contains an uneven mixture of description, celebration, advocacy, analysis and criticism" (p. 42). The research literature has been categorised as falling into one of two categories, firstly, surveying the field, (descriptive) and secondly, concern for a specific issue, for example, the work of Yates (1996) in tracing the different understandings of girls' schooling and how these have impacted on the policy reform process.

Kenway (1990) considered that the research literature had yet to develop a theory of change that had gender as a central concern. She saw that there was a lack of published research on examination of policy into practice at the school level and which went further than describing teachers' attempts at changing practice to any research that actually "discusses the politics of change at the 'chalkface' " (p. 51).

There exist different theories of change utilised for gender research which demonstrate attempts at theorising the gender reform process. Charters (1981) attempted to order research methods utilised in gender reform research using the three categories, descriptive research, cause and effect studies and research on practice. Byrne (1987) engaged a seven-step change model to review and critique the development of gender policy in Australia and Europe over the ten years 1975-1985, a model which was criticised by Kenway (1990) for being linear and for not lending itself to explore the connection between legislation and policy.

Yates (1993) utilised the work of Byrne (1987, p. 13) in evaluating the progress of gender reform in education by the use of her three questions to critique the *National policy for the education of girls* (1987):

- i. Is progress incremental, exponential or constant?
- ii. Are the changes or improvements in new provision, recruitment or progression or in resource-allocation, located in the mainstream or system; or have they remained pilot experiments and peripheral?
- iii. Has educational thinking changed its basic premises to accept that equal means the same and not different but equivalent? Have planners accepted the concept of interchangeable as distinct from mutually exclusive sex roles?

In evaluating progress of the *National policy for the education of girls*, Yates' (1993) response was that progress could not be described as incremental, exponential or constant; she saw that the question was whether the *National policy*, “now does represent a drawing together of the previous initiatives in terms of a more systematised approach which will provide a basis for ‘exponential’ spread” (p. 105).

A third framework for an understanding of the nature of gender reform implementation research was provided by Willis, Kenway, Rennie and Blackmore (1992). Their framework for analysis of the reception of gender reform drew on a cultural perspective whereby gender reform was seen as “consisting of intersecting sets of cultural processes” (Willis et al., 1992, p. 4). Thus the response of different players to gender policy was seen to be influenced by many cultural factors and hence “some teachers and administrators will be more predisposed to gender reform than will others” (Willis et al., 1992, p. 5[AM3]  M4]). The aim of their research was to build theories that could explain the process of gender reform in schools from an empirical base and to contribute to feminist theory “of and for change” (p. 3). They explained the reasons for the lack of literature studying the reception of gender reform in school in terms of an absence of a theory of change “where gender is central” (p. 3) and which could demonstrate “how people in schools go about the process and what happens when they do” (p. 3).

Within this cultural perspective framework, gender reform is understood as intersecting cultural processes whose meanings are open to negotiation, contested perspectives and

change and as such, would be understood and responded to differently depending on one's cultural position. At school level, gender reform would be read differently by teachers and administrators depending on particular cultural and human factors and so,

Clearly this means that some teachers and administrators will be more predisposed to gender reform than will others and it is these who will be involved in producing gender reform at the micro level of the school. (Willis, Kenway, Rennie & Blackmore, 1992, pp. 4-5)

The authors demonstrated the use of this framework, through an analysis of gender reform practices in published documents, curriculum materials and project reports. It was noted that because of funding arrangements, most reform initiatives were government sponsored and thus "tend to reflect government preferences and priorities" (Willis et al., 1992, p. 5). This was demonstrated through a critique of the emphasis on broadening girls' post school options in paid work. Working in three Victorian schools, the researchers examined gender reform through girls' readings of specific gender equity programs and teachers' readings of gender equity programs using individual vignettes to illustrate the different meanings ascribed to the specific reform. They concluded that reality did not match the rhetoric and that there were varying degrees of positive outcomes in the gender reform process.

The conceptual understandings of the process embodied in the model developed by Willis et al. (1992) provided a particular framework for understanding that was utilised in the review of implementation literature in the following section of this chapter as well as in examination of teacher and principal response to gender reform directions described in Research Phase 3. This introduction to implementation research has drawn attention to the importance of developing a theoretical understanding of the process of gender reform. The next section examines the implementation literature in detail.

GENDER POLICY IMPLEMENTATION LITERATURE

The focus of implementation literature in Australia varies considerably from national databases to classroom action research and methodologies vary according to the research

focus. In order to gain an appreciation of the varied nature of this field, the literature is grouped into the following two categories:

- Databases and Reports on Specific Policy Outcomes
- Implementation Research in Schools Examining Implementation of Specific Policy Directions

Databases and Reports on Specific Policy Outcomes

In the three decades of gender reform in Australia since 1975, databases have been established and reports have been commissioned to evaluate progress following implementation of policy directions.

Reports Utilising Qualitative Data

In 1985 a federal committee was established to review progress since the 1975 School Commission Report, *Girls, school and society*. It focused on the main policy concerns around girls' disadvantage and it concluded that,

There had been relatively little change in secondary students' patterns of choice, that girls' under-achievement in maths, science and technology remained an intransigent problem; that less teacher time and space and equipment continue to be allocated to girls than to boys; and that creativity and inquiry are less encouraged in girls. (Byrne, 1987, p. 18)

Four reports (*Girls in schools 1-4*) were written between 1987 and 1991 in response to the stated expectation of the *National policy for the education of girls* (1987) around data collection and collation on the quality and outcomes of schooling. These reports documented the changes made in response to the *National policy* by the states and territories in terms of the four specified national objectives. The first report described the historical context of gender policy development and the rationale behind the priorities set, the next three reports provided qualitative information utilising descriptive overviews on new developments and exemplary practice in the four priority areas:

1. Raising awareness of the educational needs of girls
2. Equal access to and participation in appropriate curriculum
3. Provision of a supportive school environment
4. Equitable resource allocation

Other publications released as part of this evaluative process included national databases and registers of programs and projects. *The introduction to the national data base on the education of girls in Australian schools* (1988) highlighted the importance of this work in providing a national view on the education of girls, “for refining and development of policies and practices relating to the educational needs, opportunities and experiences of girls” (p. 3). These databases were seen to provide valuable information for those in research and policy making, particularly in terms of recognising trends in the data. The intention was to update this database each year and in June 1988, the Australian Education Council endorsed this proposal. From 1994 this information was included in the *National reports on schooling in Australia*.

Girls in schools (1993) *A register of programs and projects* (1994), *Report on the implementation of the national action plan 1993–7* (1994), and *National report on schooling in Australia 1995* (1995) were developed in response to the requirement of the *National action plan* to report on implementation of programs and research and to document teaching practice which addressed active participation of girls in learning. These reports were descriptive in nature, reviewing gender reform initiatives across Australia, stating achievements and signalling areas for ongoing consideration.

The programs described include projects which highlight common approaches across schools and systems, those which are innovative, and those which target specific educational contexts and groups. A strong emerging theme is the sense of commitment of many teachers, schools and systems to providing professional development and participating in programs aimed at implementing change. (*Girls in schools 1993*, p. 1)

The gender reform projects described in the *Girls in schools* reports showed the breadth of response to the *National action plan*. These included teacher professional development, development of teaching programs, specific units of work, action research, longitudinal

studies, specific subject initiatives, resource centre development, guest speaker programs, student at risk programs, classroom observations and peer mentoring, gender-awareness raising, gender and work projects, school improvement projects, single sex teaching pilot programs and creation of a supportive learning environment for girls. This material was in substance a reporting on projects rather than evaluative research, however, it gave a clear overview of the range of gender reform projects undertaken by schools and systems in response to gender policy directions.

These publications reflected the broadening of the gender policy focus to one of gender equity and included reporting of responses to girls' and boys' issues. In the introduction to the 1994 report, Vardon outlined some of the difficulties inherent in using such data for evaluative purposes:

It is required to bridge unique elements in individual States and systems; it highlights the difficulties of reporting facts which cannot be measured adequately by quantitative data alone and it endeavours to monitor and to report centrally the effectiveness of school-based programs in largely devolved systems. (*Girls in schools*, 1994, p. iii)

While Gilbert (1996) demonstrated how these government and education system reports reflected the changing terminology and changing emphases at both policy and system levels, Kenway (1990, p. 73) gave a specific example, demonstrating that the original 'gender-expansive' curriculum objective had been narrowed to a focus on girls in specific subject and career domains classified as non traditional for girls and women and how educational reform directions were given weight if they fitted with the government's agenda and thus, "Gender justice is coming to mean an education designed to prepare girls for the sorts of vocations that the government believes will enhance the economy".

In a discussion of the *Girls in schools reports* (1988, 1989, 1990), Yates (1993) concluded that general support for the *National policy for the education of girls* was indicated. Her interpretation of the data was that it appeared to indicate support for initiatives by those principals and teachers who showed interest rather than an approach to ensure that there was awareness of the issue by all schools. This was an important theme emerging for the study and has been explored and developed in Research Phase 3. Much of the

implementation literature demonstrated that implementation of gender policy directions in schools appeared to be based on individual teacher response as distinct from systematic policy implementation in all schools.

Reports Utilising Quantitative Data

Although the research context of the current study was that of K-6 schools, learnings can be gleaned from findings of reports utilising quantitative data which focused on specific policy outcomes. Specific quantitative research has been published utilising analysis of Year 12 examination data (Board of Studies, 1996; Collins, 2000; Cuttance, 1994, 1995; Teese, Davies, Charlton & Polesel, 1995) This research was indicative of the policy approach of the 1990s which emphasised performance measurement against specified criteria (Yates, 1993). Although analysis of final examination data focused on the post compulsory years, there are elements of this research that have bearing on the current study.

Whilst examination data have been used as an evaluative measure for gender policy, these same results have been utilised to inform intense popular debate in the media around the relative success of boys and girls. Headlines such as the following typify the use of such data to build a case for a specific stand on schooling and perceived disadvantage:

“Boys fall behind girls in well-off suburbs” (Raethel, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1996, p. 4)

“Co-ed schools fail for boys” (Parker & Vincent, *The Daily Telegraph*, 1996, p. 5)

“Disconcerting lack of interest in male lag” (Devine, *The Australian*, 2000, p. 13)

“Girls losing the lead” (*The Sun-Herald*, 2000, p. 33)

The four pieces of quantitative research referred to above all highlight the fine nuances of interpretation and the potential for ambiguity around the use of statistical measurements to evaluate the impact of gender reform outcomes. It is in the breadth of findings of these reports that relevance for the current study can be found. Whilst the Cuttance Review (1994) concluded that differences in Higher School Certificate (HSC) results between schools and between genders were most likely attributable to the difference in the intake and that higher retention rates for girls were seen to be reflective of a narrowing of

workplace options, of interest to this study is the work Cuttance (1994) did in canvassing a range of other issues. Cuttance addressed such issues as harassment, school facilities and resources and sport using both quantitative and qualitative data obtained from submissions and interviews as well as from statistical data. Because of their specific relevance to this study, some of these findings are discussed in more detail below.

Teacher Response to Gender Issues

A number of findings centred on teachers' understandings of and approaches to gender issues in the classroom. Gender equity was found to be not understood by teachers, the majority of whom saw it as attempts at "bringing the girls up to the level of the boys" (Cuttance, 1995, p. 35) and gender equity issues were seen as not being addressed in the classroom. Girls were viewed by teachers as "confident, articulate, and skilled in interpersonal relationships (and) better behaved, have a more positive attitude to learning and are generally more cooperative than boys" (Cuttance, 1995, p. 34) and teacher expectations of students' subject achievement were along traditional lines.

This report also highlighted a number of findings pertaining to the role of the teacher in gender equity implementation. Opportunities for professional development in gender equity were seen to be limited and school leaders reported "no specific allocation of funds for training in the area of gender equity" (Cuttance, 1994, p. 51). Teachers perceived themselves to be good gender role models, a view not shared by the students interviewed and although teachers considered it appropriate to have female teachers of non traditional subjects for good role modelling, there was little indication that this was actually happening in schools. Significantly, in a reflection of other research findings addressed in other sections of this chapter (Brannock, 1992; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1995; Kamler, Maclean, Reid & Simpson, 1994; Large, 1993; The Collins Report), the majority of teachers indicated that they had little or no professional development in the area of gender equity, nor were they able to articulate a clear understanding of its meaning.

School Approaches to Gender Reform

Cuttance recorded a number of findings around the approach of the school to gender reform, all of which have implications for developing understandings about school leadership for gender equity. Although there may have been some growth in gender equity

understandings and although some schools supported some initiatives for reform, in general Cuttance found that schools “have not addressed the need for fundamental change in policy and practice required to achieve true gender equity” (Cuttance, 1995, p. 35).

Most schools had developed a “mainstreaming approach incorporating the Girls’ Education Strategy into the school’s overall student welfare network”(Cuttance, 1995, p.3). Some schools had adopted specific initiatives to address the educational needs of girls, mostly to address the falling enrolment of girls in coeducational schools and varying degrees of success were reported, including inconclusive results around creation of single sex classes. The report concluded that lack of success of many of these initiatives could well be attributable to lack of systematic monitoring.

Sex-Based Harassment

Cuttance (1994) found that there was little acknowledgement that sex-based harassment was an issue in schools, little awareness of grievance procedures, and strong agreement among the majority of students surveyed that they would not report it. The report recommendations signalled a need for gender equity strategies to be developed by systems and schools, professional development for school staffs on gender equity and specifically on sex-based harassment and the development of policy statements addressing sex-based harassment.

Although the present study focused on the primary context, the work of Teese (1995) and Board of Studies (1996) which focused on analyses of Higher School Certificate (HSC) data had relevance, particularly as it related to the premise of the work of Large (1993) discussed elsewhere in this chapter, that educational experience at the primary level can influence post compulsory directions of girls. Of interest, given that “equal opportunity” for girls was a reform direction of the 1970s which focused on increased retention rates for girls and participation and success in traditional male fields of education (Alloway, 1996), Teese found that there was a demonstrated relationship between socio economic status (SES) and subject participation and performance for both boys and girls and that the apparent success of girls as reflected in HSC data gave them no competitive advantage as they continued to be disadvantaged post school. The Report of the NSW Board of Studies (1996) concluded that from the earliest available data collection (1981), girls had outperformed boys on University Entrance Rank (TER) however, the difference had

increased since 1992. Yet despite this difference in the TER, only small improvements were recorded for girls over a wide range of courses.

The Board of Studies Report (1996) detailed an examination of six hypotheses to explain gender gaps in average TES/TER scores. The conclusions signalled an important consideration in the use of statistical analyses of examination results in that each hypothesis was discounted and new hypotheses were raised for further examination. These conclusions demonstrated the complexities around the use of statistical measures to gauge the reception of gender policy outcomes in that they could only demonstrate what had happened, they could not give reasons why this had occurred. This report concluded by proposing a comprehensive research program at both Board of Studies level and school level in order to increase knowledge and understanding to inform future policy directions. These reports highlighted the need to address both the policy implementation process as well as policy outcomes in reviewing the efficacy of gender policy directions.

The Collins (2000) study set out to compile and analyse statistical data on participation and performance of students in their final years at school and in their early post school destinations and to examine gender differences in this data. This was achieved through a compilation and analysis of statistical data on HSC, literacy and numeracy performance, subject participation, retention rates and post school destinations as well as an examination of the interrelationship of this data with other factors such as socio economic status, locality, ethnicity, disability and indigeneity. The methodology was explained as follows:

Relatively simple statistics that attempt to document broad patterns rather than more complex statistics that seek to attribute cause and effect or rank significance of effect. (Collins, 2000, p. 28)

In investigating such patterns, Collins (2000) concluded that although there existed gender differences in school participation and performance and post school outcomes, these differences did not necessarily “translate into disadvantage in straightforward ways” (p. 2) and that close examination needed to be given to differences between and within genders to discern which ones were important. In a reflection of the Teese (1995) findings, Collins (2000) concluded that socio economic status (SES) makes the largest difference to both

school performance and educational participation and that gender impacts most strongly on school performance and participation and post school outcomes when it intersects with disadvantages such as isolation and poverty. This understanding reflected the policy underpinnings of the 1980s focusing on the intersection of gender with other forms of disadvantage discussed earlier in this chapter.

In evaluating the usefulness of large examination analysis projects, it was seen important to acknowledge critiques of this approach as a means of gender policy evaluation. Both Yates (1993) and Kenway (1995) critiqued the perception that mapping research could demonstrate progress in gender reform whilst O'Loughlin (1992) critiqued this research in terms of a need to establish the connections between students' (boys and girls) epistemological thinking and their ethical positions and to link this to their experience of schooling.

Kenway (1995) found mapping data to be useful at a system level but limited in the information it could provide on the process of gender reform in schools. Nor was it seen to provide an understanding about the reasons for success or lack of success of reform initiatives.

They are thus not usually suggestive for the fine grain of either practice or policy. Other data are necessary for this purpose. However, when one looks for such data, one finds it in rather short supply. (Kenway, 1995, p. 41)

Yates (1993, p. 25) demonstrated that mapping data was not necessarily neutral, indeed "even the driest forms of statistical research involve values and interpretation" through the questions asked and the details investigated. Specific methodological concerns about large databases were also raised by Yates and Leder (1995).

Bearing in mind these concerns and despite the fact that the data from the four research projects was gathered from secondary schools and specifically around Year 12 examination results, findings relevant to the current study have been highlighted, specifically those that focused on the role of the school and the teacher in gender reform, and on the implications of evaluating policy in terms of process and outcomes.

This section has provided an overview of evaluation of the implementation of specific gender policy directions springing from the use of reports and databases utilising qualitative and quantitative data. The focus of this literature has been on policy outcomes. The next section examines research on gender policy implementation that utilised gender practice in schools as the research context. The focus of this literature is thus on policy as process.

Implementation Research in Schools Examining Implementation of Specific Policy Directions

Studies Across Schools and Systems

In the 1990s a number of large research projects were undertaken around Australia, most involving a number of schools in different states (Kenway and Willis, 1993; Large, 1993; Milligan, 1992; The Collins Report). These authors sought to consult a large number of participants to gauge the progress of gender policy initiatives.

The Collins Report, commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, utilised quantitative and qualitative data to examine the experience of gender of students in Years 6 and 10 in 408 (213 primary and 195 secondary) schools across Australia from all three educational sectors: government, Catholic and independent.

The study of Gender and School Education was planned to establish reliable, quantitative, baseline information on boys' and girls' experiences of school. (The Collins Report, p. 7)

The Collins Report is reviewed in detail because of its close links to the current study in that the student questionnaire developed for The Collins Report was utilised in Research Phase 2, Student Experience of Gender at School, to determine the experience of gender at school of Year 6 students in the participating schools.

The two focus questions of The Collins Report were:

1. How do young people experience gender at school?
2. What are schools, as institutions, doing in a planned way about the construction of gender?

Priorities set by the *National action plan for the education of girls 1993-97* constituted the focus of the study. In addition to the student questionnaire completed by students in Years 6 and 10, questionnaires were also completed by sector authorities, principals and teachers. The bulk of the data was collected by survey, supplemented by interviews in a small number of participant schools.

The questions were organised and reported around groups of indicators related to the six priorities of the *National action plan*: sex-based harassment, school organisation and management practice, the construction of gender, teaching practices, curriculum reform, broadening work education. This research had a focus on actual practice and was concerned with the gender experiences of both boys and girls.

The authors of the report sounded a caution in the interpretation of the student questionnaire results which is relevant to the current study. They stressed that student responses were the students' own interpretation/perception of what was occurring in their school and as such, "It is important to note exactly what questions were asked and not to overgeneralise or to come to erroneous conclusions" (The Collins Report, p. 20).

Students are acting as reporters on the way they perceive their school as an environment. (The Collins Report, p. 7)

In reflecting on the learnings from this study, Collins (1999, p. 18) described gender in school as a game with clear parts to be played by girls and boys where generally "powerful boys control the game at any one site" deciding on the rules and on "who and what will be declared to be masculine or feminine". Collins (1999, p. 19) described the experience of schooling as a gender divide "being the chasm between what is regarded as masculine and the multiple or lesser things that are spurned as 'other' ". The Collins Report highlighted some obvious improvements in student experience of gender at school, specifically fairer access for girls to teacher attention and school resources.

Harassment was named as a significant issue and was reported by students as happening in equal numbers to boys and girls. This specific issue was also discussed as an instructive example that demonstrated positive outcomes where and when it had been addressed. The Collins Report demonstrated noticeable difference between levels of harassment in States which addressed the issue compared to those that had not addressed it.

The Collins Report also presented findings from results of questionnaires and interviews completed by a sample of teachers and principals which had relevance to particular areas of this study. The focus of teacher questions was primarily on classroom experiences and direct interactions with the students. Teachers responses indicated that fewer than 50% had attended professional development courses related to gender issues and the lowest percentage response was from teachers from the Catholic sector. Almost 50% of courses attended were school-based and one notable difference was in the area of sex-based harassment for which government sector teachers expressed the highest rate of satisfaction whilst Catholic sector teachers expressed the lowest rate of satisfaction. Principal attendance was higher with 75% of principals reporting that they had attended professional development on gender issues in the past three years although the percentage of Catholic sector principals was considerably lower and there was a significant difference between the attendance of female principals and the much lower participation rate of male principals.

Female and older teachers showed most willingness to use teaching practices that took gender differences into account and generally teachers were most willing to take action in gender-related areas where there were clear school policies and procedures. Of interest is that there was a significantly higher proportion of government than non-government schools reported as implementing gender inclusive assessment strategies. One clear difference noted was principal and student perceptions of the existence of equitable student management and disciplinary policies and processes at their school where principal response of 97% was contrasted with student response of only 63%.

Of particular importance was school response to addressing sex-based harassment where 64% of teachers and 66% of principals reported that their schools had documented processes for addressing this issue and similar percentages were reported for

documentation detailing grievance processes for sex-based harassment. These percentage results overall were higher for government schools than for Catholic schools. Indeed, 21% of Catholic schools, the highest of all sectors, reported that there were no processes for addressing sex-based harassment. Overall, principals reported a higher degree of knowledge and response to the *National action plan* than did teachers.

The Collins Report concluded that schools had to move beyond gender understandings which are dependent on perceptions of masculine and feminine, to a focus on self and relationship with others, enabling each student to be as fully human as possible. This has clear connections to the overview of the movement of gender policy emphases in Australia discussed earlier in this chapter, from a move from gender policy phase 1 (policy focus on girls' education through equal opportunity) and gender policy phase 2 (focus on inclusive education) to gender policy phase 3 with a focus on social construction on gender. The overall results from this 1996 study demonstrated that "attention to gender issues by systems, schools and individual teachers does make a difference to the gender experiences of students in schools" (The Collins Report, p. xiv).

Other large studies have utilised a variety of qualitative methodologies from which to gain information on the experience of schooling for girls, specifically in regard to particular policy initiatives (Milligan, 1992; Kenway & Willis, 1993; Large, 1993). The focus of these research projects was firstly the experience of schooling for girls and secondly the process of change in response to the *National action plan*.

Researchers participating in the Milligan (1992) project, *Listening to girls*, engaged in formal consultancy of 600 educators in 1991 utilising interviews, meetings, submissions, teleconferences and conferences as well as interviews with 800 school girls in groups or alone. Its aims were to document the views of girls towards their schooling and to identify common themes.

Above all, the messages attest to the importance of gender in determining the effectiveness of education for girls. (Milligan, 1992, p. 5)

The messages indicated that the educational experience for girls in many cases was still adversely affected by their gender, in terms of sex-based harassment, classroom teaching and learning, involvement in the life of the school, responsibilities out of school and/or their particular cultural, economic, family background and personal circumstances. These factors were seen to have had an impact on girls' ability to fully participate in the schooling process. They were seen to contribute to a conflict with girls' beliefs that they could access all post school pathways when the reality of societal structures and expectations made it difficult for them to do so.

Specific work was undertaken by researchers under the collective title, *Projects of national significance*. These were based on a belief that "educational change will help to effect social change" (Kenway in Large, 1993, p. iv) and were an attempt to review the success of gender reform efforts.

Their underlying premises are firstly that schools can broaden girls' post school options and enhance their future lives, but secondly, if this is to happen then the connections between the two and the means by which schools can contribute need to be clearly thought through and spelt out. (Kenway in Large, 1993, p. iv)

The second book of this series was of particular relevance to the current study in that Large (1993) explored the role of primary schools in forming the gender identity of their students as well as examining a range of approaches to gender equity in the primary school. One area of concern was to investigate the connection between what schools said about gender equity and what actually occurred in response to gender issues in schools. Large explained that it is the messages that students receive, directly and indirectly, whilst at school that contribute to the formation of their gender understandings.

On the surface many schools present themselves as gender equitable but beneath the policy statements and the like, their language, structure, culture and student sub-cultures are the reverse. (Large, 1993, p. 1)

The focus of the Large (1993) study was a review of primary school gender equity programs, specifically those with a focus on developing approaches to broadening the post

school options of girls which were seen in the broadest sense as relating to a full life experience, not narrowly focused on paid work. Large (1993, p. 2) explained that this research was informed by “research on contemporary approaches to challenging sex-role stereotyping and by theories which point to the significance of language in the construction of gender identity” and it was conducted in Victoria, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory using teachers involved in gender equity networks or identified for their work in gender equity.

Important conclusions from the study focused on gender reform in its broad social context as well as on a need for individual schools to develop gender equity strategies and frameworks for action based on a critical analysis of current policies and practices. Specific attention was drawn to the need for significant time and resourcing for staff professional development. In terms of the current study, one finding was of specific importance, that of the role of the principal in gender reform. Respondents expressed feelings of isolation in implementing gender reform because of lack of principal support, lack of resources and lack of interest by colleagues:

The most common, recurring factor which was identified as a barrier to implementing gender equity programs and policies in primary schools was that of an unsupportive principal. (Large, 1993, p. 52)

This finding was illustrated through a number of specific examples: no support for professional development in gender equity, no dissemination of gender equity information or support materials, public disparagement of gender equity issues, lack of acknowledgement of gender equity initiatives in the school. Respondents provided examples and anecdotes to support their reported experiences. Professional development for principals was flagged by Large (1993) as a pressing need but it was tempered with an acknowledgement of the difficulty of persuading the non-supportive principal that professional development in the area of gender equity was a need.

In the third book of the series Kenway and Willis (1993) told the stories of gender reform efforts in schools in four States and Territories, looking at the ways that school communities moved from policy to practice with a specific focus on broadening the post

school options of girls. Their research was based on the need to look at what actually happens in schools when gender reform is undertaken and indeed what were the effects of such a reform process. In their methodology they concentrated on making sense of meanings “what meanings were made, how they were delivered by teachers and what girls did with them” (p. 2).

The stories reflected different approaches utilised by schools to improve girls’ post school options, each seen to have different discourses, each informed by different views of feminism and different views of change and each was evaluated/critiqued as a useful strategy. These four particular approaches to improvement of girls’ post school options were categorised by the authors as changing choices as a strategy, changing girls as a strategy, changing curriculum and changing the learning.

In considering these different discourses and discursive fields we have concluded that each has certain strengths and weaknesses and that each can be further developed if informed by recent feminist theories of the labour market, ...and if each reconsider its pedagogy. (Kenway & Willis, 1993, p. 88)

In discussing the teacher’s role in curriculum reform, the authors made the point that this needed more than good will or good intentions on the part of the teacher “it also requires sound knowledge and understanding and a great deal of sensitivity and skill” (p. 47). Their findings on the fourth approach, changing learning, are critical:

More often than not, changes to the school environment intended to make them more supportive of girls’ learning were relatively unsustained and not well defined and this was particularly true of matters pertaining to sexual harassment. (Kenway & Willis, 1993, p. 57)

The authors discussed the latter two approaches together, changing curriculum and changing learning as attempts to “reconstruct the learning environment and the curriculum in order to remove any impediments to girls’ access and success” (Kenway & Willis, 1993, p. 10). They saw that implied in these two approaches was a view that structural

change was needed to support changes in the girls themselves and that these two approaches could be undermined by ‘conflicting discourses’ (p. 11) in the school itself.

Research Focus on Gender Policy Implementation in ‘Best Practice’ Schools

A number of studies have addressed the reform process itself by focusing more directly on schools that were known to be working towards gender equity (Butorac & Lymon, 1998; Clark, 1990; Kenway & Willis, 1997). The focus of these studies was, however, quite different. Whereas the stated aims of Kenway and Willis (1997) were to observe practice and build theory from this, the focus of Butorac and Lymon (1998) was provision to schools of information to conduct a gender needs analysis, to plan for gender equity programs and to provide a framework to schools by which to evaluate the effectiveness of gender equity strategies.

Clark’s (1990) specific focus was to examine best practice in gender reform in primary schools within the framework of gender inclusive curriculum. However, the focus of the project changed to become “identification of the practices which contribute to the production of gender differences” (Clark, 1990, p. 4).

In the Clark (1990) study, the author spent one to two days in 16 schools which were nominated on the basis of best gender practice. Conversations with principals, teachers, gender equity officers and students were taped and analysed. Two critical issues identified by Clark were the problems encountered when attempting to evaluate primary school gender equity issues from a secondary perspective and the finding that gender equity concerns were not seen to be the domain of the primary school. These findings signalled a number of important learnings about gender construction in the primary school relevant to the current study including the critical nature of the informal curriculum, the formation and impact of teacher gender assumptions, and the understandings on which approaches to gender equity reform are based.

The final chapter of Clark’s work outlined a framework for action that challenged gender assumptions and equipped teachers and students to be able to “deal with the effects of gender on their lives” (Clark, 1990, p. 91). In demonstrating the need for a school environment that is supportive of gender equity, Clark emphasised the importance of a

whole school approach to gender equity with clearly articulated goals and directions for practice.

Of relevance to the current study are the final comments that Clark made on the role of the school leader in this process, stressing the importance of leadership for change, without which the support of teachers for gender equity could not be expected:

Unless this kind of support is provided then we really are expecting teachers to implement what is after all government policy, in their unpaid time and in a hostile environment. (Clark, 1990, p. 104)

The expressed aim of Kenway and Willis (1997) was to look at how “gender reformers read and rewrite policy, and how others in the schools read and rewrite the work of gender reformers” (p. xvii). Participating in an online discussion of this work they stated their aim as follows:

We set out to fill a gap in the literature which was that while there are lots of accounts of the different gender issues in schools, there are very few sustained discussions about what actually happens in schools when teachers try to change the gender dynamics. (edequity@tristram.edc.org, 17/11/98)

Both the Kenway and Willis (1997) and Butorac and Lymon (1998) research studies were based on ‘best practice’ schools that were known to be responding to gender policy directions and both used a case study approach. Kenway and Willis (1997) investigated gender reform in 14 secondary schools and Butorac and Lymon (1998) investigated gender reform in 11 schools, three of which were secondary, six primary and two combined primary/secondary.

Kenway and Willis (1997) concluded that reform efforts were most successful when reform is from below and where schools are open to new ideas. Three particular conclusions from the Kenway and Willis study signalled directions for future reform efforts, all of which had leadership implications:

- Often gender reform efforts were not supported by others in the school community, fellow staff and parents, and that gender reform efforts were still on the margins in schools and were dependent on the response of individual teachers.
- It was clear that measurements of success followed traditional notions such as academic achievement in high status subjects. This is further confirmation of an understanding of and response to gender equity based on a male paradigm discussed earlier in this chapter.
- The third finding, that there is an observable gap between what teachers say they believe about gender equity and what they are observed as doing, replicates findings of other research (Cuttance, 1994; Large, 1993). It signalled a methodological challenge when teachers and principals are asked to reflect on their understanding of and responses to gender equity agenda. This particular issue and its methodological implications are taken up in the next section on teacher response to gender equity in discussion of the work of Brannock (1992) and Kamler et al. (1994).

A summary of concerns from the Butorac and Lymon (1998) study indicate that in the participating schools, there still remained issues of inequity that had existed in Australian schools since the 1970s: inequitable classroom practices, inequitable playground practices, domination of boys in and out of the classroom and passivity and limiting attitudes of girls. In addition, their findings also confirmed the growing agenda around sex-based harassment, bullying and violence.

In terms of the intent of the current study to address gender reform through examination of policy implications for practice, one research outcome is of particular importance. With the exception of one school that began gender equity reform with a response to system policy on harassment, other schools in the Butorac and Lymon (1998) research commenced gender equity practices without reference to specific policy directions but rather in response to an internal needs analysis. Examples included teacher observation of gender biased practices, data from student management programs, a critical incident, and concerns about student academic performance. However, some staff members in some schools had a good working knowledge of gender research.

Teacher Response to Gender Equity

A particular research focus relevant to the current study, that of teacher response to gender equity reform, has been addressed in two different studies. Brannock (1992) and Kamler et al. (1994), utilising different methodologies, both addressed the relationship between the stated attitudes of teachers to gender equity and the translation of these into classroom practice.

Brannock (1992) focused on the correlation between the stated attitudes of teachers to gender and gender equity and the translation of these into classroom practice, hypothesising that there would be a gap between teachers' perceptions of equitable teacher-pupil interaction in their own classrooms, and the perceptions of an observer. Her conclusions supported this hypothesis.

The GATAP project concluded that teachers and principals are passive and reactive agents in the maintenance and reinforcement of sex role stereotypes, with the attitudes of teachers and principals to sex roles and gender equity falling short of accepting a proactive educational role. (Brannock, 1992, p. viii)

Brannock (1992) found that participants' response to the survey demonstrated a reluctance by teachers, males more so than females, to commit themselves to affirmative action on gender equity and even where participants professed egalitarian attitudes, these did not necessarily translate into egalitarian practice. Teacher beliefs about their own sex equitable teaching practices were not observed in practice; in fact teachers were observed to reinforce, actively and passively, sex stereotypes.

The DEET funded project authored by Kamler et al. (1994) was designed to examine the classroom impact of a teacher committed to gender-aware teaching practices. This study highlighted the complexity of intersecting issues including the differing values, experiences and expectations that the teacher and others bring to their roles, the different gendered experiences of each of the students and the impact of these on their behaviours, especially aggressive behaviour by boys and the structures and procedures of the school which the researchers considered could impose limits on what the teacher is able to do and achieve in the classroom.

The conclusions of both of these studies focused on the need for professional development for teachers, specifically in the area of gender-aware teaching strategies and to enable them to understand and to be able to respond to the complexities inherent in the gender agenda.

One particular learning from these two studies replicates the observation already raised in this chapter, that there is a gap between teachers' professed beliefs about gender equity and the reality of what is observed to occur in the classroom.

Implications for the Current Study Arising From Policy Implementation Research in Schools

There are a number of specific implications from the policy implementation research that are relevant to the current study.

- An important finding is around the role of the leader in the gender reform process. The role of the school leader in the gender policy implementation process has not been given specific research attention. However, within these research projects, observations were made about this role. Whilst the learnings from the Large (1993) study focused on the adverse effect on school gender equity efforts by teachers of an unsupportive principal, Kenway and Willis (1993) found positive aspects to the role:

Leaders who spearhead change in the education system and who are prepared to put in time and effort and to motivate and lead others are a valuable resource which must be nurtured. Such individuals are found at all levels of the education system; too often they are neither recognised nor supported. (Kenway & Willis, 1993, p. 89)

- Aligned to the first finding are the reflections on the formation of staff understandings about gender equity, the impact of these understandings on other members of the school community and the relationship of these understandings to actual school and classroom practice. The Kenway and Willis (1993) study is reflective of those that demonstrated a gap between what was said about gender equity in schools and what was actually occurring. Although participant schools in the Kenway and Willis (1993)

study were selected because of their gender reform efforts, most strategies reflected an ignorance of the relationship between schooling and “the gendered nature of paid and unpaid work let alone feminist theories of the labour market” (p. 42). The authors expressed lack of surprise at the focus on equal opportunity (informed by liberal feminism) and on promoting/celebrating femaleness (cultural feminism), explaining that thinking in terms of the construction of gender was only emerging at the time of the study. They also noted that in cases where teachers acknowledged that girls did not belong to one homogenous group, their reform strategies appeared not to take this into account.

- Particular themes relevant to this research also emerged from the implementation literature focusing on specific gender policy implications for practice. It is interesting to note the specific policy implications for practice that were raised for consideration in a number of studies. Such policy concerns as sex-based harassment, the links between gender and full participation in the life of the school, and the connection between gender equity initiatives and post school pathways occupied the attention of a number of researchers.
- Finally, in terms of the intent of the research to involve K-6 schools, there was certainly confirmation of the usefulness of utilising a large group of schools as the research context. It is important to note the perception that much could be learnt about the efficacy of gender reform efforts from research utilising a large number of schools, even about the relationship of specific gender initiatives to post school pathways in primary schools. In addition, it is clear that this form of research provides the opportunity to gain valuable data about gender reform from school staff and school students across a breadth of schools. This specific research approach provides the opportunity for participants to provide detailed insights into their experiences and views of gender equity reform and allows for the synthesis and analysis of this data into common themes for further discussion.

SUMMARY

The review of literature has surveyed the field of research pertaining to gender policy critique and the implementation of gender reform in schools. It has established relevant

research issues and methodological approaches which are to be taken up in the current study. There are some key findings that have emerged from the literature that are important for this research.

First there was a need to distinguish between different types of policy literature and to discern the particular field of implementation literature that was relevant to this research. An important distinction has been established between those studies which influence policy development and those studies that examine what has occurred in schools as a result of the implementation of policy. This study is clearly attentive to the latter field and to the emphasis on the process of policy implementation. A consideration that has been highlighted has been the actual research context of the primary school. Specific issues around the role of the primary school in gender reform have been canvassed and the implications for the current research noted.

Second, a number of specific gender policy directions have emerged in the literature as dominant themes. A number of specific policy implications for school practice have been highlighted through various studies and continue to be signalled as pertinent issues for schools. It was the intent of Phase 1 of the research to examine in detail gender policy directions for Australian schools and to then track their implementation in a sample of Catholic K-6 schools in Research Phases 2 and 3.

Also of importance is the role of the teacher in the process of implementation of gender reform, particularly how the teacher views this role and the connection between stated understandings and actual practice. A critical element highlighted has been the importance given to planned, systematic teacher professional development to support policy implementation. This is clearly intertwined with the understandings and meanings that are given to gender equity by the whole school community.

More generally, with few exceptions, gender reform was both a subordinate and highly contested discourse in the schools of our studies – this despite the fact that the schools were all selected because of their acknowledged good work in the area. (Kenway, 1995, p. 44)

Of importance to this study have been the implications for leadership for gender equity that have been signalled directly in some of the research studies and the learnings for leadership that have emerged in much of the policy development and implementation literature. Vardon's (1995) comment on leadership for change highlights the critical nature of this role:

In the past, gender equity has been seen as the responsibility of perhaps the gender equity consultant in the system, or the sexual harassment contact officer in a school. But I am pushing for senior staff in school systems and schools to gain a good awareness of gender issues – because they're the people who can make real changes. And that change has to be part of the senior person's responsibility, not solely the responsibility of some teachers. (Vardon, 1995, p. 1)

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



INTRODUCTION

This chapter details the research methodology utilised in addressing the major research question, ‘What implications for leadership for gender equity in schools can be developed from an examination of the response to gender policy directions in a sample of Catholic K-6 schools?’. It includes a description of the research samples and an overview of the three research phases and the methodology employed for each of them.

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

In order to address the major research question, this study aimed to critically analyse 11 gender policy documents in order to determine implications for school practice and to understand the impact of these policies in schools through an examination of Year 6 students’ experience of gender at school and through an examination of the response to gender policy directions by teachers and principals.

The nature of this research required a multimethod approach which utilised different data across three distinct research phases. A combination of data types was chosen as this was considered to be “appropriate and useful” (Gay, 1996, p. 232) in providing depth and meaning to the findings. This process of triangulation of data was seen to be interpretative in that it included selecting, organising and conclusion drawing leading to a corroboration of findings (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

The three distinct phases of the research were:

Research Phase 1: Examination of gender policy directions for Australian schools through content analysis of selected policy documents with a particular focus on implications for school leadership.

Research Phase 2: A survey study of students' experiences of gender at school with a focus on implications for school leadership utilising a validated questionnaire from a national research project.

Research Phase 3: A survey study of principal and teacher response to gender reform directions with a focus on implications for school leadership utilising questionnaire tools developed from gender policy analysis conducted in Research Phase 1.

It was the intention of the research design (Figure 1.1, p.15) to utilise the findings of each of the three research phases to address the research aim: to determine implications for school leadership for gender equity through an examination of the response to gender policy directions in a sample of Catholic K-6 schools.

In selecting particular methodologies for each research phase, there was an acknowledgement that in choosing a research design that involved staff and students in schools, there were ethical responsibilities that had to be considered. These were addressed when submitting the application for Ethics Approval.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

An application was submitted to the Research Projects Ethics Committee of the Australian Catholic University in November 1999. This application included the following:

- Formal approval by the Executive Director of Schools to invite schools in the Diocese to participate in the research (Appendix F)
- Formal approval by the Australian Council for Educational Research and Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs to use the Student Questionnaire from the ACER study, Collins et al. (1996) (Appendix F)
- Principal, Parent and Student Consent Forms
- An outline of research procedures, and the three survey instruments, the student questionnaire (Appendix G), the teacher questionnaire (Appendix H) and the principal questionnaire (Appendix I)
- An explanation of the anticipated outcomes of the research and the perceived benefits to the participants as well as details regarding confidentiality in data collection,

analysis and storage. Approval for the research project using human participants was granted by the Research Projects Ethics Committee in December 1999.

RESEARCH PHASE 1: GENDER POLICY DIRECTIONS FOR AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS

Background

In order to develop learnings for leadership for gender equity in schools, the first research phase addressed the question, ‘What have been the significant policy initiatives for gender equity in Australian schools?’.

The research aimed to determine implications for leadership for gender equity in schools through examining the response that a sample of Catholic K-6 schools had made to gender policy directions. Critical to this aim was the need to determine the specific reform directions for schools as contained in gender policy documents during this time.

Selection of Gender Policy Documents

For the purposes of this research, 11 critical gender policy documents (Appendix A) of the period 1975 – 1997 were selected for content analysis. This period for research focus was chosen as it covered the time from commencement of federal government attention to gender issues in education and inception of gender policy to the year of the commencement of the research proposal, thus reflecting the movement of gender equity initiatives for Australian schools. The year 1975 was critical to this agenda as it marked the publication of the first major Australian government sponsored report in the area of gender and schools.

The documents also represented a broad base that allowed for examination of gender equity directions on a national, state and local level. Criteria for selection meant that each of these documents was based on specific principles, each specified key issues and priorities in terms of gender equity and each embodied a particular view of what was an appropriate response by schools to gender issues in education. It should be noted that although nine of these documents were not specifically written for Catholic schools, they were widely published and disseminated to schools.

Methodology

The first research phase necessitated an examination of the selected gender policy documents to determine the directions set for schools in the area of gender equity. These documents were thus analysed to identify major implications for school practice.

In order to determine the specific policy initiatives for gender equity in Australian schools since 1975 and to extract, analyse and synthesise implications for school practice, content analysis was employed as a research methodology. This form of analysis provided opportunities to make judgements about the actual text of the policy documents through a process devised to divide the text into patterns of meaning (Lindquist, 1981). Of particular importance, this approach allowed for identification of particular patterns in the text (Trochim, 2000) and it allowed the researcher to “make valid inferences from the text” (Weber, 1985, p. 9).

Content analysis typically involves “counting the frequency with which various values of a variable occur” (Crowl 1993, p.127) through the use of specific means of classification (Weber, 1985). Weber (1985) proposed that there is no right or wrong way to conduct content analysis, rather, “each investigator must judge what methods are appropriate to her or his substantive problem” (p. 13).

Underpinning the attention given to the gender policy documents to be analysed was the intent to examine the impact that these documents had made on actual school practice. Content analysis, therefore, needed to focus on the actual implications for school practice contained in each of these documents. An element of this research approach, as for other qualitative research methods, was the actual coding of the data. The purpose of coding was twofold, first to categorise all the data in the document and second to describe the implications emerging from the placement of data into categories (Trochim, 2000).

For the purposes of codification of gender policy data from the 11 documents, a Policy Analysis Template  was developed (Appendix B). This template was specifically structured to encompass the totality of school experience and thus to allow for an overview of all implications for practice as well as for synthesis and analysis of specific information.

The codification process for development of the template involved two phases. Firstly open coding (Trochim, 2000) was employed to consider all data from the 11 policy documents. This resulted in extraction of implications for practice contained in the selected documents in order to facilitate the development of broad categories for placement of these implications for practice. Following this process, selective coding (Trochim, 2000) was utilised in order to systematically code every implication for practice. This resulted in the development of a series of categories which enabled each implication for practice to be defined and its relationship to all other implications for practice specified.

Although the focus of this particular analysis was on the implications for practice, due attention was also given to the actual context of each policy document. The political/social/educational context of each policy document was deemed to be relevant in terms of the particular policy reform phase in which it had been developed. In highlighting the connection between the policy implications for practice and the actual context of the policy, the importance of the relationship between “the data and their context” (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 23) was kept in mind when making inferences about the text.

Establishing Validity of the Policy Analysis Template

Testing for validity took place during both phases of the codification process. This validation process entailed the involvement of four expert respondents, two current principals and two consultants from the Diocesan Catholic Education Office. Initially the process involved discussion leading to refinement of the four major policy analysis template headings chosen to categorise all implications for practice.

During the selective coding phase, further discussion occurred in the process of development of all categories and in the placement of each implication for practice in the selected category. The final test for validity was a written one in which the four expert respondents were asked to respond to the final template in terms of the four major headings and all subheadings (Appendix C). After this process was completed, feedback was obtained on the placement of each implication for practice within the final Policy Analysis Template.

Placement of all 661 implications for school practice extracted from the selected gender policy documents into the Policy Analysis Template resulted from this testing process and utilised frequency counts. This form of representation of data was chosen for its efficiency and effectiveness. It was seen to be the most common form of representation of data and in this case, it served as a summarising function for further analysis (Krippendorff, 1980).

RESEARCH PHASE 2: STUDENT EXPERIENCE OF GENDER AT SCHOOL

Background

In order to determine implications for leadership for gender equity in schools the research entailed examination of the response of schools to gender policy directions and the outcomes of this process for students. The second research phase addressed the question, ‘What is the experience of gender at school of Year 6 students in 35 Catholic K-6 schools?’.

The research methodology entailed a survey of Year 6 students in 35 Catholic K-6 schools utilising a validated and reliable research tool, *National sample study of gender and school education student questionnaire: Co-educational primary schools* from Collins, Batten, Ainley and Getty (1996) (hereafter called The Collins Report). The use of this particular research tool allowed for two distinct outcomes. First, it facilitated collection of data from a large number of students about their experience of gender at school and second, it allowed for comparisons between the responses of the current research group and those responses of the research groups participating in the original 1996 study. Both sets of data were seen to be able to contribute to the research aim of determining implications for leadership for gender equity.

Permission was gained from the Australian Council of Educational Research (ACER) and the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs to utilise the student questionnaire from The Collins Report. This was a national research project involving 213 primary schools and 195 secondary schools from all three educational sectors: government, Catholic and independent. This project also utilised questionnaires completed by system and sector authorities, teachers and principals and was supplemented

by visits and interviews at 18 schools. This project sought to obtain “reliable, quantitative, baseline information on boys’ and girls’ experiences of (gender at) school” (The Collins Report, p. 7) and to gain information on how schools were responding to gender issues.

The Collins Report student questionnaire was constructed around indicator groups, twelve of which explored priorities raised in the *National action plan for the education of girls 1993-1997*. The final two indicator groups related to out of school activities and priorities for adult life. Of the 14 indicator groups, 12 were examined in The Collins Report Year 6 questionnaire and 11 were examined in the student questionnaire for this study. Questions relating to Indicator Group 14, Priorities for Adult Life, were only included in The Collins Report Year 10 questionnaire. Indicator Group 13 questions focused on out of school activities in which students participated. As the focus of the current study was school gender reform practices and implications for school leadership, what occurred out of school was deemed not to be of direct relevance in addressing the research question and was therefore omitted from the analysis.

This particular research tool was chosen for Phase 2 of this research because it was a validated, reliable tool which  measured student experience of gender at school. It was developed with reference to gender policy and with a view to measuring the progress in the implementation of gender policy directions. In developing research tools for this research, the following methods were employed in The Collins Report:

- Questionnaires were developed using extensive consultation with a Steering Committee representing States and school sectors
- The questionnaires were field tested in a range of schools
- Samples of schools were drawn from the ACER Sampling Frame which is stratified by State and sector. This ensured representation of a variety of schools.
- A smaller, qualitative interview sample of students, teachers, principals and gender equity officers was used to assist with data analysis and interpretation

The questionnaire tool utilised for The Collins Report was developed for the broad population of students in Year 6 at schools around Australia, thus a similar cross section of Year 6 students to the student participants in the current study. It sought responses from

boys and girls in Year 6, “to reflect the view that gender is relational and that understanding the education of girls is facilitated by information about boys’ expectations and behaviours and vice versa” (The Collins Report, p. 7). As this questionnaire tool had been utilised in the Collins study, no piloting was deemed necessary.

Research Sample

For Research Phase 2 a sample survey approach was utilised as a means to gather information from students. The particular sample utilised was a sample of Year 6 students in 35 Catholic K-6 schools in one Catholic Diocese of New South Wales. This Diocese spans a large geographic area and serves people from a broad socio economic range from many different cultural and language backgrounds. According to Gay (1996) information can be inferred about a population of interest based on a sample drawn from that population. Permission was sought and granted from the Catholic Education Office to conduct student surveys in the schools (Appendix F).

Initially principals of all 52 K-6 schools belonging to the specific Catholic education system of schools were addressed at a principals’ meeting. The purpose of the research was explained and information was given about the student questionnaire. An outline of the research was given emphasising its intended outcomes for schools. Principals were informed that feedback would be provided to each school regarding the outcomes of the research and invited to consider participation by their school.

Thirty five principals consented to their school taking part in the research study. There was no reason to presuppose that these respondent schools differed to non respondent schools as they spanned the complete spectrum of K-6 schools in the Diocese. They varied in size (Year 6 Enrolment numbers 17-131), socio economic status (Ross Farish SES Indicator: 94-120), geographical location (high density urban areas to semi rural), history (established less than 5 years to established more than 100 years) and gender of principal.

Student Questionnaire Distribution

Letters and consent forms were distributed to all Year 6 students ($N=1952$) and their parents in the 35 participating schools. Particular attention was given to an explanation of the research for both parents and students in order that clarity around its intent and method

was established and thus informed consent was assured. Each school was assigned a coded number and individual questionnaires were given running numbers based on the school. This coding was known only to the researcher. No identification of the school or the student was asked for on the questionnaire itself and students and principals were assured that neither students nor schools would be identified in any way. Each participating school was dispatched a research parcel containing the following:

- One questionnaire for each student
- One instruction sheet for each student (Appendix G)
- Teacher instruction sheet for conduct of the student survey (Appendix G)
- School instruction sheet regarding collection of the student surveys
- A presentation book for the school library with an inscription of thanks from the researcher for participation in the research.

Student Questionnaire Response

Nine hundred and sixty one student questionnaires were returned, which is a response rate of 49%. The age and gender distribution of the student participants is detailed in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Sex* Age Cross tabulation

		Age				
		10	11	12	13	Total
Male	Count	9	285	136	2	432
	% Within Sex	2.0	66.0	31.5	0.5	100
	% of Total	0.9	29.7	14.2	0.2	45
Female	Count	6	403	119	1	529
	% Within Sex	1.1	76.2	22.5	0.2	100
	% of Total	0.6	41.9	12.4	0.1	55
Total	Count	15	688	255	3	961
	% Within Sex	1.6	71.6	26.5	0.3	100
	% of Total	1.6	71.6	26.5	0.3	100

Data Analysis and Reporting of Results of Student Questionnaire

Questionnaire Items

Reporting Gender Similarities and Differences

Student responses were analysed according to the same method utilised for the 1996 study using percentage of student response for each item. For the purposes of this research, results were reported separately for boys and girls in indicator groups according to the particular *National action plan* priority. The focus in analysis of gender difference and similarity was on establishing and examining trends, differences and similarities in student responses.

The Collins Report relied on reporting of results using percentages. In discussing analysis of gender difference, The Collins Report (p. 22) considered that “as a rule of thumb” gender differences of 6% or more would usually be considered significant at the .001 level. In this study, with a student sample of 961 from 35 participating schools, measures of significant difference between genders were determined using statistical analysis. As the intent was to note specific trends in student experience of gender at school, items which showed a significant difference between boys’ and girls’ response were highlighted for further discussion. Also, those items on which responses of boys and girls were very similar were discussed in depth.

To investigate differences between girls’ and boys’ perceptions of the gender issues examined in the student questionnaire, Pearson χ^2 tests for consistency were conducted for each set of indicator items. The overall significance level was set at .05 and the Bonferroni inequality (Stevens, 1992) was employed because separate analyses were conducted for each item within the indicator group. The conservative application of this inequality requires the planned Type 1 error (level of significance) to be set at the family-wise level divided by the number of analyses. For example, Indicator Group 3 (Providing Equal Access to Resources for Girls) had four items and the planned Type 1 error was set accordingly at $p = .05/4 \approx .013$.

Comparative Analysis

The aim of the comparative analysis was to facilitate a critical examination of similarities and differences in student experience of gender at school across the two samples, the current research group and The Collins Report research sample, which were separated by a five year time difference. Although the current research sample was comparatively smaller than The Collins Report sample, it was considered an important step to address similarities and differences in students' response. As The Collins Report data was substantially reported using percentage responses to the highest questionnaire scale (i.e. the 'often' or the 'true' response), this was taken as the measurement for comparative analysis.

The Collins Report examined State, location and sector difference, utilising a "rule of thumb" approach (p. 22). Thus it was determined that as a general rule, State and location differences of 7% or more would be seen to be significant and sector differences of 8% or more were seen to be significant, all at the .001 level. For the purposes of the current research, the percentage response on each item of the current sample was compared with the percentage response of each of the following three groups from The Collins Report: the total 1996 national sample of Year 6 participants (N=4969), the 1996 sample of NSW participants (N=922) and the 1996 sample of participants from Catholic schools (N=1066). It was not the intent in this comparison to determine statistical significance but to examine trends. Thus comparative percentage results for each item were utilised.

Discussion of comparative results focused on a number of different considerations. First, attention was given to those items where there appeared to be no difference in response across all groups, determined by similarity in percentage response. Second, where there were noticeable differences in results between the current research group and The Collins Report total group, these were highlighted for discussion. In addition, where there were State or Catholic sector similarities or differences in results, these were highlighted for discussion in the study. Because of the limitation of research data from The Collins Report, no claims for significance were made in this comparative analysis. For the purposes of this study, the comparative analysis was utilised to add breadth to the analysis of student experience of gender at school.

Analysis of Indicator Group Items

All student questionnaire items were grouped around priorities of the *National action plan* and results were reported in these groupings, named as Indicator Groups 1-9 and 11. For the purposes of the current research, it was deemed important to examine student response to the items in each of the indicator groups. This was seen to enable critical insights into the degree to which each specific policy area had influenced students' experience of gender at school. This then facilitated comparison of student feedback with gender policy reform directions and with teacher and principal data on their experience of gender reform. These indicator groups were as follows:

- Indicator Group 1: Incidence of Sex-Based Harassment
- Indicator Group 2: Addressing Sex-Based Harassment
- Indicator Group 3: Providing Equal Access to Resources for Girls
- Indicator Group 4: Provision of a Supportive Interpersonal Environment
- Indicator Group 5: Providing for Basic Dignity in Relation to Bodily Functions
- Indicator Group 6: Personal Concerns Related to Gender Construction at School
- Indicator Group 7: Teaching about Gender and Sexuality
- Indicator Group 8: Disruptive and Dominating Behaviours
- Indicator Group 9: Gender-Aware Teaching Strategies
- Indicator Group 11: Balance of Emphasis among Non Academic Activities

Open-Ended Questions

Each student was invited to make comment via an open-ended question. This second body of data was analysed to provide context and meaning to the statistical analysis of responses to the individual questionnaire items. Utilising information from student responses to the open-ended question was seen to be important in that it added descriptive breadth and depth to the quantitative data gained from the questionnaire items.

The approach to analysis of the open-ended responses was a thematic analysis of all content utilising codification according to categories (Gay, 1996; Trochim, 2000; Van Manen, 1990). This process was simplified by the application of the ten indicator group categories which had been placed into the four major pre-established headings from the

Policy Analysis Template, School Development, School Organisation and Administration, Teaching and Learning and Pastoral Care.

This approach to the analysis of qualitative data was endorsed by Gay (1996) and Van Manen (1990) as a means to facilitate a meaningful synthesis of the data leading to the researcher developing an “overall understanding of what the data mean” (Gay, p. 227) and producing insights for discussion.

Making something of a text or of a lived experience by interpreting its meaning is more accurately a process of insightful invention, discovery or disclosure – grasping and formulating a thematic understanding is not a rule-bound process but a free act of “seeing” meaning...Theme gives control and order to our research and writing. (Van Manen, 1990, p.79)

All student comments were thus analysed and assigned categories according to the ten indicator groups which were then placed within the major headings of the Policy Analysis Template (demonstrated in Sample Student Comment Analysis, Appendix J). In most instances, the one student comment was found to encompass a number of responses which fell across different categories. Each section of the student response was placed in a table relevant to its category. A frequency count was completed on each response category in order to highlight trends in student expression of experience. The student comments were utilised as further data to add breadth and deeper understanding to the results on each questionnaire item.

RESEARCH PHASE 3: GENDER PRACTICE IN SCHOOLS

Background

In order to develop implications for leadership for gender equity in schools, the third research phase addressed two questions, ‘In participating schools what has been the experience of teachers of gender reform and to what extent has policy impacted on practice?’ (Research Phase 3a) and, ‘In participating schools what has been the experience of principals of gender reform and to what extent has policy impacted on practice?’ (Research Phase 3b).

The prime focus of this research phase was an examination of the gender equity understandings and practices of teachers and principals in the participating schools. A questionnaire tool was devised in order to provide data in an efficient time and cost effective manner. It was important that the questionnaire be designed to engage the interest of the participants as well as providing an assurance of the importance of their participation in furthering understandings about gender issues in schools. This was particularly important as participation was voluntary.

The four page questionnaire, comprising introduction page, two pages of questionnaire items and the last page of six open-ended questions, was developed so that it could be completed in 30 minutes. In utilising the teacher questionnaire and principal questionnaire, the intent was to gain insights into teacher and principal experience of the gender reform process. The analysis process also focused on the data gained from Research Phase 1 and Research Phase 2. Hence, discussion of results in Research Phase 3 drew on the earlier findings from policy analysis as well as from student questionnaire responses. In forming an overview of responses from each of the research phases, clear understandings about school responses to gender policy directions were formed and implications for school leadership for gender equity were developed.

School Response

The initial invitation to principals to participate in this research project directly related to Research Phase 2 and the completion of student questionnaires. To proceed with Research Phase 3, which was to commence some time after Phase 2, it was considered appropriate to invite principals of the 35 schools that participated in Research Phase 2 to take part in Research Phase 3. Twenty four principals responded. Each of the 24 schools was then sent one principal questionnaire.

In order to determine the number of teacher questionnaires to distribute to each school, a number of factors were taken into account. Most importantly was consideration of the focus of the teacher questionnaire which was to gain a breadth of response across participating schools in order to develop detailed understandings about teacher response to gender policy directions. There was no intent to compare teacher response across

participating schools, nor to compare the response of students and the response of teachers and principals in any individual school.

The focus of this particular study was on determining implications for leadership for gender equity in schools. The research approach set out to examine emerging themes across all three research phases, to develop understandings about gender policy directions for schools, to examine the findings about student experience of gender and teacher and principal experience of gender reform and thus to determine implications for the principal as school leader.

The participating schools differed in size (e.g. number of Year 6 students: 17-131) and therefore in the number of teachers. In addition, the final research phase took place in the final weeks of the school year and thus there was a limit to the number of volunteer teachers in any school who were able to participate. Given that the participating schools shared many similar, observable characteristics in that they were all K-6 Catholic coeducational schools belonging to one system of schools in one Catholic Diocese of NSW, it was considered that six teachers from each school could provide a representative sample for this research phase.

It was anticipated that these participants could provide appropriate coverage for the purposes of the research. It was deemed that across the participating schools, these teachers would represent the “integral characteristics” (Leedy, 1996, p. 206) of the total population of the teachers in these schools. No specific direction was given to the schools regarding which teachers should be given the questionnaires and so it could be assumed that within each school the distribution of the six teacher questionnaires was random. As the emphasis of this particular part of the research was on the totality of teacher experience across the system, it was deemed appropriate to gauge this experience with this sample. Six teacher questionnaires were thus dispatched with the principal questionnaire to 24 schools.

The total number of questionnaires returned was 21 principal questionnaires and 61 teacher questionnaires. This represented a response rate of 87% for principals and 42% for teachers. This sample was deemed to be an appropriate size from which to gain

information (Munn & Drever, 1990). The intent of Research Phase 2 was to examine the response of schools to policy implications for practice that emerged from policy analysis in Research Phase 1. The focus of the research was thus on the totality of the schools' responses rather than on the individual and unique nature of each participating school.

Development of Teacher and Principal Questionnaire

In order to develop the questionnaire tools utilised in this research phase, results from Research Phase 1, Gender Policy Analysis, were utilised. The synthesis and analysis of implications for practice contained in the 11 gender policy documents (Appendix A) via the Policy Analysis Template, described in full in Chapter 4, provided directions for this process. After extraction of 748 implications for practice from the gender policy documents, those implications for practice that went beyond the responsibility of the school ($N=87$) were removed. The remaining 661 implications for school practice were ordered and grouped, resulting in a total of 299 grouped implications for practice. When all 299 grouped implications for practice across the 11 documents were placed in the Policy Analysis Template, the spread of these was very clear as demonstrated in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Spread of Implications for Practice across Policy Documents

Number of Policy Documents	Number of Implications for Practice Appearing
1	170
2	47
3	38
4	13
5	12
6	11
7	3
8	3
9	1
10	1
11	0

Two hundred and seventeen of the implications for practice occurred only in one or two documents. In order to address the response of schools to gender policy directions over three decades, it was deemed important to focus on those policy implications for practice mentioned in at least three documents, based on the assumption that more frequent mentions in policy documents signalled a perception of their importance at the time or across different periods of time. In giving attention to those implications for school practice mentioned in three or more of the policy documents or in the policy documents written specifically for Catholic schools, the research thus addressed the response of schools to those directions for schools highlighted as important in policy documents or specifically signalled as important to Catholic schools.

A selected number of these gender policy implications for school practice was utilised to construct one or more questionnaire item. The rationale for selection was directed by the specific focus of the implication for practice and thus those selected had a clear connection to the work of teachers and/or principals and some were directly relevant to the K-6 context. In addition, specific questionnaire items were developed from the implications for practice extracted from the two Catholic gender policy documents.

Each questionnaire item was developed to relate to and to measure response to one specific gender policy implication for practice. Weber (1985) described face validity as the correspondence between the researcher's definition of a concept and her or his definition of the category that measures it, or the extent to which it appears to measure the construct it is intended to measure. For the purposes of item construction for teacher and principal questionnaire, it was determined that face validity was established by directly linking each questionnaire item to one implication for school practice from the Policy Analysis Template.

In order to test for logical validation of each questionnaire item, face testing of the draft teacher questionnaire and draft principal questionnaire was completed by a small pilot group comprising two consultants (former principals), two peer principals and teachers from two different K-6 schools via written responses and interview. Utilising this feedback, appropriate changes and additions were made and the final copy prepared.

Teacher and Principal Questionnaire Structure

The teacher questionnaire and the principal questionnaire each had four sections. These were informed by implications for school practice extracted from the gender policy analysis conducted in Research Phase 1 which resulted in the completion of the Policy Analysis Template. Reporting of the findings within each questionnaire section was thus undertaken utilising the framework of the Policy Analysis Template.

The principal questionnaire and the teacher questionnaire differed in format. The format was determined by the implications for school practice extracted from the gender policy documents. There were a number of implications that appeared to have direct relevance to teacher work in the classroom and to teacher experience of gender issues and gender reform. Other implications for school practice related to principal perceptions of gender issues and to principal experience of gender reform. The specific area of perception of priority given by the school to specified areas of gender reform was tested with both groups of participants.

For the purposes of questionnaire construction, in particular, to produce an accessible format for respondents, the questionnaire items required placement into different sections. The teacher questionnaire was structured in four sections:

Section 1: Perceptions of Gender Experiences of Girls and Boys at School

Section 2: Teacher Experience of Professional Development in Specific Gender Issues

Section 3: Priority Given by the School to Specific Areas

Section 4: Open-Ended Questions

The principal questionnaire was structured in four sections, one of which, Priority Given by the School to Specific Areas, was identical to the teacher questionnaire. To ensure that these two instruments were easily seen to be distinct, this section was placed in a different part of each questionnaire. Thus in the teacher questionnaire it was section 3 and in the principal questionnaire it was section 1.

It was deemed important to construct one identical questionnaire section to be utilised for comparative purposes. This was seen to address two issues. First, there was the

opportunity to compare and contrast teacher and principal perceptions of gender priorities at their school and to form understandings based on these responses. Second, the opportunity to compare teacher and principal responses to the same questionnaire items was seen to be a means of addressing research mentioned previously (Brannock, 1992; Kamler et al., 1994) around the gap between teacher perceptions and observed classroom practice of gender equity initiatives.

The principal questionnaire sections were as follows:

Section 1: Priority Given by the School to Specific Areas

Section 2: Staff Involvement in Evaluation of School Gender Practices

Section 3: Gender Equity Considerations in Planning/Programming/Teaching

Section 4: Open-Ended Questions

Questionnaire Items

The major part of both questionnaires contained individual questionnaire items. These were used to ensure clarity of understanding for the respondents, to enable consistency of response for data tabulation and to facilitate data interpretation.

In the questionnaire design, a four point Likert Scale was utilised. A Likert scale was selected in that it was seen to be relatively easy to construct and to provide ease of response and analysis (Anderson, 1988). The four scales were developed to measure frequency of response and level of priority.

This forced response scale of four was seen to enable the full range of responses to be made whilst providing no middle, neutral or undecided choice. Respondents thus had to make a choice towards one side of the scale or the other (Trochim, 2000). This was seen to facilitate data analysis where the focus was on identification of similarities and differences as well as on particular trends among respondents. A neutral response would not have contributed to information sought as the focus for data analysis was on degree of response in terms of frequency of occurrence or measure of priority. The advantage of utilising an even number of response items was seen to be in eliminating the tendency of respondents to move to a 'not sure' response and thus choosing an option not to make a real choice (Anderson, 1988).

Grouping of Questionnaire Items: Teacher Questionnaire

Teacher Questionnaire Section 1: Student Experiences at School

Ten items measured teacher perception of the experience of boys and girls at school. These items encompassed the academic, cultural, sporting, recreational and liturgical areas. For each item, respondents were asked to select a frequency scale (frequently, sometimes, rarely, never) that was ‘true for boys’ and ‘true for girls’.

Teacher Questionnaire Section 2: Participation in Professional Development Activities on Gender Issues

Five items measured teacher frequency of participation (frequently, sometimes, rarely, never) in professional development activities, meetings, discussions in the following areas:

- The specific educational needs of girls
- The specific educational needs of boys
- Non-sexist teaching strategies
- Examining assumptions about boys and girls
- Developing teaching styles that allow for gender difference

Teacher Questionnaire Section 3: School Gender Equity Priorities

Thirty items covered various gender equity priorities spanning the four Policy Analysis Template headings: School Development, School Organisation and Administration, Teaching and Learning, Pastoral Care. Respondents were required to indicate the priority (highest to lowest) that the school gave to each specific item.

Grouping of Questionnaire Items: Principal Questionnaire

Principal Questionnaire Section 1: School Gender Equity Priorities

This section was identical to section 3 of the teacher questionnaire. It was considered advantageous to have one section that could be utilised for purposes of comparison. This facilitated comparison between teacher and principal responses on perceptions of school gender equity priorities. It thus enabled close attention to be paid to areas of close alignment and where there was obvious difference, attention could be given to possible reasons for this.

Thirty items covered various gender equity priorities spanning the four major Policy Analysis Template headings, School Development, School Organisation and Administration, Teaching and Learning, Pastoral Care. Respondents were required to determine the priority (highest to lowest) that the school gave to each item.

Principal Questionnaire Section 2: Involvement of Staff in Gender Equity Planning and Evaluation

Thirteen items focused on the participation of staff in developing school gender equity responses and their involvement in examining and evaluating gender equity issues, needs and initiatives. Respondents were required to nominate the frequency of participation (frequently, sometimes, rarely, never) of staff for each item.

Principal Questionnaire Section 3: Gender Equity Considerations in Planning, Programming, Teaching

This section required respondents to nominate how often (frequently, sometimes, rarely, never) consideration was given to specific gender equity concerns in curriculum content and pedagogy. There were fourteen items that focused on initiatives from the Policy Analysis Template heading, Teaching and Learning.

Analysis of Questionnaire Responses for Teacher Questionnaire and Principal Questionnaire

The items for both teacher questionnaire and principal questionnaire were constructed to provide data for analysis whereby measurement of responses was expressed numerically (Gay, 1996). Data summary and analysis of each item were conducted utilising percentage counts. The focus of analysis of the distribution of responses on the four point scale for each item was one of comparison. The primary aim was to record the frequency of response of teachers and principals to each item and to draw conclusions.

Because each item was developed from a particular section of the Policy Analysis Template, individual items were then grouped under the appropriate Policy Analysis Template heading and the results were analysed for that group of items.

Teacher and Principal Questionnaire: Open-Ended Questions

The final section of both questionnaires was identical. Whereas the specific focus of the questionnaire items was a particular policy implication for practice, the focus of the open-ended questions was much broader. The questions were designed to elicit response on the actual process of gender reform in the school, from initial awareness raising through to specific practices. Gaining qualitative data was seen as critical in adding breadth and depth to the results from the previous questionnaire sections.

Each respondent was invited to complete six open-ended questions, each of which was assigned three lines for response. These questions were developed to enable respondents the opportunity to make responses to specific questions with more freedom and to enable them to explore an issue and respond in greater detail.

The review of literature drew attention to those studies that considered the experiences of teachers and the role of principals in the process of implementation of gender reform directions (Brannock, 1992; Butorac & Lymon, 1998; Clark, 1989; Cuttance, 1994; Kamler et al., 1994; Kenway & Willis, 1993; Kenway & Willis, 1997; Large, 1993; The Collins Report). The particular focuses and outcomes of these studies were utilised in determining the areas for discussion via the open-ended questions.

The specific areas of inquiry for these questions were:

- An effective gender equity strategy implemented at the school
- The most critical gender equity issue facing the school
- Means by which the school community was addressing the gender equity issue
- Major factors that had contributed to the school's level of response to gender equity issues
- Role of the principal in responding to issues of gender equity

The final open-ended question invited respondents to make further comment on the issue of gender and education

Analysis of Open-Ended Questions

Munn and Drever (1999) noted that developing a framework to codify data in order to organise responses can either be created ahead or can be derived from the data. The teacher questionnaire and principal questionnaire were both developed from the outcomes of the policy analysis process in Research Phase 1 and related directly to the framework of the Policy Analysis Template. In addition, the open-ended questions had been developed to follow specific issues raised by the review of literature.

The questions themselves as well as the structure of the template were determined to be appropriate means to utilise for codification of the open-ended responses. The coding scheme for open-ended question analysis thus utilised pre set categories. Such a codification process was seen to be an appropriate procedure in reducing a large number of responses to a form in which data could be tabulated and analysed. It “represents the superimposition of a response format onto a free and unstructured response” (Tuckman, 1988, p. 254).

Coded responses utilising the categories were then sorted using clustering that facilitated interpretations and understandings of meaning (Demonstrated in Appendix K, Sample Teacher Comment Analysis and Appendix L, Sample Principal Comment Analysis). This process was assisted by the use of frequency counts whereby each response was recorded in the appropriate major heading of the Policy Analysis Template and a frequency recorded. These demonstrated not only the breadth of perception and experience of participants but also those areas on which there was strong agreement.

Analysis of the responses to the open-ended questions was used to provide further validation of the percentage data through an expansion of the results generated from analysis of the forced response items. Van Manen (1990) described detailed reading of the text as adding to the meaning of whatever phenomenon is being described. He saw the task of the researcher as identifying the important themes that are emerging and determining their “universal or essential quality” (Van Manen, 1990, p.107).

As we thus study the lived-experience descriptions and discern the themes that begin to emerge, then we may note that certain experiential themes

recur as commonality or possible commonalities in the various descriptions we have gathered. The task is to hold on to these themes by lifting appropriate phrases or by capturing in singular statements the main thrust of the meaning of the themes. (Van Manen, 1990, p. 93)

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) also described this form of data analysis as categorising, synthesising, “searching for patterns and interpreting the data you have collected” (p. 127). They saw this as interpretative in that every time a decision is made to include or exclude a piece of information, a judgement is being made. Conclusions drawn from this data were seen as a qualitative measure, able to generate “fuzzy generalisations” (Bassey, 1999, p12) whereby what is highlighted in a small number of cases may be found in similar cases elsewhere, that is, there is “a possibility but no surety” (Bassey, 1999, p. 52).

LIMITATIONS OF THE METHODOLOGY

Three limitations of the methodology are highlighted and explained. The first consideration is that because the researcher was a secondary principal known to some of the participant principals, there existed the potential for response bias. However, this was seen to be addressed by information provided at the principal briefing that all respondents would remain anonymous, that the focus of the research was not on comparison of individual schools or of individual students, teachers or principals and that the intent was to combine all responses from all participating schools. In addition to addressing this limitation, these measures were also seen to be an appropriate means to ensure confidentiality.

The second limitation was the relatively small number of principals and teachers actually involved in Research Phase 3. As has been explained in the methodology, the focus of this phase of the research was on the totality of school experience and the number of respondents was deemed to be an appropriate representative sample in providing coverage across the breadth of participating schools.

Finally, it is acknowledged that because of the particular three phase research design, there was a methodological challenge to control the wealth and complexity of the data collected. In utilising the structure of the Policy Analysis Template for synthesis and analysis of findings across each of the research phases, control and order was established on all

information. In adhering to the thematic directions established through the major headings of the Policy Analysis Template, analysis and discussion of the findings of each research phase were able to be interlinked and utilised in developing research recommendations.

SUMMARY

In this chapter a detailed overview of the research approach adopted for the study has been provided. There has been a description of the research sample of 35 K-6 Catholic schools as well as discussion of the ethical considerations that were addressed in inviting participation by students, teachers and principals.

The methodological approach of three interlinked research phases has been explained including an overview of the three research phases and the methodology employed in each. Clarity has been established about the contribution of each research phase in addressing the research question. In addition, connections between each research phase as demonstrated in Figure 1.1 (p. 15) have been outlined. The research methodology as explained in this chapter was developed as a means to gain information and understandings about how schools have responded to gender policy directions in order to formulate implications for leadership for gender equity in schools.

The chapter concluded with a discussion of the limitations of the methodology and an overview of the means by which these were addressed.

The next chapter examines in detail the results of Research Phase 1, Gender Policy Analysis. This provides a clear picture of gender policy directions for Australian schools during the period 1975-1997.

CHAPTER 4

GENDER POLICY DIRECTIONS FOR AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS

RESEARCH PHASE 1: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a detailed overview of the policy analysis process and to examine the implications of the results of this analysis. It sets out to determine the implications for practice contained in 11 Australian gender education policy documents published since 1975. This information was utilised for three specific purposes. It enabled the development of understandings about gender policy directions for schools over three decades, specifically in terms of school leadership implications. It provided a contextual platform from which to assess and evaluate student responses in Research Phase 2, as well as teacher and principal responses in Research Phase 3. The analysis of the data using a specific framework developed for this purpose, also facilitated development of survey tools for Research Phase 3, Gender Practice in Schools.

GENDER POLICY ANALYSIS

Analysis of Australian gender policy documents discussed in Chapter 3 has provided insights into the socio, political, economic contexts of the development of these policies and has highlighted the particular gender discourses that have influenced specific reform directions. Particular themes in gender reform and specific policy understandings and directions relevant to this research were highlighted and have been drawn on throughout this and following chapters.

Specific directions for this policy analysis have been provided by Prunty (1985) who signalled the importance of identifying the values that underpin a policy and by Kenway (1990) who acknowledged the legitimacy of analysis of policy content for evaluation, as distinct from analysis for policy development, through textual analysis and ideological

critique and by Shaw (1997) whose definition of policy focusing on process has provided direction for this research phase.

The 11 gender policy documents utilised for this research span three decades, and the focus for analysis described in this chapter was on the implications for practice contained in each of the following documents, full details of which are provided in Appendix A.

1. *Girls, school and society* (1975)
2. *Towards non-sexist education: Policies and guidelines for schools* (1983)
3. *Girls and tomorrow: The challenge for schools* (1984)
4. *The national policy for the education of girls in Australian schools* (1987)
5. *Gender and equity: Some issues and perspectives for Catholic schools K-12* (1987)
6. *Girls' education strategy* (1989)
7. *National action plan for the education of girls 1993-1997* (1993)
8. *Challenges and opportunities: A discussion paper* (1994)
9. *Girls and boys at school: Gender education strategy* (1996)
10. *Gender equity: A framework for Australian schools* (1997)
11. *Towards gender equity in Catholic education* (1997)

These documents covered the three gender reform phases described in the literature review (Alloway, 1995b; Foster, 1992; Gilbert, 1996; Kenway, 1993; Yates, 1985, 1993) and thus it was anticipated that the emphases of the implications for school practice contained in these documents would vary according to the specific gender reform period in which the document was produced. This analysis of directions given to schools was seen to facilitate an overview of the developing and changing roles that the school and the school leader, the principal, have been seen to play in responding to gender equity issues since 1975. These insights have then been utilised to develop specific research tools to examine the response to gender reform directions in the participating schools.

GENDER POLICY ANALYSIS STEP 1

Extraction of Implications for Practice from Gender Policy Documents

Step 1 of the policy analysis process involved the extraction of implications for practice across the 11 documents (demonstrated in Sample Gender Policy Analysis, Appendix D).

These totalled 748. Those implications for practice that went beyond the responsibility of the school ($N=87$) were removed. The total number of implications for practice within schools across the 11 policy documents was 661. 

There was a clear need to design a template to allow for an overview of implications for practice as well as for synthesis and analysis of specific information. The process of development of the template for analysis and the testing for validity was detailed in Chapter 3. The Policy Analysis Template was developed after thorough review of all policy implications for practice and utilised the following four major headings, the development of which is explained below:

1. School Development
2. School Organisation and Administration
3. Teaching and Learning
4. Pastoral Care

These headings were perceived to be expansive enough to encompass the totality of the school experience and thus to allow for placement of every implication for practice. That these four headings enabled placement of policy implications for practice from policy documents 1975-1997, demonstrates their capacity to embrace policy directions from the three distinct gender reform phases discussed in the review of literature.

It should be noted that some documents contained implications for practice beyond school ($N=87$). However, these implications were limited and were deemed to be too few to attempt categorisation. These were listed in each gender policy document analysis as Beyond School Implications for Practice (demonstrated in Sample Gender Policy Analysis, Appendix D). Although these are important considerations for various system responses to issues of gender equity, in the final development of the Policy Analysis Template these implications were not included. As the focus for this research was on school response to gender equity initiatives, these particular implications for practice were not deemed to be essential for further consideration.

Within each of the major headings, subheadings were established to facilitate synthesis and analysis of the implications for practice. These are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Policy Analysis Template

<i>School Development</i>	<i>School Organisation and Administration</i>	<i>Teaching and Learning</i>	<i>Pastoral Care</i>
<i>School Planning and Partnership Development</i>	<i>Daily Routines and Staff Responsibilities</i>	<i>Curriculum Content and Structure</i>	<i>Student Welfare</i>
i. Community Education and Partnership	School Awards, Ceremonies	Careers, Post School Education and Advice	Harassment
ii. Leadership Responsibilities	School Leadership Structures	General Principles	Pastoral Care Program
iii. School Planning	School Organisation: Parents	Programs, Assessment, Reporting	Specific Welfare Issues
iv.	School Organisation: Students	Teaching Resources	Student Discipline
v.	Staff Responsibilities	Sex Education, Human Relationships	Student Relationships
vi.	Whole School Organisation	Sex Roles	Student Self Esteem
vii.		Subject Selection, Timetable Structure	School Environment
viii.		Unpaid Work, Family Responsibilities	Uniform
ix.		Women's Role	
<i>Staff Professional Development</i>	<i>School Plant, Facilities Resources</i>	<i>Pedagogy</i>	<i>Student Involvement</i>
i.	Allocation Policy	Specific Subject Implications	Extra/Co Curricular Involvement
ii.	Plant	The Learning Environment	Sport
iii.	Sporting/Recreational Facilities	The Teacher's Role	Student Responsibilities
iv.	Student Access to Teaching Resources		

Policy Analysis Template Headings

The four major headings of the Policy Analysis Template were seen to cover a range of policy directions for schools as seen in the following overview. The process for the development of these headings, explained in Chapter 3, entailed detailed examination of all

implications for school practice in terms of their relationship to the many facets of a school's role. Utilising a team of specialist consultants, these implications were sorted, processed and grouped until the final headings and subheadings were determined. The results of this process follow.

School Development

School Development implications focus on the role of the school in determining gender equity directions, formalising these into school policy statements and developing action plans that are systematically monitored and evaluated. The school is seen to have a responsibility to educate parents about the processes of gender construction as well as to provide ongoing professional development for teachers to support gender equity, specifically by enabling them to examine their assumptions about boys' and girls' capacities, interests and potential and the effect that these assumptions can have on teaching practice.

School Organisation and Administration

School Organisation and Administration implications focus on the requirement that the overall organisation of the school is gender inclusive, reflecting the interests and needs of girls and boys. This is reflected in the distribution of roles among male and female staff with the expectation that these would challenge gender stereotypes and provide appropriate role modelling to students. There is also the call for schools to give equal emphasis to the talents and achievements of boys and girls through ceremonies, awards, displays and public performances. There are implications that focus on the need for school facilities and resources to be equally available to girls and boys as well as a very specific direction about the need for toilets to be clean, safe and comfortable with ready access to sanitary materials.

Teaching and Learning

Teaching and Learning implications span curriculum content, structure and delivery. The role of the timetable in providing equal access for all students to all curriculum areas and avoiding discriminatory practices is seen to be critical. Schools are asked to consider ways to address gender stereotyping of subjects as well as particular approaches to maximise girls' participation in a range of studies and activities.

Curriculum content implications look particularly at the role of careers education and work experience in challenging gender stereotypes and thus broadening future options for girls and boys. There is also consideration of subjects that should be studied by all students, specifically computer technology and human relationships including sex education, and knowledge and skills that all students should develop, specifically the knowledge about women's role in historical events and their contributions to society and an understanding of issues relating to paid and unpaid work as well as skills to undertake family and parenting responsibilities. There are also a number of implications that focus on the need for schools to encourage a higher participation by girls in maths, science and technology.

The role of the teacher is seen to have particular importance in addressing gender equity issues. There is an expectation that teachers will develop the knowledge, understandings and skills to create a gender inclusive classroom and to be able to monitor their teaching in terms of gender equity criteria. There is also a call for the use of non-sexist teaching resources and the provision of appropriate curriculum support for gender equity initiatives.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care implications emphasise the importance of quality relationships and of providing students with the understandings and skills in learning how to develop these. Elimination of harassment, sexist behaviour, violence and discriminatory language is seen as critical along with the need for the development of formal anti-harassment policies. Student discipline and behaviour management policies operating within a gender equity framework assume particular importance.

There is a focus here on the importance of programs for the development of students' self esteem, and the need for schools to implement explicit action to develop the self esteem of girls. Schools are asked to give attention to organising non competitive sport programs for girls that emphasise health, fitness, skills and comfort with one's body. There is also a call for schools to provide special support and encouragement for girls who become pregnant or have children while at school.

There is also an acknowledgement of the important role that participation in sport and extra curricular activities can play in the lives of young people in terms of developing their self

esteem and in nurturing quality relationships and schools are asked to ensure that the same opportunities are available to all students.

POLICY ANALYSIS STEP 2

Use of Template to Extract Implications for Practice Occurring in Three or More Policy Documents

When all 661 Implications for School Practice were analysed, grouped and placed within the Policy Analysis Template, the total number of grouped implications was 299. Across the four major headings the spread was as follows:

School Development Implications for Practice: $N = 68$

School Organisation and Administration Implications for Practice: $N = 47$

Teaching and Learning Implications for Practice: $N = 111$

Pastoral Care Implications for Practice: $N = 73$

The Policy Analysis Template containing all implications for practice from the 11 policy documents was then utilised to isolate all implications for practice that occurred in three or more of the documents, the rationale for which was detailed in Chapter 3. The rationale for this selection highlighted the importance of focusing on those areas of reform that were seen to be important across a number of documents, often from different reform periods, written within different contexts and for different audiences. A total of 82 implications for practice occurred in three or more of the documents analysed. The spread of these across the four Policy Analysis Template Headings is shown in Table 4.2 and summarised under the four major headings as follows:

School Development: 14 Implications for Practice occurring in 3 or more documents

School Organisation and Administration: 15 Implications for Practice occurring in 3 or more documents

Teaching and Learning: 35 Implications for Practice occurring in 3 or more documents

Pastoral Care: 18 Implications for Practice occurring in 3 or more documents

Table 4.2 Implications for Practice Occurring in Three or More Documents

	Number of Documents in Which Implications for Practice Occur								Total
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
School Development	8	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	14
School Organisation and Administration	8	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	15
Teaching and Learning	12	4	7	7	1	2	1	1	35
Pastoral Care	10	4	1	2	1	0	0	0	18
Total Implications for Practice	38	13	12	11	3	3	1	1	82

For ease of reference in discussion of each of these individual implications for practice, each one has been numbered, commencing with the first in School Development numbered 1 to the last in Pastoral Care numbered 82. This reference system is utilised in the discussion to follow.

All implications for practice that were utilised in the development of teacher questionnaire and principal questionnaire ($N=48$) are signified with an *. The rationale for selection of these implications was detailed in Chapter 3. Specifically, the choice of these implications was directed by those which had a connection to the specific work of teachers and/or principals as well as being relevant to the K-6 context. Those policy implications for practice that formed the basis for the student questionnaire items from The Collins Report are labelled with an 's'.

This system of labelling indicates the breadth of policy implications for practice that were examined as an essential part of the study, either through the student questionnaire developed for The Collins Report or through the teacher questionnaire or the principal questionnaire.

School Development Policy Implications for Practice Occurring in Three or More Documents

Table 4.3 School Development Policy Implications for Practice Occurring in Three or More Documents

School Planning and Partnership Development

- i. Community Education and Partnership
 - 1. Parent information to be given re career options and changing employment patterns (83, 87b, 97)
 - 2. Provision of reading material, visiting speakers, information, meetings to promote awareness of the educational needs of girls (87, 89) of sexism (83) *
 - 3. Teachers to work with school community to develop shared high expectations of all groups of boys and girls and to raise awareness of the effects of differing expectations (87, 87b, 96)*
 - 4. Courses for parents to help them understand sex differences and socialisation, the need for greater equality between the sexes, impact of gender construction (75, 87b, 93, 97, 97b) *
 - 5. Special efforts to develop closer links between school, home, organisations about post school options (87, 93, 96)
 - 6. Schools to establish links with local communities to enhance employment understandings and opportunities for students and to address gender issues related to post school training and work (89, 93, 97)
- ii. Leadership Responsibilities
 - 7. Administrators to consider gender equity issues and possibilities for action / create a non-sexist culture (75, 84, 94)*
 - 8. School leaders to promote gender equity as central to excellence in education (84, 94, 97, 97b)*
- iii. School Planning
 - 9. Schools to develop action plans/policy statements (87, 96, 97, 97b) for girls' educational outcomes (89) *
 - 10. Schools to implement evaluation procedures to monitor the move to non-sexist education, including data collection, performance and resource allocation monitoring, development of accountability steps, regular reporting procedures (83, 89, 93, 97) *

Staff Professional Development

- 11. Schools to provide professional development to support gender equity/on issues of sexism/ on gender as an educational issue (83, 87b, 89, 94, 96, 97, 97b) *
 - 12. Courses for teachers to help them understand sex differences and socialisation/gender construction (75, 93, 97) *
 - 13. Professional development on the social, educational, emotional needs of girls (87, 89, 93) *
 - 14. Professional development to examine teachers' assumptions about boys' and girls' mental processes, subject potential, future employment, general behaviour, interests and the effect of these assumptions on teaching practice (75, 83, 84, 87, 87b, 93, 96, 97) *
-

Note: Those implications for practice utilised in teacher questionnaire and/or principal questionnaire are signified *. Documents containing each implication for practice are designated according to their year of publication.

School Development implications for practice that occurred across three or more policy documents focused on a number of considerations. The two most frequently occurring implications both concentrated on professional development of staff, specifically to support gender equity as an educational issue (11) and to enable examination of teachers' assumptions about the aspirations, interests, behaviour and potential of boys and girls and the effect that these assumptions can have on teaching practice (14). Other professional development directions addressed the need for staff to examine sex differences and gender

construction (12), to address the specific needs of girls (13) and to raise awareness of sexism (2).

Professional development opportunities for staff were seen to encompass such activities as staff meetings, visiting speakers and provision of reading material (2). The particular focus on professional development of staff was a major consideration in much of the literature (Brannock, 1992; Cuttance, 1994; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1995; Kamler et al., 1994; Large, 1993) and emerged in policy critiques and research outcomes as integral to the gender reform process. This research theme was explored and developed in each of the research phases of this study.

Important School Development policy directions focused on the role of the school leader in promoting gender equity as central to excellence in education (8). Specific attention was given to the development of policies and action plans to respond to gender equity issues (9) and to the need to implement evaluation procedures to monitor the move to non-sexist education (10). These procedures were given specific detail around data collection, allocation of performance and resource allocation, the development of steps to measure accountability and the implementation of regular reporting procedures (10). There were other implications that occurred across a number of documents which cited the importance of information to parents and the community on gender issues (3, 4) and issues specifically related to career options and employment patterns (1) and to make connections with the community to expand these options (5, 6).

There was a clear policy focus on the importance of development of school plans, programs and evaluation processes that include parents and the role of the leader in the promotion of gender equity. The research has revealed the importance of focusing on a whole school approach to gender reform (Butorac & Lymon, 1998; Clark, 1990; Cuttance, 1994; Kenway & Willis, 1997, The Collins Report). In addition, a small number of studies have signalled the importance of the role that the leader assumes in the process of initiating and supporting change (Clark, 1990; Kenway & Willis, 1993; Large, 1993). These particular themes were addressed in the current study through an examination of gender practice in schools. They were integral to developing implications for school leadership for gender equity.

School Organisation and Administration Implications for Practice Occurring in Three or More Documents

Table 4.4 School Organisation and Administration Policy Implications for Practice Occurring in Three or More Documents

Daily Routines and Staff Responsibilities

- i. School Awards, Ceremonies
 - 15. School ceremonies, displays and public performances to give equal emphasis to the talents and achievements of girls and boys (83, 87, 87b, 96, 97b) * (s)
- ii. School Leadership Structures
 - 16. School staffing policies/allocations to be based on affirmative action/equity principles (84, 87, 97)*
 - 17. Women to be represented in school leadership and encouraged to apply for promotion/to participate equally in decision making (84, 93, 94)
 - 18. All staff to be given leadership experience, equal status to be given to male and female leadership roles. schools to examine these roles (84, 87b, 97b) *
- iv. School Organisation: Students
 - 19. Mixed groupings of students for assemblies, lines, seating (75, 83, 87b)
- v. Staff Responsibilities
 - 20. All staff duties to be distributed among females and males, and to challenge gender stereotypes (83, 84, 87b, 93, 96, 97b) *
 - 21. Female and male staff to be allocated to classes and subjects across all grades and abilities/schools to examine male/female roles (75, 84, 87b)
- vi. Whole School Organisation
 - 22. Schools to consider single sex classes as a strategy to provide direct support for girls in non traditional subjects (87b, 89, 93)
 - 23. Overall school organisation to be gender inclusive, to reflect the needs of girls and boys (83, 87, 89, 97)

School Plant, Facilities, Resources

- i. Allocation Policy
 - 24. School resources allocation policies and practices to be consistent with equity principles (87, 89, 93, 96, 97b) (s)
 - 25. All facilities to be shared equally by girls and boys (87, 93, 97) (s)
 - ii. Plant
 - 26. Provision of toilets that are clean, private, comfortable and safe (87, 87b, 89, 93, 96, 97) (s)
 - iii. Sporting/Recreational Facilities
 - 27. All sections of the school playground and recreational facilities to be available to boys and girls (83, 87b, 89, 96, 97) * (s)
 - 28. Schools to monitor girls' uninhibited access to playground space and to physical resources (87, 87b, 93) * (s)
 - vii. Student Access to Teaching Resources
 - 29. All resources and equipment to be shared equally by both sexes (83, 87b, 97) * (s)
-

Note: Those implications for practice utilised in teacher questionnaire and/or principal questionnaire are signified *. Those implications for practice utilised in the student questionnaire are signified (s). Documents containing each implication for practice are designated according to their year of publication.

School Organisation and Administration implications for practice that occurred across a number of policy documents specifically addressed the need for staffing structures and roles to reflect gender equity principles (16, 20). These structures addressed the need for all staff, men and women, to assume equal duties, in particular those that challenge gender stereotypes (20), to have varied leadership experiences, to participate in decision making and to be encouraged to apply for promotion positions (17, 18). This direction addressing equitable staff roles was also extended to the classroom whereby there was seen to be a need for women and men to teach across grades and subjects (21).

Schools were also asked to consider overall organisational structures that promote gender equity (23). These included equitable allocation of resources and equipment (24, 25, 29) and provision of appropriate facilities (26, 27, 28).

Specific student organisational structures and processes that reflect and promote gender equity were suggested for schools in three specific areas: mixed groupings of students (19), opportunities for encouragement and affirmation for girls and boys across a range of arenas (15) and the possibility of single sex classes as a means to support girls in non traditional subjects (22).

These particular policy implications for practice impact directly and indirectly on student experience of gender at school. Two research studies highlighted varying degrees of progress in this area (Butorac & Lymon, 1998; The Collins Report). Of interest to the current study was the examination of the responses of teachers and principals to reform directions in school administration and organisation and the perceptions of students in this area. Particular attention was given to responses by participants to issues of equitable resources, equipment and facilities provision and to student experience of encouragement and affirmation in areas of public performance and displays.

Teaching and Learning Policy Implications for Practice Occurring in Three or More Documents

Table 4.5 Teaching and Learning Policy Implications for Practice Occurring in Three or More Documents

Curriculum Content and Structure

- i. Careers, Post School Education and Advice
 - 30. Students to be informed about the relevance of subjects and levels of study for future career and study options (75, 83, 84, 87, 87b, 93, 97) specifically girls (89)
 - 31. Girls to be taught skills and understanding of their abilities/interests to make appropriate career/curriculum choices (89, 93, 97b) all students (83)
 - 32. Careers education to challenge stereotyped views of appropriate career choice, to explore a full range of post school options, to increase and develop students' knowledge of work (75, 83, 89, 96, 97) specifically girls who benefit least from schooling (93)
 - 33. Work experience to give opportunities in non traditional roles, to be relevant and challenging, to be across paid and unpaid work, to provide a range of experiences (75, 87, 87b, 93, 97)
 - 34. Curriculum to incorporate consideration of the range of jobs related to each field of study, to increase knowledge of work, to increase general and vocational pathways (84, 93, 97)
 - 35. Careers education program to be developed at all levels of schooling within the context of the school's curriculum framework (75, 87) based on gender equity principles (97) *
 - 36. Careers education program to link with TAFE and to encourage students to enter a wide range of courses (83, 87, 87b)
- ii. General Principles
 - 37. Curriculum to pay substantial attention to the assessment of major social trends and cultural influences (87, 87b, 93)
 - 38. Curriculum to provide a gender inclusive vision of human endeavours, to reflect interests and needs of boys and girls, to address gender as an educational issue (75, 83, 84, 87, 89, 94, 96, 97, 97b) * (s)
 - 39. Curriculum to reflect awareness of the important role that language plays in gender construction (93, 97, 97b)
- iii. Programs, Assessment and Reporting
 - 40. Assessment and reporting methods not to discriminate against girls, to enhance girls' participation and achievement, to improve girls' self-esteem (87, 93) students' self esteem (87b)
 - 41. Assessment methods to use the experiences of girls and boys, to incorporate a range of methods (93, 96, 97) * (s)
- iv. Teaching Resources
 - 42. Teachers to use non-sexist teaching materials and texts, appropriate curriculum materials to be available to support teachers (75, 83, 84, 87b, 96) *
 - 43. Educational resources and visual material to be displayed to depict women and men in realistic, non-sexist, non traditional roles (75, 83, 87b) *
- v. Sex Education/Human Relationships
 - 44. Human relationships course (including communication skills/sex education) to be available to all students (75, 83, 84, 93, 96, 97) (s)
 - 45. Students to be taught effective communication and conflict management skills (94, 97, 97b) * (s)
- vi. Sex Roles/ Distinctions
 - 46. Girls and boys to be presented in interesting and exciting roles and activities in a range of occupations and situations, to reflect their diverse interests, experiences, aptitudes (83, 87b, 93, 96, 97) *
 - 47. Balanced reference to girls and boys, men and women to reflect their life experiences in exercises, examples, assignments, tests, content, careers references (83, 87b, 89, 93, 94, 96) *
 - 48. Assignments and content to raise questions about sex roles, sex stereotyped situations, social structures and practices (75, 83, 84, 87, 93, 94) * (s)
 - 49. Curriculum to teach understandings about being female and male, the construction of gender, to engage in critical exploration of gender issues (87, 93, 94, 97, 97b) * (s)

Table 4.5 (continued) Teaching and Learning Policy Implications for Practice Occurring in Three or More Documents

vii.	Subject Selection/Timetable Structure
50.	Curriculum offerings and timetable to be organised to give all students as wide choice as possible, to give all students equal access to all curriculum areas, to avoid assumptions and practices that discriminate, to increase participation (75, 83, 84, 87, 87b, 89, 93, 96, 97, 97b) *
51.	Timetable to be organised to maximise girls' participation in a full range of studies, activities, to avoid stereotyped assumptions about girls, to improve the quality of girls' education (84, 87, 89, 93)
52.	Schools to consider ways that gender stereotyping of subjects can be reduced (75, 83, 87, 87b, 93, 96, 97)*
viii.	Unpaid Work/Family Responsibilities
53.	Curriculum to address issues of paid and unpaid work and interaction with family responsibilities (84, 87, 93, 97) *
54.	Students to be taught skills to undertake family and household management (84, 93, 96, 97, 97b) specifically boys (87)
ix.	Women's Role
55.	Women's role in historical events and contributions to society to be included in programs and support material (75, 83, 84, 87, 87b, 89, 93, 97) *
Pedagogy	
i.	Specific Subject Implications
56.	Encouragement of girls to participate in maths, science, technology; schools to examine the way that maths is taught (75, 83, 84, 87, 87b) *
57.	Girls to be encouraged to continue with higher levels of maths, science (75, 83, 87b)
58.	Schools to place higher value on participation in specific subjects by boys and girls, specifically arts, humanities (87, 94, 97) * (s)
59.	All students to be educated in computer technology, computer education across all curriculum areas (84, 96, 97), specifically girls (87, 87b) (s)
60.	Development of non competitive PE programs for girls that emphasise health, fitness, skills, comfort with one's body and to enable full participation in sport (84, 87, 89, 93) * (s)
ii.	The Learning Environment
61.	The learning environment to be based on gender equity principles, to be challenging, supportive, co-operative, valuing and caring equally of boys and girls (87, 87b, 89, 94, 97b) * (s)
iii.	The Teacher's Role
62.	Teachers to be aware of the impact of language, voice tone, praise, criticism, responses, questions, range of tasks (83, 87, 87b) * (s)
63.	Teachers to be aware of learning preferences of boys and girls, teaching styles that allow for gender difference (84, 87b, 93, 96, 97, 97b) * (s)
64.	Teachers to be brought to an awareness of how to create a gender inclusive classroom and of practices that contribute to sex stereotyping (75, 84, 87b, 89, 93, 97) * (s)

Note: Those implications for practice utilised in teacher questionnaire and/or principal questionnaire are signified *. Those implications for practice utilised in the student questionnaire are signified (s). Documents containing each implication for practice are designated according to their year of publication.

The 35 Teaching and Learning implications for practice that occurred across three or more policy documents covered a breadth of considerations. The importance of the role of curriculum in promoting gender equity was reflected in the fact that in nine policy documents there was a call for the curriculum to provide a gender inclusive view of human

endeavours, to address gender as an educational issue and to reflect the interests and needs of boys and girls (38). There was also a perceived need to specifically teach understandings about being male and female and to engage in a critical exploration of gender issues (49) and major social trends (37). A number of implications concentrated on the importance of appropriate career advice including the importance of subject choice (30, 31), work experience (33) and knowledge of work and career options (32, 34, 35, 36).

The role of the teacher was highlighted as one of creating a challenging, supportive, valuing and caring learning environment (61) and of understanding and utilising specific practices that promote gender equity (62, 63, 64). There were a number of implications that focused on the importance of appropriate teaching and assessment materials and approaches (40, 41, 42, 43, 46, 47, 48, 55). These understandings about the teacher's role related directly to implications for practice regarding teacher professional development highlighted in the School Development domain.

Specific timetabling and subject implications addressed the need for girls and boys to be provided with appropriate support, opportunity and encouragement to participate and experience achievement in the broadest curriculum range (50, 51, 52, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60). Finally in this section, specific attention was given to the development and teaching of human relationships courses that embrace relationship understandings, conflict resolution and communication skill development and preparation for unpaid work and family responsibilities. (44, 45, 53, 54).

The teaching and learning domain appears to have received the most attention in the policy documents. Chapter 2 highlighted the fact that whilst much research, both qualitative and quantitative, addressed the outcomes of gender reform efforts, a smaller number of studies have been undertaken to examine what actually happens in the classrooms of teachers committed to practice informed by gender equity principles (Butorac & Lymon, 1998; Clark, 1990; Kamler et al., 1994; Kenway & Willis, 1997). As the review of gender policy development and critique in Chapter 2 demonstrated, there were different policy emphases over different time periods and these impacted on the approach to gender reform asked of teachers. An important theme that emerged in this study was that of the role of the teacher

in the gender reform process; the findings in this area have a direct bearing on those implications developed for school leadership for gender equity.

Pastoral Care Implications for Practice Occurring in Three or More Documents

Table 4.6 Pastoral Care Policy Implications for Practice Occurring in Three or More Documents

Student Welfare

- i. Harassment
 - 65. Schools to develop policy for grievance procedures for sex based harassment including by/to a staff member and for regular monitoring of these (87, 93, 94, 96, 97, 97b) * (s)
 - 66. Sexual harassment, sexist remarks, discriminatory language and sexist behaviour to be challenged and rejected (83, 87, 87b, 93, 94, 96, 97) * (s)
 - 67. Homophobia, violence, bullying to be challenged and rejected (94, 96, 97) * (s)
- ii. Pastoral Care Program
 - 68. Pastoral care, welfare programs to address common needs of all students, the different needs of girls and boys and promote gender equity (89, 93, 97b)
- iii. Specific Welfare Issues
 - 69. Support and encouragement for girls who become pregnant/ have children while at school (75, 87, 93) / who experience gender specific circumstances (97)
 - 70. Schools to monitor and provide support for girls (75, 93)/ boys (96) who leave school early, truant or are suspended or who have specific social needs
- iv. Student Discipline
 - 71. Schools to develop similar fair disciplinary practices and behaviour management policies for boys and girls that take place within a gender equity framework (75, 83, 87b, 89, 94) * (s)
- v. Student Relationships
 - 72. Teaching/learning strategies and resources to be developed to resolve conflict arising from gender differences and to teach the unacceptability of violence and aggression, to teach development of equal and respectful relationships (87, 93, 96, 97) * (s)
- vi. Student Self Esteem
 - 73. Schools to be aware of the self esteem needs of girls and boys and develop programs for its development and promotion and to avoid/ reduce its loss (83, 87, 89) * (s)
 - 74. Schools to implement explicit action to develop girls' self esteem, to assist them to have a changed view of their reality (75, 84, 87, 87b, 89) *
- vii. The School Environment
 - 75. Provision of a supportive, culturally aware, safe environment where boys and girls are equally valued and where their needs are addressed (87, 94, 97) specifically girls (89) * (s)
- viii. Uniform
 - 76. Dress code to allow for girls' active participation in sport, PE, variety of activities, all areas of the curriculum (83, 87b, 93) (s)
 - 77. Girls' uniform to comfortable, practical (75, 87, 87b) (s)

Table 4.6 (Continued) Pastoral Care Policy Implications for Practice Occurring in Three or More Documents

Student Involvement

- i. Extra/Co Curricular Involvement
 - 78. Activities not to be classed as male/female and to respond equally to the interests of boys and girls (84, 93, 96, 97b) * (s)
 - ii. Sport
 - 79. Particular encouragement to be given to reluctant participants in physical activities and sport (83, 87) specifically girls (89) (s)
 - 80. Provision of staffing and equipment for non-sexist sport, to examine the practice of separating girls and boys at sport (75, 87, 87b)
 - iii. Student Responsibilities
 - 81. Boys and girls to be represented in school- based decision making processes (87b, 94, 96)
 - 82. Girls and boys to carry out similar tasks in the school (75, 83, 96)
-

Note: Those implications for practice utilised in teacher questionnaire and/or principal questionnaire are signified *. Those implications for practice utilised in the student questionnaire are signified (s). Documents containing each implication for practice are designated according to their year of publication.

Pastoral Care implications for practice that occurred over a number of policy documents focused on a small number of specific areas. One important area was that of harassment and the need for schools to address issues of harassment through education of students, through development of policy and by development of appropriate reporting and grievance procedures (65, 66, 67). Understanding gender differences and resolving conflict arising from gender differences were addressed in a number of different implications for practice (68, 72) as well as the need for schools to ensure fair disciplinary processes (71).

A number of implications for practice arose from consideration of specific welfare issues (69, 70) as well as from an acknowledgement of the importance of promotion of students' self esteem (73, 74). There were a number of implications for practice in this section that signalled the importance of appropriate provision and support of sport and physical fitness opportunities and a breadth of school participation in responding to some of the pastoral care needs of students and to promote student well being (76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82).

The particular issue of harassment has been an important focus in the research literature (Butorac & Lymon, 1998; Cuttance, 1995; The Collins Report). In terms of policy directions, it was certainly a more recent consideration and was clearly aligned with the overall policy focus of the 1990s on gender construction and gender relations. This was an

important theme tracked in this study through student, teacher and staff responses. The learnings from this in terms of school response to an issue of gender equity and the role taken by the principal in this process as well as consideration of its impact on student experience of gender at school allowed for the development of understandings of the gender reform process and the specific role of the leader in leading the school community in response to a specific policy direction.

POLICY ANALYSIS STEP 3

Extraction of Implications for Practice Occurring in One or Both Policy Documents

Written for Catholic Schools

Also isolated were those implications for practice that occurred only in the documents written for Catholic schools (*Gender and equity*, 1987 and *Towards gender equity in Catholic education*, 1997). Of these, there were a number of implications for practice that could well have been developed through a particular consideration of the Catholic ethos or because of specific considerations for a Catholic school. Whilst the number of these was quite small, they spanned the four major headings and were extracted for further consideration.

Central to consideration of these implications for practice was the understanding of the role of the Catholic school outlined in Chapter 1 (Dorr, 1991; Duncan, 1998; Flynn, 1993; Paul, 1999; Treston, 1997). There is a particular values base on which Catholic schools are founded and which thus provides a particular viewpoint on issues of gender equity which is based solidly on a belief in the uniqueness of each student and on a commitment to action framed within a social justice perspective.

For ease of reference, those implications for practice that occurred only in one or both of the two documents written for Catholic schools were labelled with a 'c' (indicating Catholic) prefix ($N = 49$). As for previous tables, those implications for practice that were utilised in the teacher and/or principal questionnaires are signified with an * ($N = 11$). The basis for selection of particular implications was outlined in Chapter 3 and was primarily based on those that were deemed to have a particular relationship with the culture of the Catholic school.

School Development Implications for Practice Occurring Only in One or Both Documents Written for Catholic Schools

Table 4.7 School Development Implications for Practice Occurring Only in One or Both Documents Written for Catholic Schools

School Planning and Partnership Development

i. Community Education and Partnership

- c1. Schools to involve whole community in awareness raising about gender equity issues*
- c2. Pastors to play a role in promoting gender equity
- c3. All members of the school community to be committed to a culture of respect, mutuality and co-operation *

ii. Leadership Responsibilities

- c4. School leaders to publicly affirm gender equity principles
- c5. Schools to appoint a staff member with specific responsibility for development of non-sexist education policies and practices

iii. School Planning

- c6. Schools to examine the social, emotional and physical needs of all students

Staff Professional Development

- c7. Staff to collaboratively examine those Gospel values that have meaning for them in their professional and personal lives *
 - c8. Staff to regularly examine the ways in which these Gospel values are reflected in the school's curriculum, policies, procedures, organisation and interpersonal relationships *
 - c9. Professional development on the link between girls' subject choices and career options
-

Note: Those implications for practice utilised in teacher questionnaire and/or principal questionnaire are signified *.

In School Development, the implications for practice focused on specific values that underpin the lived school culture. There was an expressed need to involve the whole school community in awareness raising about gender equity issues (c1) as well as a call for all members of the school community to be committed to a culture of respect, mutuality and co-operation (c3) and to base their responses to equity on a need to examine and respond to the needs of all students (c.6). Pastors were named as having a specific role to play in promoting gender equity (c2).

Specific professional development implications focused on the values that underpin gender policy and practice in schools. It was suggested that staff work in collaboration to identify those Gospel values that have meaning for them in their professional and personal lives (c7) and to regularly examine the ways in which those Gospel values are reflected in the school's curriculum, policies, procedures, organisation and interpersonal relationships (c8).

School Organisation and Administration Implications for Practice Occurring Only in One or Both Documents Written for Catholic Schools

Table 4.8 School Organisation and Administration Implications for Practice Occurring Only in One or Both Documents Written for Catholic Schools

Daily Routines and Staff Responsibilities

- i. School Awards, Ceremonies
- c10. Excellence in sport to be rewarded equally for girls and boys*
- v. Staff Responsibilities
- c11. Women to take an active role in the liturgical life of the school*

School Plant, Facilities, Resources

- ii. Plant
 - c12. Physical environment to be aesthetically pleasing and students to contribute to its improvement
 - iii. Teaching Resources
 - c13. Selection and display of library resources to reflect the broad interests of all students and to use non-sexist criteria
-

Note: Those implications for practice utilised in teacher questionnaire and/or principal questionnaire are signified *.

There were only four School Organisation and Administration implications for practice that occurred in the Catholic school documents. Of these, three mirrored directions signalled in other policy documents. These focused on the need for excellence in sport to be equally recognised for girls and boys (c10), the physical environment of the school to be aesthetically pleasing and for boys and girls to be encouraged to contribute to its improvement (c12) and for library book selection criteria to be non-sexist and reflective of the interests of all students (c13).

There was one implication for practice that highlighted the particular culture of the Catholic school in calling for staff to examine the role that women play in the liturgical life of the school (c11). This could well be seen not only as important to women but also to the other members of the school community as a message about roles that are valued in the school. This item was adapted for the teacher questionnaire and the principal questionnaire by focusing on equitable student participation in liturgies.

Teaching and Learning Implications for Practice Occurring Only in One or Both Documents Written for Catholic Schools

Table 4.9 Teaching and Learning Implications for Practice Occurring Only in One or Both Documents Written for Catholic Schools

Curriculum Content and Structure

i. Careers, Post School Education and Advice

- c14. Vocational education to address issues of gender related differences in career aspiration, education and employment
- c15. Career counselling, especially for girls, to be given support by the school
- c16. Schools to examine the ways curriculum can limit or broaden girls' and boys' career aspirations

ii. General Principles

- c17. Curriculum to provide opportunities to study church teachings on equality of men and women *
- c18. Curriculum to address factors in student learning in the light of Gospel teachings and Catholic traditions
- c19. Schools to examine what knowledge is valued and how it is taught

iii. Programs, Assessment and Reporting

- c20. Emphasis in assessment to be on co-operation and self development, not competition *

v. Staff Responsibilities

- c21. Social education/living skills program to assist students in developing their own future and promoting gender equity
- c22. Living skills program to teach students independence, assertiveness, goal setting
- c23. Living skills program to draw on skills from a variety of subject areas

vi. Sex Roles/ Distinctions

- c24. Curriculum content to provide opportunities to students to learn about the lives of biblical men and women

viii. Subject Selection/Timetable Structure

- c25. K-6 schools to consider the weighting given to the teaching of specific subjects (maths, science, language, arts)
- c26. Industrial arts courses to be available to girls who should be actively encouraged to select them

ix. Women's Role

- c27. Religious Education programs to give students the opportunity to learn about women in the church, in particular in Australia *
- c28. Curriculum to include the significance of Mary

Pedagogy

i. Specific Subject Implications

- c29. Maths and Science to be shown to have importance for careers in Years 4-6
- c30. Counselling for boys and girls when they wish to drop maths or science, or choose a level of study below their ability
- c31. Schools to use student and parent feedback to assist teachers in the development and modification of courses in maths and science
- c32. Dance education for boys to be included in the Physical Education program

ii. The Learning Environment

- c33. Boys and girls to have equal hands on experience in practical subjects

iii. The Teacher's Role

- c34. Teachers to examine ways learning can be more co-operative, less competitive *
- c35. Teachers to be aware of teaching practices that increase girls' self esteem
- c36. Teachers to relate in respectful, positive ways to girls and boys

Note: Those implications for practice utilised in teacher questionnaire and/or principal questionnaire are signified *.

In Teaching and Learning, some general principles were established. These specified that the curriculum should provide opportunities to study Church teachings on equality of men and women (c17), that the curriculum should address factors in student learning in the light of Gospel teachings and Catholic traditions (c18) and that schools should examine what knowledge is valued and how it is taught (c19).

Particular directions for values to underpin practice were reflected in the call for the emphasis in assessment (c20) and teaching and learning (c34) to be on co-operation and self development rather than on competition. Directions were also given regarding the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that teaching practices enhanced the self esteem of girls (c35) and to relate in respectful, positive ways to boys and girls (c36). This particular approach to pedagogical practice highlights the intent of these documents to inform gender equity directions in schools through attention to the philosophical understandings on which Catholic schools are based. This directly relates to documents on Catholic schools referred to in Chapter 1 which highlight the core value of promotion of human dignity on which Catholic schools are founded.

There was a particular emphasis in curriculum content on opportunities for students to learn about the lives of biblical men and women (c24) about women in the Church, especially in Australia (c27) and about the significance of Mary (c28). These content directions indicate the importance of specific Catholic Church role models being utilised in teaching gender understandings.

Further curriculum implications for practice highlighted the importance of ensuring that equal opportunities for girls and boys are created to participate, to develop self-awareness and to do well in a broad range of subjects including vocational education (c14), career counselling (c15), social education and living skills (c21, c22, c23), industrial arts and practical subjects (c26, c33), maths and science (c29, c30, c31) and dance (c32).

Pastoral Care Implications for Practice Occurring Only in One or Both Documents Specifically Written for Catholic Schools

Table 4.10 Pastoral Care Implications for Practice Occurring Only in One or Both Documents Written for Catholic Schools

Student Welfare

i. Harassment

c37. Issues of harassment to be seen as an educational issue rather than just a behavioural one

iv. Student Discipline

c38. Discipline procedures/rules to improve the quality of girls' education

vi. Student Self Esteem

c39. Primary and secondary schools to examine ways to assist girls to avoid/reduce loss of self esteem including counselling and specific programs

Student Involvement

i. Extra/Co Curricular Involvement

c40. Schools to examine the extent of involvement of all students in physical activity after school and on weekends and to use this information to evaluate Physical Education programs

ii. Sport

c41. Equal resources to be allocated to teaching girls sport and physical fitness and equal expectations of achievement of both girls and boys

c42. Opportunities for inter school sports participation to be available equally to boys and girls

c43. Girls to be expected to participate in the sports program when menstruating

c44. Full range of girls' interests to be considered in developing sport programs and parent/student feedback to be used in evaluation

c45. Schools to address girls' unavailability for sport out of school hours due to family responsibilities

c46. All sports to be valued and given the same status

c47. Schools to address how sport can enable greater mutuality and understanding between the sexes

iii. Student Responsibilities

c48. Leadership experience to be offered to boys and girls of all abilities and leadership roles to have the same status

c49. Students to undertake similar roles in community service programs/other initiatives*

Note: Those implications for practice utilised in teacher questionnaire and/or principal questionnaire are signified *.

Pastoral Care implications for practice for Catholic schools focused on the importance of participation in the full life of the school, especially for girls, in order to develop their self esteem and physical and emotional well being. There was a call to provide girls with appropriate opportunities, expectations and skills to participate in community service and other initiatives (c49), leadership (c48) and the sporting life of the school (c41, c42, c43, c44, c45).

Another consideration addressed the role that sport could play in promoting understanding between the sexes (c47) as well as the need for all sports to be valued and given the same status (c46) and the need for schools to examine the extent of student involvement in out of school physical activity and to use this feedback in evaluation of Physical Education Programs (c40). Attention was given to the issue of harassment with a specific direction for this to be seen as an educational issue rather than just a behavioural one (c37). Schools were asked to examine ways to address the self esteem of girls (c39) and to ensure that disciplinary procedures were seen to improve the quality of girls' education. (c38).

POLICY ANALYSIS FINDINGS: DISCUSSION

The importance of policy analysis can be seen in the synthesis and analysis of implications for practice. These important themes are highlighted for discussion in terms of their relevance to the study.

Focus of Gender Policy Implications for Practice

It is of considerable interest to take an overview of the policy implications for practice in terms of their relevance to girls and boys. The review of literature in Chapter 2 provided a contextual backdrop to the focus of gender policy documents since 1975. It was clear from this review that during the 1970s, gender reform for Australian schools was firmly based on the need to redress the perceived disadvantage being experienced by girls (Gilbert, 1996; Hayes, 1996; Henry & Taylor, 1993; Yates, 1990) The major policy document published in 1975, *Girls, school and society* (1975), made the link between the disadvantage of women in society and the workforce and girls' experience of education and hence the focus of reform directions specified in this document was on girls' education through equal opportunity.

This emphasis was widened in the 1980s during which time there developed a focus on gender inclusive education (Gilbert, 1996; Kenway, 1990; Suggett, 1987b; Yates, 1992), highlighted in the reform directions of *The National policy for the education of girls in Australian schools* (1987). In the 1990s, gender policy focus emphasised the importance of addressing the construction of gender (Alloway, 1996; Gilbert, 1996; Hayes, 1996; Lemaire, 1994) and this was reflected in the policy document, *Gender equity: A framework for Australian schools* (1997). This was against a backdrop of increasing attention given to

the perceived disadvantage of boys, in particular in terms of differing understandings regarding gender policy emphases (Connell, 1994; Kenway, 1994; Walpole, 1995).

When all implications for practice from the 11 gender policy documents were synthesised, grouped and organised into the Policy Analysis Template, the final number totalled 299. Of these 299 implications, 56 (18.7%) signalled specific action for girls, 8 (2.7%) signalled specific action for or about women, 7 (2.3%) signalled specific action for boys. The majority of implications for practice across these 11 documents, 228, (76.3%) focused on action relevant to all students, girls and boys.

Thus despite the titles of five of these 11 documents indicating a particular concern for girls, the total number of implications for practice that embraced all students made it clear that the majority of gender equity directions in 11 gender policy documents published since 1975 have not focused exclusively on girls. Rather, gender policy directions outlined for schools provided a very clear basis for gender equity; one founded on an inclusive approach to issues of gender that would benefit all students, boys and girls.

Analysis of policy implications for practice that occurred in three or more policy documents demonstrated similar findings. A total of 82 implications for practice occurred in three or more policy documents. Of these 82 implications, 14 (17.1%) specifically were directed at action for girls, 2 (2.4%) addressed issues of women and 1 (1.2%) specifically directed action for boys. The majority of all implications for practice that occurred over three or more policy documents, 65 (79.3%) focused on the needs of boys and girls.

This particular finding is worthy of note and further exploration. It highlights the intent of policy documents for schools to address the specific needs of girls and of boys within a framework of gender equity that concentrates on inclusion. This finding was explored in Research Phase 2 when students were invited to reflect on their experience of gender at school and in Research Phase 3 where teachers and principals reflected on their understanding and experience of gender reform in school.

Breadth of Gender Policy Implications for Practice

It is also important to note the breadth of response that schools have been called upon to consider across three decades of gender reform. The Policy Analysis Template facilitated synthesis and analysis in order that a framework of understanding could be developed. This resulted in an ordering of the implications for practice, not only in terms of specific areas of school practice, but also in terms of frequency of occurrence across policy documents.

The overall number of grouped implications for practice, 299, indicates the complexities and the detail that were embodied in the policy documents. Critical directions for schools, given within the four main Policy Analysis Template headings, testified to the multiplicity of understandings on the gender issues that informed policy development. The number of implications for practice occurring in three or more policy documents, 82, signalled the consistency of understanding around specific areas of reform that were seen to be important across a number of documents, often from different times and written within different contexts and for different audiences.

It was timely therefore, that this study attempted to explore the relationship between gender policy and student experience of gender at school and teacher and principal experience of gender reform at school in order to develop understandings about leadership for gender equity.

The Role of the School Leader in Gender Policy Implications for Practice

There was one specific area of gender policy reform for schools that was critical for consideration in the context of this study – the role of the school leader in gender reform. Within the Policy Analysis Template, there were listed three specific implications for practice that focused on responsibilities of the school leader. The role of the principal in assuming responsibility for the development of a gender equity action plan and reporting processes and for non discriminatory practices was mentioned in one policy document. In three documents, the role of the principal was seen to be that of considering gender equity issues and possibilities for action in creating a non-sexist school culture and in four documents the role of the principal was seen to be critical in promoting gender equity as central to excellence in education.

That very little attention has been specifically paid to the role of the principal across the 11 gender policy documents echoes the scant attention given to leadership responsibilities in the literature on gender reform that was reviewed in Chapter 2. This particular issue was explored in this study and had a direct bearing on the formulation of implications for leadership for gender equity which was the intended outcome of this research.

DEVELOPMENT OF SURVEY TOOLS FOR RESEARCH PHASE 3

Background

The aim of Research Phase 3, Gender Practice in Schools, was to determine teacher and principal response to critical gender policy directions in order to gain insights about experiences of gender reform efforts. The research study aimed to link this reflection on teacher and principal experience with the findings about gender policy directions highlighted in Research Phase 1 and with the data on student experience of gender at school gathered in Research Phase 2. It was seen that in combining the dual focuses of gender policy and gender reform practice, learnings for school leadership for gender equity could be established.

Development and Utilisation of Policy Analysis Template

In this study, the theoretical basis for examination of gender practice in schools was that of policy. The review of policy literature in Chapter 2 highlighted the prolific and extensive development of gender policy documents for Australian schools since 1975. Critical to the research aim, to develop learnings for leadership for gender equity in schools, was the need to develop a conceptual framework with which to assist analysis and synthesis of the content of the policy documents.

The Policy Analysis Template was developed as a framework to order in a meaningful way the implications for practice contained in policy documents. There were three specific challenges in this developmental process: for every implication for practice there needed to be a heading under which logically it could be placed; there needed to be established a clear relationship between the major headings and subheadings, and finally, the framework needed to accurately reflect the context of a school such that all aspects of the total life of a school could be easily represented and captured within the overall framework.

The policy analysis process demonstrated that the Policy Analysis Template was a valuable framework to synthesise and analyse the 661 implications for school practice initially extracted from the 11 policy documents. The framework of the template provided the means whereby policy implications for practice could be grouped for examination and for further comparative purposes. Its use resulted in the presentation of a clear and detailed overview of gender policy directions for Australian schools across three decades.

An additional important outcome of the process of development of the Policy Analysis Template was its use in the following two phases of the study. It was utilised extensively in the development of further research tools as outlined in the following section. In addition, analysis of results in the next three chapters demonstrates how the four major headings from the Policy Analysis Template were utilised to order results from all three questionnaires used in the research. This framework was a valuable means to order results from forced response items and open-ended questions. Because results from all three research phases were reported utilising the main headings of the Policy Analysis Template, comparison of findings and discussion of themes emerging from these was facilitated. Discussion of research outcomes and recommendations for leadership for gender equity in schools also followed this framework.

This particular Policy Analysis Template was developed specifically as a tool to facilitate the process of gender policy analysis in Research Phase 1. Its usefulness in this process has been established, as has its use as a means to analyse and synthesise research findings in other phases of the study.

That the Policy Analysis Template has served this purpose well indicates its potential use as a tool for policy research and evaluation in schools. The extensive developmental process ensured that the overall framework of the template utilising the four major headings, as well as a series of subheadings, encompassed the totality of the school experience. Hence, it would serve well in instances where there was a need for evaluation of the reception of policy directions or indeed, to evaluate the potential efficacy of a new policy in reaching across the broad span of school life. It also has potential to facilitate examination of existing policy documents in order to assess the specific areas of school life

on which they may well impact as well as those areas of school life on which they will have no effect at all.

The Policy Analysis Template is a useful tool for school principals to utilise in leading the school community in the process of setting and evaluating gender reform directions. It would enable examination of current gender policy documents in order to determine priorities for action across different areas of school responsibility. It provides a framework for development of school action plans to respond to gender policy implications for school practice and it provides the means to develop a framework to evaluate school action and to determine future priorities.

Development of Survey Tools

The basis for inquiry in Research Phase 3, *Gender Practice in Schools*, was that of survey. The questionnaire tool that was developed for both teacher and principal participants was developed using the data collected through policy analysis in Research Phase 1.

The specific implications for practice that were isolated in Steps 2 and 3 of the policy analysis formed the basis for the development of the research tools utilised in Research Phase 3. The 82 implications for practice that occurred in three or more gender policy documents as well as the 49 implications for practice that occurred only in one or both of the gender policy documents written for Catholic schools were considered in terms of their relevance to this research phase, particularly in terms of their connection to K-6 education, their immediacy in terms of teacher and principal roles, and in terms of the Catholic school documents, their relevance to the Catholic school context. Specific implications for practice were then selected to form the basis for individual questionnaire items. A detailed overview of the use of the teacher questionnaire and principal questionnaire to examine the experience of gender reform in specific schools is provided in Chapters 6 and 7.

SUMMARY

There were four clear outcomes of Research Phase 1 as discussed in this chapter. First the process of development of the Policy Analysis Template was explained demonstrating its use for synthesis and analysis of gender policy implications for practice across 11 gender policy documents. Second, there was a specific focus and discussion on themes and trends

of gender equity reform in Australian schools emerging from the policy analysis as well as a specific examination of those implications for practice that had relevance for school leadership. Included in this was a highlighting of specific directions for gender reform that were then examined in Research Phase 2. These policy directions could be closely linked to student response data on their experience of gender at school. Student responses provided valuable insights into those implications for practice that have actually impacted on their experience of gender at school and they also highlighted those areas where gender policy directions appeared to have had little or no impact.

Third, the extraction process which was facilitated by the Policy Analysis Template signalled those implications for practice for schools which occurred across a number of policy documents as well as those that occurred only in those documents written specifically for Catholic schools. The connection between the extraction process and the development of survey tools for Research Phase 3 was established.

Finally, the policy analysis highlighted important understandings about the focus and direction of gender policy documents for Australian schools since 1975. Signalled for attention were two particular findings. The number of implications for practice occurring in the 11 policy documents indicated the complexity and the detail as well as the multiplicity of gender understandings that informed these documents. In addition, the finding that the majority of implications for practice across these 11 documents focused on the needs of both boys and girls highlighted the intent of gender policy directions for schools to address gender issues within a framework founded on inclusion.

Findings and discussion relevant to Research Phase 2 and Research Phase 3 have been detailed in the following three chapters.

CHAPTER 5

STUDENT EXPERIENCE OF GENDER AT SCHOOL RESEARCH PHASE 2: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Attention to gender issues by systems, schools and individual teachers does make a difference to the gender experiences of students in schools. (The Collins Report, p. xiv)

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to detail and discuss the findings of Research Phase 2. These findings addressed the messages that were given to students in participating schools about gender and how these messages were given. The purpose of Research Phase 2 was to determine the experience of gender at school of 961 Year 6 students from 35 Catholic K-6 schools. These findings provided rich data about the messages students have received about being male and female at school. This data contributed to an understanding of the specific gender reform priorities that appeared to have impacted on how girls and boys experience gender at school. These particular findings also provided a specific basis from which to reflect on the outcomes of Research Phase 3 that sought information from teachers and principals about their experiences and perceptions of gender reform in schools.

Data gathering in Research Phase 2 was via the *National sample study of gender and school education student questionnaire: Co-educational primary schools* first used in The Collins Report referred to in the first three chapters. In undertaking this phase of the research, the opinion expressed in this report was considered critical, that in completing the questionnaire, students were doing no more than providing their own perceptions and understandings of their experiences.

ORGANISATION AND REPORTING OF DATA

Data in The Collins Report was based on the framing of questions around priority areas of the *National action plan*. Each of the items from this student questionnaire was thus categorised in The Collins Report into one of the priority area headings. Results were then reported in these groupings, named as Indicator Groups 1-12.

Reporting of findings from the current study followed the assigned major headings of the Gender Policy Analysis Template discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. Ten of the twelve priority area headings used by The Collins Report were relevant to the current study (Indicator Groups 1-9 and 11). These were seen to fit clearly into the headings of the Gender Policy Analysis Template as follows.

School Development

There were no questionnaire items in the student questionnaire that fitted into the first major heading of the Gender Policy Analysis Template, School Development. The policy implications for practice for School Development as placed in the Policy Analysis Template referred to school gender reform directions pertaining to the involvement of the school community in the development and monitoring of gender equity policies and action plans and also to the specific role of the school in parent education and staff professional development. None specifically referred to student experience of gender at school.

School Organisation and Administration

- Indicator Group 3: Providing Equal Access to Resources for Girls
- Indicator Group 5: Providing for Basic Dignity in Relation to Bodily Functions

Teaching and Learning

- Indicator Group 7: Teaching about Gender and Sexuality
- Indicator Group 8: Disruptive and Dominating Behaviours
- Indicator Group 9: Gender-Aware Teaching Strategies

Pastoral Care

- Indicator Group 1: Incidence of Sex-Based Harassment
- Indicator Group 2: Addressing Sex-Based Harassment

- Indicator Group 4: Provision of a Supportive Interpersonal Environment
- Indicator Group 6: Personal Concerns Related to Gender Construction at School
- Indicator Group 11: Balance of Emphasis among Non-Academic Activities

The implications of using the student questionnaire for this research phase have been addressed in Chapter 3. One important consideration was that of analysis of data. This particular survey instrument was utilised in The Collins Report to provide descriptive data on student experience of gender at school.

For the purposes of this research, it was the intent to establish understandings about student experience of gender in the participating schools as well as to highlight areas of similarity and difference to the 1996 samples used in The Collins Report. The focus for data analysis was thus on examination of areas of similarity and difference of boys' and girls' responses in the areas of gender policy directions as well as determination of those gender policy directions about which students recorded positive experience and establishing comparison with the 1996 sample. As per The Collins Report, the measure for analysis was percentage response of boys and girls to each item.

All findings from the student questionnaire were reported using percentage responses and for the purposes of this study, responses to each question were calculated separately for girls and boys. As indicated in Chapter 3, Pearson χ^2 tests to investigate differences between male and female students' perceptions on individual items were performed. The overall significance level was set at .05 and the Bonferroni inequality (Stevens, 1992) was employed because separate analyses were conducted for each item within each separate indicator group. Each of these items was developed in relation to a specific gender policy direction; each was seen to be independent of the other and thus no interaction effect was examined.

Where results for this research study showed variations or indeed, close similarities to those of any of the three research groups from The Collins Report, the total 1996 sample (N=4969), the 1996 NSW sample (N=922), the 1996 Catholic sector sample (N=1066), these were highlighted and discussed. It should be noted however, that although a Likert scale response was used for all items in the student questionnaire, The Collins Report

focused only on the top end of the scale for each priority area in discussion of results. Additionally, in many cases, findings from The Collins Report were given as a percentage of the total sample, not separately for girls and boys as in the current research.

Reporting of the findings in the present study followed the same order for each major category heading of the Policy Analysis Template. Within each heading, the results on particular indicator groups were reported firstly for the current sample and then comparing the current sample with the research groups from The Collins Report. These findings were then addressed in the discussion section immediately following the reporting of findings for that particular indicator group.

Analysis of the open-ended question at the conclusion of the questionnaire took place separately using the indicator groups placed within the key headings of the Policy Analysis Template as direction for content analysis as explained in Chapter 3. These comments were then utilised to add substance to the discussion of results.

SCHOOL ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Two indicator groups from the student questionnaire utilised in The Collins Report were addressed within the Policy Analysis Template heading of School Organisation and Administration:

- Indicator Group 3: Providing Equal Access to Resources for Girls
- Indicator Group 5: Providing for Basic Dignity in Relation to Bodily Functions

Indicator Group 3: Providing Equal Access to Resources for Girls

There are two tables in this section. The first (Table 5.1) provides a summary of the response of the students in the 35 participating schools to perceptions of girls' access to particular resources at their school. The second (Table 5.2) demonstrates a comparative overview of the current research sample and The Collins Report research groups to the items addressing girls' access to resources at school.

Table 5.1 Indicator Group 3: Providing Equal Access to Resources for Girls

	Female Response (%)			Male Response (%)			χ^2 (2, N=961)
	True	Not True	Don't Know	True	Not True	Don't Know	
Girls' sports teams get as much help and coaching as boys' sports teams	66.7	16.0	17.3	62.8	16.6	20.7	2.10
At lunch time girls get as much sports equipment and space to play as boys	49.3	44.8	5.8	56.1	34.0	9.9	14.28*
As much attention is given to girls' teams that win as is given to boys' teams that win	66.4	19.1	14.5	63.5	19.4	17.1	1.32
Girls use the school computers out of class time as often as boys	44.6	27.4	28.0	39.7	28.9	31.4	2.52

* $p < .013$

Findings for Indicator Group 3: Providing Equal Access to Resources for Girls

The first three questions related to resourcing sport at school and the data is summarised in Table 5.1. Of particular note is the similarity of response of boys and girls to two of these items. As indicated in Chapter 3, χ^2 tests to investigate differences between male and female students' perceptions on individual items were performed. For Indicator Group 3, the planned Type 1 error was set at .013 due to the Bonferroni Inequality. Table 5.1 reports statistically significant differences between male and female students on one item: *At lunch time girls get as much sports equipment and space to play as boys*. A significantly higher proportion of girls (44.8%) reported that girls do not get as much equipment and space to play compared to boys (34.0%).

It should be noted that the questionnaire did not seek to elicit the reasons for student response to this item and so it could be reasoned that there could be factors operating for differential gender experience other than those to do with provision of resources. Whatever the reason, the results point to different experiences of girls and boys in terms of access to these resources at school with only 49.3% of girls and 56.1% of boys considering that girls get as much sports equipment and space to play as boys. Student comments on this issue were very few and those that were made highlight not only differing perceptions between girls and boys but also different experiences of girls and boys at different schools as evidenced by the following examples:

I don't like the play area around the school because we don't have enough land and hardly any grass to play on like footy, soccer, ball throws. (Boy, school 3)

I think boys get more time and space to play sport. (Girl, school 18)

My friends and I play with the boys and they share all of the equipment. (Girl, school 6)

At lunch I play football with the boys and we're all great friends. (Girl, school 35)

Normally boys take up most of the oval space at our school. (Girl, school 19)

There was agreement between the girls and boys on the issue of support for girls' participation in sport whereby over 60% of girls and boys considered that there was equal support and affirmation for girls' sports teams. However, it is noted that over 30% of boys and girls recorded that this was not true or they did not know. Student comments on the issue of sport and recreation time and space numbered 22 from girls and 5 from boys. Of note is that the majority of these comments by girls (77%) and boys (80%) were expressing concern. The following examples demonstrate the range of concerns expressed:

There are different awards for sports for girls and boys. (Boy, school 11)

Girls get a lot more coaching at sport games at school than boys. (Boy, school 31)

At school girls are not allowed in the cricket or football team but boys are allowed in the netball team and the only sport girls are allowed to participate in is netball and once touch football. I think it's unfair. (Girl, school 23)

The final question of this section asked if girls used the school computers out of class time as often as the boys. The perceptions of boys and girls did not differ significantly whereby fewer than 45% of girls and boys saw that girls used computers out of class time as often as boys. The questionnaire of itself did not allow further interpretation of the reason for this perception of differential experience, however, there was clear agreement among

students that the use of computers out of class time was a much less frequent occurrence by girls.

Only two student comments pertaining to school resources were provided, one of which was positive and the other expressing a concern:

Sometimes at school the girls get more stuff than the boys. (Boy, school 31)

They (the boys) share all of the equipment. (Girl, school 6)

Comparison with 1996 Results on Providing Equal Access to Resources for Girls

Comparative data provided in the following table are in percentages of the students who answered in the negative. The Collins Report did not provide information on the responses of boys.

Table 5.2 Comparison with 1996 Results on Providing Equal Access to Resources for Girls

	<i>Female 'Not True' Response (%)</i>				<i>Male 'Not True' Response (%)</i>			
	Current Sample	1996 Total	1996 NSW	1996 Cath.	Current Sample	1996 Total	1996 NSW	1996 Cath.
Girls' sports teams get as much help and coaching as boys' sports teams	16.0	18.6	23.1	16.2	16.6	-	-	-
At lunch time girls get as much sports equipment and space to play as boys	44.8	41.3	48.7	46.2	34.0	-	-	-
As much attention is given to girls' teams that win as is given to boys' teams that win	19.1	21.6	23.8	17.31	9.4	-	-	-
Girls use the school computers out of class time as often as boys	27.4	29.9	31.5	30.9	28.9	-	-	-

Note: The Collins Report results were provided for girls only.

Responses demonstrate progress of schools in the current sample in terms of ensuring that girls' sports teams receive as much help and coaching as boys' teams. There was also more recognition for girls' teams that win in comparison to the total 1996 group. Perceptions of girls' access to sporting equipment and space to play at lunchtime did not vary much between all groups; however, the difference in response of the boys in the current group was very clear as has been discussed in the previous section. Of interest was

the slightly more positive response given by students in the current sample to girls' use of computers out of class time; although many respondents indicated that girls' use of computers out of class time was less frequent than that of boys.

Discussion of Findings for Indicator Group 3: Providing Equal Access to Resources for Girls

These findings are similar to those research findings discussed in Chapter 2 in the review of literature and to the policy analysis findings discussed in Chapter 4. The issue of equitable access to facilities and equipment has been on the gender reform agenda since the 1970s when there was a clear policy emphasis on the elimination of sexism/bias in schools (Gilbert, 1996; Yates, 1990), with some policy directions focusing on differential provision for girls (Hayes, 1996). Specific implications for practice have also been named in a number of policy documents (Table 4.4, p. 107) since that time. In discussing and explaining this agenda, the authors of The Collins Report described it as “ensuring that girls get access to resources valued by boys” (p.33).

In examining student responses to these specific questionnaire items, it should be noted that the concept of ‘access’ could be open to differing interpretations. It has been established that girls do not get as much sports equipment and space to play at lunch and that they don't use computers out of class time as often as the boys. The reasons for this however, have not been established and thus many possibilities exist. It could be that girls simply choose not to use the available equipment, that there exist attractive alternatives in which they freely chose to engage, that they are discouraged to participate by other students, either girls or boys, that there exist specific school structures/procedures that make access difficult, that they are not permitted access by boys or that this use of sporting and recreational facilities is clearly seen as the boys' domain.

The background to this gender difference has not become apparent in responses. The limited number of student comments pertaining to this issue certainly provided some understandings however, caution is sounded in discussion and interpretation of results.

Analysis of gender policy documents discussed in Chapter 4 revealed the important role for schools in giving equal emphasis to the talents and achievements of girls and boys (Table 4.4, p. 107; Table 4.8, p. 116) and this appears to have been addressed in many of the participating schools. The issue of ensuring equal access to computers out of class time and to sports equipment and space to play however, has revealed differing experiences of girls and boys in participating schools.

Given the policy attention to this particular agenda, the response of principals and teachers to this has been further explored and discussed in Chapters 6 and 7. Of importance was the information provided by some of these teacher and principal participants in open-ended responses, that school awareness of and response to gender equity issues was precipitated by staff voicing concerns about perceived inequities in girls' and boys' access to facilities and resources.

This response would accord with the Butorac and Lymon (1998) findings that the majority of schools participating in their research commenced gender equity practices following an internal needs analysis, sometimes in response to teacher observation of gender bias in practice. There are clear learnings for the principal that spring from this finding in terms of how gender equity issues are initially recognised, how they become accepted by staff as an issue to be addressed, how planning and action follows awareness raising, and how attention to one specific gender equity issue can be utilised as a springboard for further action.

Indicator Group 5: Providing for Basic Dignity in Relation to Bodily Functions

There are two tables reporting results in this section which addressed provision for basic dignity in relation to bodily functions. The first (Table 5.3) provides data on the responses of the current research sample and the second (Table 5.4) provides comparative data between the current research sample and The Collins Report research groups.

Table 5.3 Indicator Group 5: Providing for Basic Dignity in Relation to Bodily Functions

	<i>Female Response (%)</i>		<i>Male Response (%)</i>		χ^2 (1, N=961)
	True	Not True	True	Not True	
I can go to the toilet block and feel safe from harassment from others	78.3	21.7	72.1	27.9	4.90
The toilet cubicles used by Year 6 are private (doors lock properly, doors are big enough, you can't be spied on in other ways)	38.7	61.3	37.8	62.2	0.08

Findings for Indicator Group 5: Providing for Basic Dignity in Relation to Bodily Functions

Both questions in this section asked about the school's provision of appropriate toilet facilities. Two χ^2 tests were conducted on the items in Indicator Group 2 and neither was significant at $p < .025$. However, although not significantly different, the responses of girls and boys to the first item could indicate varying experiences in terms of feeling safe in the school toilets. That only 78.3% of girls and 72.1% percent of boys answered 'true' signals a concern about the provision of toilet facilities that ensure students are free from worrying about keeping safe.

Student responses indicated shared perceptions about the provision of private toilet facilities whereby only 38.7% of girls and 37.8% of boys considered that their school toilets ensured student privacy. Although there were only eight student comments pertaining to this issue, all written by girls, it should be noted that all expressed concerns about toilet provision, reflected in the following two examples:

Well the soap machine things don't work in the toilet and I do believe the toilets could have a bit more privacy e.g. the toilet wall could be taller. (Girl, school 10)

Girls can go to the toilet whenever they want to. Boys can't. (Girl, school 17)

Comparison with 1996 Results on Providing for Basic Dignity in Relation to Bodily Functions

Responses to both questions pertaining to provision for basic dignity in relation to bodily functions in The Collins Report were given separately for boys and girls.

Table 5.4 Comparison with 1996 Results on Providing for Basic Dignity in Relation to Bodily Functions

	<i>Female ' True' Response (%)</i>				<i>Male ' True' Response (%)</i>			
	Current Sample	1996 Total	1996 NSW	1996 Cath.	Current Sample	1996 Total	1996 NSW	1996 Cath.
I can go to the toilet block and feel safe from harassment from others	78.3	73.3	74.6	81.9	72.1	70.3	68.7	75.5
The toilet cubicles used by Year 6 are private (doors lock properly, doors are big enough, you can't be spied on in other ways)	38.7	31.6	26.0	40.0	37.8	32.9	31.6	30.5

In terms of believing that they could go to the toilet block feeling safe from harassment, data provided in Table 5.4 demonstrated that the response from girls in the current research sample was less positive than the 1996 Catholic sector sample and there was a less positive response to the same question from the boys in the current research sample in comparison with the 1996 Catholic sector sample. Conversely, the responses from the current sample of both girls and boys were more positive than the 1996 total sample and the NSW 1996 sample.

Although there were indications that more girls and boys from the current sample in comparison to most 1996 groups with the exception of girls from the Catholic sector, considered that the toilets ensured adequate privacy, the data clearly indicate that this issue was still of concern to a large number of students. Of note also, was that boys from the current sample felt more concerned about harassment in the toilets than girls and boys across all samples with the exception of the male NSW sample and the total 1996 sample.

Discussion of Findings for Indicator Group 5: Providing for Basic Dignity in Relation to Bodily Functions

The data on the two items in this section highlight an important finding. Six of the policy documents analysed in Chapter 4 (Table 4.4, p.107) signalled the need for school action in the area of provision of safe, private toilet facilities and yet it appears that little or no progress has been made since the 1996 study. The finding that fewer than 40% of the students surveyed considered that their school toilets adequately provided for privacy would appear to be a serious consideration that must be addressed.

The reasons behind the lack of school response to the actual toilet facilities may well be complex and connected with financial considerations around major maintenance priorities. This is a policy area that would be seen by the school community as the responsibility of the school principal who exercises stewardship for the whole school plant. The strength of student response signals an urgent call for leadership attention.

There was also signalled a concern by 27.9% of the boys and 21.7% of the girls that they did not feel safe in the toilets. Student safety is clearly a concern for the whole school community but one that would be seen as ultimately the responsibility of the school principal. Why student safety remains such an issue despite clear policy directions as demonstrated in the analysis of gender policy directions detailed in Chapter 4 (Table 4.4, p. 107) is signalled for further consideration and discussion in Chapter 8. In addition, there may well be connections between this response and the responses given by students to issues around provision of a supportive interpersonal environment and personal concerns related to gender construction at school. This connection is examined in later sections of this chapter.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Three indicator groups from The Collins Report student questionnaire were addressed within the Policy Analysis Template heading of Teaching and Learning:

- Indicator Group 7: Teaching about Gender and Sexuality

- Indicator Group 8: Disruptive and Dominating Behaviours
- Indicator Group 9: Gender-Aware Teaching Strategies

Indicator Group 7: Teaching about Gender and Sexuality

There are two tables in this section. The first (Table 5.5) provides a summary of the response of the students in the 35 participating schools to consideration of what they have been taught about sex-based issues and the second (Table 5.6) provides comparative data between the current research sample and The Collins Report research groups on the same consideration.

Table 5.5 Indicator Group 7: Teaching about Gender and Sexuality

	<i>Female Response (%)</i>		<i>Male Response (%)</i>		χ^2 (1, <i>N</i> =961)
	True	Not True	True	Not True	
We talk in class about what it is like to be a boy or girl	46.6	53.4	39.8	60.2	4.56
I have been taught that there are lots of different ways to be an OK boy or girl, not just one “right way” of being a boy or being a girl	80.9	19.1	80.2	19.8	0.09
I have been taught ways to handle hassles from others about how they want a girl or boy to look and behave	77.1	22.9	73.2	26.8	2.00
I have been taught ways to put my point of view without getting threatening or violent	83.6	16.4	76.0	24.0	8.55*
I have been taught about sexual behaviour and development	74.8	25.2	70.5	29.5	2.24

* $p < .01$

Findings for Indicator Group 7: Teaching about Gender and Sexuality

The emphasis on curriculum itself was a clear policy direction of the gender reform focus on inclusive education in the 1980s and many policy implications for practice stressed the importance of this teaching and learning area for gender equity (Foster, 1989; Yates, 1993).

Five χ^2 tests were conducted on the data on the items in this indicator group. As shown in Table 5.5, statistically significant differences between male and female students were

found for the item, *I have been taught ways to put my point of view without getting threatening or violent*. Significantly more girls (83.6%) than boys (76.0%) believed this statement to be true. Considering that these students participated in coeducational lessons, the reasons for this varying response are not clear. However, that there was a statistically significant difference in girls' and boys' response to this item highlights an area of curriculum content and/or pedagogy that cannot be ignored.

There are directions for school leadership suggested by this finding. It would appear that evaluation of programming in terms of content and teaching strategies may provide insights into the different perceptions of this experience by boys and girls. However, the response could also reflect aspects of classroom dynamics and culture that require close examination and discussion. The role of the principal would seem to be critical in initiating staff awareness raising, providing appropriate support in addressing the issue as well as leading a process of development of avenues for response at a whole-school and class level

In contrast to the differing responses to the previous item, there were very similar responses provided by girls and boys to the item that asked about learning that there are different ways to being a girl or a boy. A similar high proportion of girls (80.9%) and boys (80.2%) reported that they had been taught this. Responses to two further items indicated that 77.1% of girls and 73.2% of boys considered they had been taught how to handle hassles and 74.8% of girls and 70.5% of boys reported that they had been taught about sexual behaviour and development.

A notable response was that given to being asked if students talk in class about what it is like to be a boy or girl with only 46.6% of girls and 39.8% of boys saying 'true'. This has a direct connection to the policy emphasis of the 1990s on the construction of gender whereby students are perceived to develop an understanding of gender relations through learning how these are embedded in the ways that they discuss and practise specific relationships (Alloway, 1996).

Twenty one comments were made by girls in relation to this indicator group and 11 made by boys. The following two comments reveal differences in student readiness to engage

with the actual content which have implications for pedagogy:

Some teachers talk about sex too much. They show us things about it. They say we must learn about it. (Boy, school 18)

I don't think there is nothing wrong with being any sex and would like to learn more about it in the future. (Girl, school 20)

The majority of the comments for this indicator group by girls (71%) and boys (82%) focused on expressions of their understandings and attitudes about gender and sexuality. The most common responses made by both genders were “we are all the same/equal”, “we should all be treated fairly/equally” and “it would not matter who you are, you are still human”. This theme can be seen in the following longer comment:

I think boys and girls should not pick on each other, be kind, co-operate and play with each other and let them play with each other. (Boy, school 21)

That students chose to comment on their experience of gender and school by reflecting on the ideals of quality relationships based on specific values understandings is an important finding. The background to the formation of these attitudes which clearly reflect the values on which Catholic schools are founded and their relationship to students' perception and experience of gender at school is signalled as an issue identified throughout this study.

The Catholic school context was described in Chapter 1 as being underpinned by foundational values of equality and justice, informed by a particular belief in the dignity and potential of each person, created equal in the eyes of God. Importantly, the Catholic school is seen to have an important role in being a witness to these particular beliefs (Dorr, 1991; Duncan, 1998; Flynn, 1993; Treston, 1997). The two gender policy documents written specifically for Catholic schools examined in Chapter 4 (pp.114-120) demonstrated the importance of school policies and practices reflecting foundational values. The importance of the Catholic school context in terms of school response to gender equity issues emerged as an important theme in this research. Clearly there was a need to investigate the relationship between this particular student response and

experiences reported by teachers and principals as discussed in the following chapters.

Comparison with 1996 Results on Teaching About Gender and Sexuality

Comparative data used from The Collins Report on teaching about gender and sexuality was not provided separately for girls and boys.

Table 5.6 Comparison with 1996 Results on Teaching about Gender and Sexuality

	Female Current Sample	Male Current Sample	<i>True Response (%)</i>		
			1996 Total Sample	1996 Total NSW	1996 Total Cath.
We talk in class about what it is like to be a boy or girl	46.6	39.8	39.4	43.3	44.7
I have been taught that there are lots of different ways to be an OK boy or girl, not just one 'right way' of being a boy or being a girl	80.9	80.2	73.7	75.0	75.1
I have been taught ways to handle hassles from others about how they want a boy or girl to look and behave	77.1	73.2	69.2	66.9	68.2
I have been taught ways to put my point of view without getting threatening or violent	83.6	76.0	74.1	73.8	75.1
I have been taught about sexual behaviour and development	74.8	70.5	68.1	73.4	71.8

Data provided in Table 5.6 indicate that a higher proportion of both girls and boys in the current sample gave positive responses to three of the five items in comparison to all 1996 groups. It would seem that in this particular gender policy area, progress has been made as students reported that they had been taught specific aspects of gender and sexuality.

Of note, however, is the less positive response of boys in the current research sample in comparison to two 1996 groups to being asked if they had been taught about sexual behaviour and development and in response to being asked if students talk in class about what it means to be a boy or a girl. As discussed in the previous section, the different gender responses to perceptions of what has been taught in class is problematic. Why boys and girls reported different experiences of specific aspects of the curriculum taught in class is certainly an issue that calls for further investigation.

This specific item response could provide the point of entry into examination of other

aspects of teaching and learning and findings may produce insights into behavioural differences that have been highlighted in responses to other items. Principals may find support and commitment by staff in pursuing this examination. Teacher questionnaire responses examined in the following chapter demonstrated that 52% of teachers had participated frequently or sometimes in professional development in developing teaching styles that allow for gender difference (Table 6.2, p.194). This is clearly an area of gender equity that engages teachers and thus principals could readily encourage involvement in appropriate formation in terms of content and pedagogy.

Discussion of Findings for Indicator Group 7: Teaching about Gender and Sexuality

Two important findings are highlighted for further consideration:

Shared Values Underpinning Student Understandings of Gender and Sexuality

This consideration springs from the articulation in the cited responses of student understanding about the quality of relationships and the values that underpin these. What has been expressed by these students is confirmation of the values on which Catholic education is based, as discussed in Chapter 1. That some students chose to reflect on the two specific values of recognising each person's essential equality and each person's right to be treated fairly in response to issues of gender relations signals an integration of faith and life that goes to the very core of the mission of Catholic schools.

This is an important research finding that was further developed in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. There is clear connection of this consideration to the theoretical understandings of the meaning and purpose of policy developed in Prunty's (1985) critique of directions in education policy analysis highlighting the importance of recognising the role of the school in the education process and of seeking to examine the values that underpin the policy.

Teaching and Learning: Teaching about Gender and Sexuality

More than 16.4% of girls and 19.8% of boys considered that they had not been taught the five particular aspects about gender and sexuality examined in this indicator group. On the experience of talking in class about what it is like to be a girl or boy, this percentage increased to 53.4% of girls and 60.2% of boys who considered that they had not been taught this particular aspect of gender and sexuality.

These findings are of particular interest in light of the policy directions of the 1990s discussed in Chapter 2 (Gilbert, 1996; Yates, 1993) and Chapter 4 (Table 4.5, pp.109-110) which specifically focused on teaching about gender construction and gender relations. In addition, they mirror findings from earlier sections of the student questionnaire in which boys and girls reported differing perceptions and understandings of the same curriculum content and teaching/learning experiences.

This has implications for understanding findings from other sections of the student questionnaire that revealed differing experiences of gender at school for girls and boys, particularly in terms of students reporting they were not happy or depressed and who considered that there were different gender expectations and disciplinary processes at their school. Particular insights can be gained from attention to approaches to teaching and learning that have been detailed in Chapter 6 which demonstrated that teachers from participating schools appear to give appropriate attention to the content of a particular issue but drawing this knowledge out for discussion and placing it within the actual context of student life experience has not emerged as an equal priority.

Although it is beyond the scope of the current research, it would be also of interest to map the degree to which the specific educational agenda related to teaching about gender and sexuality is formally addressed in the NSW K-6 Personal Development Health and Physical Education Syllabus and to investigate the reasons that some students considered that it had not been taught to them. Also of interest would be an investigation into the degree to which this educational agenda is learned by students through informal interactions, through other K-6 teaching programs, through classroom climate and through other aspects of school culture.

Indicator Group 8: Disruptive and Dominating Behaviours

There are two tables in this section. The first (Table 5.7) provides a summary of the response of the students in the 35 participating schools to consideration of the frequency of disruptive and dominating behaviours and the second (Table 5.8) provides comparative data between the current research sample and The Collins Report research groups on the same issue.

Table 5.7 Indicator Group 8: Disruptive and Dominating Behaviours

	Female Response (%)			Male Response (%)			χ^2 (2, N=961)
	Often	Sometimes	Never	Often	Sometimes	Never	
Some girls make fun of others' answers to the teacher's questions in class	5.5	66.3	28.1	5.9	62.4	31.7	1.60
Some boys make fun of others' answers to the teacher's questions in class	24.5	66.7	8.9	17.7	72.1	10.1	6.34
Some girls tease others in class who want to work	4.2	41.0	54.8	6.4	38.4	55.2	2.57
Some boys tease others in class who want to work	17.9	46.2	35.9	14.8	47.6	37.6	1.62
Some girls muck around and disrupt classes	13.0	65.5	21.5	8.5	63.8	27.7	7.79
Some boys muck around and disrupt classes	60.5	36.2	3.4	51.6	44.2	4.2	7.37
Some girls try to get most of the teacher's attention	25.0	50.4	24.6	27.2	46.9	25.9	1.13
Some boys try to get most of the teacher's attention	28.4	46.0	25.6	24.4	56.6	19.0	10.98*
Some girls try to get and hold onto the computers in class	12.4	39.4	48.2	17.8	35.6	46.7	5.54
Some boys try to get and hold onto the computers in class	30.2	37.2	32.6	25.2	35.6	39.1	4.97

* $p < .005$

Findings for Indicator Group 8: Disruptive and Dominating Behaviours

The questions in this section asked participants to consider the frequency of boys' and girls' participation in five particular behaviours in their class and findings are summarised in Table 5.7. Ten χ^2 tests were conducted on the data collected on the items in Indicator Group 8.

As shown in Table 5.7 statistically significant differences between female and male students were found in response to the item, *Some boys try to get most of the teacher's attention*. Significantly more girls (25.6%) than boys (19.0%) answered 'never' to this item, however, of interest is that 4% more girls than boys answered 'often' to the same item. That the difference in response of boys and girls to this item was statistically significant indicates varying perceptions of classroom behaviour. The reasons for this can only be surmised and call for further attention. For example, it may be that boys and girls

have different perceptions of what constitutes attention seeking behaviour, or that this is seen as 'normal' behaviour by girls and as such is not noted, or that boys feel the need to seek teachers' attention, or it may well be that it is just not noticed by girls.

Of relevance was the observation that for all of the five behaviours, girls recorded higher frequency of boys' involvement in these behaviours than that of girls and on four of the five items, boys did likewise. Thus the 'often' response for boys was recorded by an additional 19% of girls and 11.8% of boys in terms of making fun of other's answers to the teacher's questions in class. An additional 13.7% of girls and 8.4% of boys recorded that boys often tease others in class who want to work in comparison to girls often teasing those in class who want to work.

There was an interesting response to student perception of girls' and boys' involvement in trying to gain most of the teacher's attention. There was strong agreement between the students to girls' involvement in that 75.4% of girls and 74.1% of boys saw that girls do this often or sometimes. As previously noted, there were statistically significant differences in perceptions of boys' involvement in that 74.4% of girls and 81% of boys reported that boys do this often or sometimes. This was the only item on which the boys recorded a higher frequency of involvement of girls than boys, demonstrated in the contrasting responses to 'often' in that 27.2% of boys recorded that girls often tried to get the teacher's attention in contrast to 24.4% of boys who recorded that boys did this often.

Of particular note was student response to the questions about disrupting classes whereby boys and girls saw a clear difference in boys' and girls' involvement. Whereas 13% of girls and 8.5% of boys recorded that girls do this often, an additional 47.5% of girls and 43.1% of boys recorded that boys do this often

The final set of questions asked about trying to get and hold onto computers in class and boys' and girls' responses reflected similar perceptions expressed in responses to the earlier question about girls' and boys' use of computers in out of class time (Table 5.1, p. 131) with both boys and girls seeing that this was a more frequent occurrence by boys than by girls demonstrated by an additional 17.8% of girls and 7.4% of boys who recorded that boys did this often or frequently.

Of the five student comments made in reference to this indicator group, four by girls and one by a boy, four referred to particular behaviours of boys, reflected in the following examples:

I believe boys are more ruder and disrespectful to teachers and fellow students. (Girl, school 10)

A group of boys must get bored and try to get my friends and my attention and it gets annoying at times. (Girl, school 29)

Comparison with 1996 Results on Disruptive and Dominating Behaviours

In this section, the 1996 percentage for the ‘often’ response was given for each of the three research samples and comparative data is provided in Table 5.8. Results were not provided separately by The Collins Report for boys and girls.

Table 5.8 Comparison with 1996 Results on Disruptive and Dominating Behaviours

	<i>‘Often’ Response (%)</i>				
	<i>Female Current Sample</i>	<i>Male Current Sample</i>	<i>1996 Total Sample</i>	<i>1996 Total Sample</i>	<i>1996 Total Cath.</i>
Some girls make fun of others’ answers to the teacher’s questions in class	5.5	5.9	9.3	8.6	6.1
Some boys make fun of others’ answers to the teacher’s questions in class	24.5	17.7	26.3	28.4	23.6
Some girls tease others in class who want to work	4.2	6.4	9.9	9.3	8.4
Some boys tease others in class who want to work	17.9	14.8	22.7	25.2	22.6
Some girls muck around and disrupt classes	13.0	8.5	18.1	15.5	17.6
Some boys muck around and disrupt classes	60.5	51.6	57.2	57.0	58.5
Some girls try to get most of the teacher’s attention	25.0	27.2	27.0	28.7	22.6
Some boys try to get most of the teacher’s attention	28.4	24.4	30.0	29.4	23.2
Some girls try to get and hold onto the computers in class	12.4	17.8	21.1	23.5	17.3
Some boys try to get and hold onto the computers in class	30.2	25.2	31.8	37.1	26.5

On five of these items, the percentage response of the boys and girls in the current research group was less than the percentage response of the 1996 samples. One difference is noted in the much lower response of both the boys and girls in the current research sample to being asked about boys teasing others in class who want to work.

Another clear difference was the lower proportion of boys in the current sample in comparison to all other groups who answered 'often' to the item about boys making fun of other's answers in class. The other difference of note was in response to the question about girls 'mucking around' and disrupting classes with a much lower percentage response provided by both boys and girls in the current research sample.

There was one question where the response of the current research sample was similar to the Catholic sector results but differed to the rest of the 1996 sample which recorded more responses in the 'often' category; this was in response to being asked if girls and boys try to get and hold onto computers in class.

Discussion of Findings for Indicator Group 8: Disruptive and Dominating Behaviours

Gender policy directions discussed in Chapter 4 highlighted the importance assigned to the teacher's role in creating an appropriate learning environment for boys and girls and in understanding and utilising appropriate teaching strategies to respond to gender difference (Table 4.5, pp. 109-110; Table 4.9, p. 117). There appears to have been progress in addressing the issues highlighted in this indicator group.

On many items, the incidence of disruptive and dominating behaviours was lower than the 1996 samples for both boys and girls. However, student responses would indicate that the misbehaviour of boys in class remained of serious concern. This certainly reflects the findings of the Butorac and Lymon (1998) study that found dominance of boys was still considered a critical issue in many classrooms.

Not to be ignored in these considerations was the shared perception by 25% of girls and 27.2% of boys that girls try to get most of the teacher's attention. However, as noted

previously, the understandings around what this behaviour actually means and what indeed its indicators are, could be problematic. Of note were the different perceptions of girls' involvement in trying to get hold of the teacher's attention whereby boys recorded a higher frequency of involvement than girls. This accords with the findings of Spender (1982) who demonstrated that boys considered that they received less teacher attention than girls in class when the observed ratio of teacher attention was demonstrably higher for boys than girls.

It is important to compare these findings with the response of teachers and principals detailed in Chapters 6 and 7 in order to determine the connection between student experience and specific reform directions in schools. The review of literature (Brannock, 1992; Cuttance 1994; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1995; *Girls in School Report, 1993*; Kamler et al., 1994; Large, 1993; *National action plan for the education of girls, 1993*; The Collins Report) and the analysis of gender policy documents in Chapter 4 (Table 4.3, p. 105) highlighted the importance of professional development for teachers in development of a pedagogical response to classroom issues. There are directions for leadership in addressing how effective these opportunities for teachers have been or indeed whether they have been available and accessible for teachers.

Indicator Group 9: Gender-Aware Teaching Strategies

There are two tables in this section. The first (Table 5.9) provides a summary of the response of the students in the 35 participating schools to consideration of the occurrence of specific gender-aware teaching strategies and the second (Table 5.10) provides comparative data between the current research sample and research groups from The Collins Report on the same issue.

Table 5.9 Indicator Group 9: Gender-Aware Teaching Strategies

	Female Response (%)			Male Response (%)			$(\chi^2 (2, N=961))$
	True in Many Subjects	True in a Few Subjects	Not True	True in Many Subjects	True in a Few Subjects	Not True	
We get many chances to learn in teams and groups as well as by ourselves	52.0	46.5	1.5	49.9	46.2	3.9	5.58
We get marks for doing things like projects as well as for taking tests	71.9	22.8	5.3	69.5	25.7	4.8	1.14
We discuss in class what we are going to do and know what work is expected of us	79.8	18.5	1.7	70.6	24.5	4.9	14.29*
What we learn is made interesting to both girls and boys	47.7	48.8	3.6	52.9	40.2	6.9	10.45*
Teachers expect the same amount of effort from both boys and girls	85.1	11.1	3.8	79.5	14.9	5.5	5.25

* $p < .010$

Findings for Indicator Group 9: Gender-Aware Teaching Strategies

The questions in this section asked participants to consider the frequency of particular teaching strategies in their class. Although very few students considered that gender-aware teaching strategies had not been put into place, there were a number of significant differences in their responses. Four χ^2 tests were conducted on the data collected on the items in this indicator group and as shown in Table 5.9, statistically significant differences between female and male responses were found for two of these.

In response to the item, *We discuss in class what we are going to do and what work is expected of us*, significantly more girls (79.8%) than boys (70.6%) considered that this happened in many subjects. In addition, in response to the item, *What we learn is made interesting to both girls and boys*, there were significant differences across the categories with significantly more boys (52.9%) than girls (47.7%) reporting that this was true in many subjects and significantly more boys (6.9%) than girls (3.6%) reporting that this did not occur at all.

The most positive response was given in terms of teachers expecting the same effort from both boys and girls where a high proportion of girls (85.1%) and boys (79.5%) considered

that this was true in many subjects. That over 93% of respondents considered that all five gender-aware teaching strategies were in place in many, or a few subjects, is certainly an indicator that this particular gender policy direction was reflected in classroom practice. What is not clear, however, is why perceptions in terms of two of these gender-aware strategies should differ significantly between boys and girls.

Fifteen girls and nine boys made a comment relevant to this indicator group. The majority of these comments by girls (63%) and boys (66%) focused on differences in teacher expectations and in attention given to girls and boys. These perceptions are reflected in the following examples:

I think it's unfair how boys are treated stronger than girls. Like a teacher says, "I need six strong boys to help me." Why can't it be "I need six strong boys or girls to help me"? I find that happens quite often. (Girl, school 11)

I think girls get much more attention from the teachers and are more favoured (liked much more). (Boy, school 34)

I think girls get more attention than boys at school! (Girl, school 11)

A small number of comments communicated specific concerns about approaches to teaching and learning seen in the following:

Teachers should give enough time for everyone to finish work, they should put all the work on the floor and when you have finished you just get the next piece of work. When somebody gets into trouble the whole class shouldn't get into trouble. (Boy, school 10)

Comparison with 1996 Results on Gender-Aware Teaching Strategies

The 1996 results as shown in Table 5.10 were given for students who answered 'true in many subjects'. Separate results for girls and boys were not provided in The Collins Report.

Table 5.10 Comparison with 1996 Results on Gender-Aware Teaching Strategies

	<i>'True in Many Subjects' Response (%)</i>				
	Female Current Sample	Male Current Sample	1996 Total Sample	1996 Total NSW	1996 Total Cath.
We get many chances to learn in teams and groups as well as by ourselves	52.0	49.9	44.3	38.9	47.0
We get marks for doing things like projects as well as for taking tests	71.9	69.5	71.3	74.8	72.7
We discuss in class what we are going to do and know what work is expected of us	79.8	70.6	66.1	63.6	66.8
What we learn is made interesting to both girls and boys	47.7	52.9	49.0	46.9	49.3
Teachers expect the same amount of effort from both girls and boys	85.1	79.5	77.3	76.6	78.2

As indicated in data recorded in Table 5.10, there was a higher percentage response from the current research group on the questions asking if students had as many chances to learn in teams and groups as well as by themselves, in discussing directions and expectations for work and in seeing that teachers expected the same amount of effort from boys and girls.

However, there was a lower percentage response from the current research sample on the question asking students if they received marks for doing things like projects as well as for taking tests. Of note also, is the comparatively lower response of girls in the current sample (47.7%) and higher response by boys in the current sample (52.9%) to reporting on the item asking if what they learn is made interesting to both girls and boys.

Discussion of Findings for Indicator Group 9: Gender-Aware Teaching Strategies

From the time of publication of *Girls, school and society* in 1975, eliminating sexism from school experience has been a gender policy direction. Yates (1992) provided an insight into this policy emphasis stating that the concern was not only that girls and boys learnt that different things were expected of them but that these learnings were unexamined. It would appear that gender-aware teaching strategies have successfully been taken up by teachers in many of the participating schools as indicated in the comparative findings. However, it would be of interest to know more about the reasons for students discriminating in their responses between many subjects and a few subjects. The fact that

they discerned different strategies for different subjects signals an important research implication that is beyond the scope of the current research project but is certainly worthy of further development.

Gender-aware teaching strategies involving forming understandings and developing appropriate pedagogical responses to the needs of girls and boys have been highlighted as a priority in a large number of policy documents as discussed in earlier chapters. A key to understanding was provided by Yates (1990) who considered that the emphasis for gender-aware teaching needed to be on both curriculum content and process, engaging the teacher in reflective practice.

There was little difference in response between girls and boys to the question focusing on the same teacher expectations for both boys and girls with only 3.8% of girls and 5.5% of boys recording that this was not true. However, the student comments referred to instances where this did not happen. There has been a definite policy emphasis on equality of treatment of girls and boys by teachers (Yates, 1992) so it is interesting to note that some students sought to express their concerns regarding perceived differences in this area.

Directions for further analysis have also been signalled in the two teaching areas which received significantly different responses from boys and girls. That significantly more girls than boys considered that they discuss in many subjects what they have to do and what is expected of them and significantly more boys than girls considered that the work is made interesting to girls and boys in many subjects are both indicators that boys and girls are receiving different messages in the same classroom. Examination of the reasons for these particular responses could make a contribution to understanding girls' and boys' perceptions and experiences of disruptive and dominating classroom behaviours as reported in Table 5.7 (p. 145).

There are research possibilities suggested in these results for exploring the connections between gender-aware teaching strategies and student engagement in their learning. For example it may well be that one explanation for the disruptive and attention-seeking behaviour of boys as reported in Table 5.7 (p. 145) and Table 5.8 (p.147) could be that they have not had sufficient opportunity to discuss what they are supposed to be doing.

One of the most often mentioned implications for practice has been professional development in gender-aware teaching strategies which has also been highlighted by many of the researchers (Brannock, 1992; Cuttance, 1994, 1995; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1995; Kamler et al., 1994; Large, 1993; The Collins Report). The relevance and importance of this consideration in terms of gender-aware teaching strategies was foreshadowed as a major theme to investigate in reviewing the questionnaire responses of teachers and principals. There are clear implications for leadership for gender equity in the investigation of availability, accessibility and quality of professional development in gender-aware teaching strategies.

PASTORAL CARE

Four indicator groups from The Collins Report student questionnaire were addressed within the Policy Analysis Template heading of Pastoral Care:

- Indicator Group 1: Incidence of Sex-Based Harassment
- Indicator Group 2: Addressing Sex-Based Harassment
- Indicator Group 4: Provision of a Supportive Interpersonal Environment
- Indicator Group 6: Personal Concerns Related to Gender Construction at School

Indicator Group 1: Incidence of Sex-Based Harassment

Policy reform directions focusing on construction of gender and safer gender relations emerged in the early 1990s (Gilbert, 1996; Lemaire, 1994) with an acknowledgement also, that implications for practice had to involve both boys and girls (Davy, 1995). There were four different types of sex-based harassment considered in this priority area and each was addressed separately:

- a. Verbal Sex-Based Harassment
- b. Physical Sex-Based Harassment
- c. Same Sex Bullying and Hurting
- d. Opposite Sex Bullying and Hurting

Items in this section asked students to report whether particular behaviours occurred at

their school using a frequency of response scale. A large number of student comments related to this particular priority area.

Findings for Indicator Group 1: (a) Verbal Sex-Based Harassment

There are two tables in this section. The first (Table 5.11) provides a summary of the response of the students in the 35 participating schools to consideration of the frequency of verbal sex-based harassment and the second (Table 5.12) provides comparative data between the current research sample and The Collins Report research groups on the same issue.

Table 5.11 Indicator Group1: Incidence of Sex-Based Harassment: (a) Verbal Sex-Based Harassment

	<i>Female Response (%)</i>			<i>Male Response (%)</i>			χ^2 (2, N=961)
	Often	Sometimes	Never	Often	Sometimes	Never	
Girls have nasty things said about them by other girls to keep them out of a group	25.4	52.2	22.4	17.0	59.2	23.8	9.82*
Boys have nasty things said about them by other boys to keep them out of a group	19.0	58.7	22.4	22.9	54.5	22.6	2.42
Girls get called nasty names to make them uncomfortable about themselves as a girl	31.3	57.1	11.7	21.3	62.8	15.9	13.00*
Boys get called nasty names to make them feel uncomfortable about themselves as a boy	28.3	60.4	11.3	33.3	54.7	12.0	3.33
Girls have nasty sex-based messages written about them on walls or passed around in notes	10.4	27.4	62.3	7.3	27.4	65.2	2.75
Boys have nasty sex-based messages written about them on walls or passed around in notes	6.6	28.9	64.5	5.6	26.9	67.6	1.15

*p<.008

Verbal sex-based harassment occurs when a student or students verbally insult, bully, embarrass or harass another student(s), focusing on their sex. This includes same sex abuse as a means of group ostracism. As demonstrated in the data recorded in Table 5.11, there was very little to discriminate between the responses of girls and boys on four of these items, signifying similar trends in terms of each of these experiences for boys and girls.

Six χ^2 tests were conducted on the data collected on the items in this section of Indicator

Group 1. As shown in Table 5.11, statistically significant differences between female and male students were found on two of the items, both of which related to experiences of girls. In response to the item, *Girls have nasty things said about them by other girls to keep them out of a group*, significantly more girls (25.4%) than boys (17.0%) considered that this happened often. In response to the item, *Girls get called nasty names to make them uncomfortable about themselves as a girl*, significantly more girls (31.3%) than boys (21.3%) reported that this happened often.

A high proportion of boys (33.3%) and a lower proportion of girls (28.3%) reported that boys experienced name calling to make them feel uncomfortable about themselves as a boy and a higher proportion of boys (22.9%) than girls (19%) reported that boys have nasty things said about them to keep them out of a group. Same sex verbal put-downs as a means of group ostracism were considered in The Collins Report to be a particular form of sex-based harassment and the results of the current study indicate the extent of this concern.

Verbal sex-based put-downs from groups of one's own sex are not, in our survey data, a behaviour associated just with girls. Both sexes take part in ostracising behaviour, using verbal harassment, often sex-based, to expel individuals from the group and to keep outsiders out. (The Collins Report, p. 27)

A much lower percentage response was recorded by both genders to the issue of written messages. A small percentage of boys (7.3%) and a slightly higher percentage of girls (10.4%) recorded that girls often have nasty sex-based messages written about them on walls or passed around in notes and the same experience was seen to occur often for boys by 6.6% of girls and 5.6% of boys.

Fifty seven comments were made by girls pertaining to this indicator group which represents 11% of the total sample of girls. Twelve boys made comments which is 3% of the total sample of boys. Of these comments, 74% of the girls' comments and 75% of the boys' comments referred to experiences that were seen as harassment. The remaining responses of girls and boys reflected the perception that this behaviour did not occur at their school:

We have no sexual harassment. (Boy, school 11)

As a girl in Year 6 I believe that boys treat us how they want to be treated.
(Girl, school 7)

Four comments by girls referred specifically to examples of verbal sex-based harassment reflected in the following example:

Sometimes there are people who say rude things about me and I don't understand what they mean. (Girl, school 9)

Comparison with 1996 Results on (a) Verbal Sex-Based Harassment

As demonstrated in Table 5.12, The Collins Report provided results for gender group to whom the behaviour referred.

Table 5.12 Comparison with 1996 Results on Sex-Based Harassment: (a) Verbal Sex-Based Harassment

	<i>Female 'Often' Response (%)</i>				<i>Male 'Often' Response (%)</i>			
	Current Sample	1996 Total	1996 NSW	1996 Cath.	Current Sample	1996 Total	1996 NSW	1996 Cath.
Girls have nasty things said about them by other girls to keep them out of a group	25.4	29.1	33.3	28.1	17.0	-	-	-
Boys have nasty things said about them by other boys to keep them out of a group	19.0	-	-	-	22.9	26.6	27.5	26.0
Girls get called nasty names to make them uncomfortable about themselves as a girl	31.3	34.6	38.0	29.2	21.3	-	-	-
Boys get called nasty names to make them feel uncomfortable about themselves as a boy	28.3	-	-	-	33.3	36.2	40.9	31.9
Girls have nasty sex-based messages written about them on walls or passed around in notes	10.4	13.7	14.2	11.5	7.3	-	-	-
Boys have nasty sex-based messages written about them on walls or passed around in notes	6.6	-	-	-	5.6	11.9	12.7	8.6

Note: The Collins Report results were provided only for girls pertaining to verbal sex-based harassment of girls and for boys pertaining to verbal sex-based harassment of boys.

As demonstrated in this table, the data from the current sample for verbal put downs to cause discomfort about being a boy or a girl and for written sex-based harassment showed a lower percentage response than that of all groups from the 1996 study. Results for the item regarding verbal put-downs in order to ostracise showed that the 1996 Catholic sector had the lowest percentage response followed by the current research group sample

Findings for Indicator Group 1: (b) Physical Sex-Based Harassment

There are two tables in this section. The first (Table 5.13) provides a summary of the response of the students in the 35 participating schools to consideration of the frequency of physical sex-based harassment and the second (Table 5.14) provides comparative data between the current research sample and The Collins Report research groups on the same issue.

Table 5.13 Indicator Group1: Incidence of Sex-Based Harassment: (b) Physical Sex-Based Harassment

	Female Response (%)			Male Response (%)			χ^2 (2, N=961)
	Often	Sometimes	Never	Often	Sometimes	Never	
Girls get touched or pinched in embarrassing ways by other kids	12.1	33.9	54.0	6.6	36.0	57.3	7.91
Boys get touched or pinched in embarrassing ways by other kids	7.6	30.6	61.8	9.7	37.3	53.0	7.46
Girls get their clothes flicked up or pulled down by other kids	5.1	31.2	63.7	6.1	22.5	71.4	8.95*
Boys get their clothes flicked up or pulled down by other kids	5.3	26.0	68.7	7.9	31.6	60.5	7.39

*p<.013

The questionnaire asked students about experiences of physical sex-based harassment demonstrated in such behaviours as embarrassing touching or pinching and clothes being flicked up or pulled down. The data recorded in Table 5.13 demonstrate that physical sex-based harassment was indeed an issue for many boys and girls. Four χ^2 tests were conducted on items in the section of Indicator Group 1 and significant differences between male and female responses were found on one of these. In response to the item, *Girls get their clothes flicked up or pulled down by other kids*, significantly more boys (71.4%) than girls (63.7%) answered ‘never’.

Although not statistically significant, there were gender differences in responses to the remaining three items in this section which could indicate different experiences of girls and boys. A higher proportion of girls (12.1%) than boys (6.6%) reported that girls often were touched or pinched in embarrassing ways by other ‘kids’. Conversely, a higher proportion of boys (9.7%) than girls (7.6%) reported that boys often were touched or pinched in embarrassing ways by other ‘kids’ and a higher proportion of boys (7.9%) than girls (5.3%) reported that boys often had their clothes flicked up or pulled down by other ‘kids’.

In addition to the noticeable difference in the response of the genders to these items, it is important to note the high percentage of students of both genders signalling that physical sex-based harassment occurs often or sometimes at their school. Two comments were made by students regarding physical sex-based harassment:

Well there is a girl that pinches me in inappropriate places. (Girl, school 27)

I got touched by a girl in a bad way. (Boy, school 18)

Comparison with 1996 Results on (b) Physical Sex-Based Harassment

Table 5.14 provides comparative data for the ‘often’ response for physical sex-based harassment.

Table 5.14 Comparison with 1996 Results on Sex-Based Harassment: (b) Physical Sex-Based Harassment

	<i>Female ‘Often’ Response (%)</i>				<i>Male ‘Often’ Response (%)</i>			
	Current Sample	1996 Total	1996 NSW	1996 Cath.	Current Sample	1996 Total	1996 NSW	1996 Cath.
Girls get touched or pinched in embarrassing ways by other kids	12.1	11.3	10.5	7.3	6.6	-	-	-
Boys get touched or pinched in embarrassing ways by other kids	7.6	-	-	-	9.7	10.3	10.6	7.2
Girls get their clothes flicked up or pulled down by other kids	5.1	9.9	10.4	6.6	6.1	-	-	-
Boys get their clothes flicked up or pulled down by other kids	5.3	-	-	-	7.9	11.7	13.2	8.1

Note: The Collins Report results were provided only for the gender to whom the behaviour related.

The 1996 Catholic sector results for embarrassing touching or pinching of both girls and boys were the lowest of all samples. In contrast, percentage responses to reporting of interference with clothing for both the girls and boys from the current research study were lower than all the 1996 samples. The percentage of girls from the current research group (12.1%) reporting that girls often were touched or pinched in embarrassing ways by other ‘kids’ was the highest of all research samples.

Findings for Indicator Group 1: (c) Same-Sex Bullying and Hurting

There are two tables in this section. The first (Table 5.15) provides a summary of the response of the students in the 35 participating schools to consideration of the frequency of same sex bullying and hurting and the second (Table 5.16) provides comparative data between the current research sample and The Collins Report research groups on the same issue

Table 5.15 Indicator Group1: Incidence of Sex-Based Harassment: (c) Same-Sex Bullying and Hurting

	Female Response (%)			Male Response (%)			χ^2 (2, N=961)
	Often	Sometimes	Never	Often	Sometimes	Never	
Boys get their path blocked by boys or boys corner them in ways that worry or embarrass them	3.1	38.5	58.3	8.1	47.2	44.7	23.07*
Girls get their path blocked by girls or girls corner them in ways that worry or embarrass them	4.8	25.9	69.4	4.5	28.8	66.7	1.06
Girls get bullied or hurt by other girls	16.5	52.5	31.0	14.6	50.0	35.4	2.22
Boys get bullied or hurt by other boys	28.9	48.6	22.4	25.8	55.0	19.2	3.86

* $p < .013$

Two questions were asked about particular behaviours that demonstrated same-sex bullying: blocking or cornering and bullying or hurting and the data reflect varying experiences for girls and boys. Four χ^2 tests were conducted on items in this section of Indicator Group 1 and as recorded in Table 5.15, statistically significant differences were found in male and female responses to one of these items. In response to the item, *Boys get their path blocked by boys or boys corner them in ways that worry or embarrass them*, significantly more boys (8.1%) than girls (3.1%) considered that this happened often and

significantly more girls (58.3%) than boys (44.7%) considered that this never happened.

Although not statistically significant, gender differences were recorded in response to another of the items which could indicate different gender experiences or perceptions of this behaviour. In response to being asked if boys get bullied or hurt by other boys, a higher proportion of girls (28.9%) than boys (25.8%) reported that this happened often and a higher proportion of girls (22.4%) than boys (19.2%) also reported that this never happened.

Responses by girls and boys to the remaining two items reflected similar perceptions of the experience of same sex bullying or hurting by girls. Data recorded in Table 5.15 show that 4.8% of girls and 4.5% of boys reported that girls often or sometimes had their path blocked or felt cornered by girls. When asked if girls bully or hurt other girls, 16.5% of girls and 14.6% of boys reported that this happened often.

Nine comments were made by students about same sex bullying, demonstrating actual experiences of this behaviour as seen in the following example:

Boys usually get bullied by other boys because of glasses or liking school.
(Girl, school 19)

Some boys at school when we are playing soccer just come over and barge me over or kick me. (Boy, school 14)

With being a girl you get teased from other girls and they're so mean. With boys they just punch up each (other) and that's that. (Girl, school 20)

Comparison with 1996 Results on (c) Same-Sex Bullying and Hurting

Data in Table 5.16 are provided for the 'often' response to items on same-sex bullying and hurting.

Table 5.16 Comparison with 1996 Results on Sex-Based Harassment: (c) Same-Sex Bullying and Hurting

	<i>Female 'Often' Response (%)</i>				<i>Male 'Often' Response (%)</i>			
	Current Sample	1996 Total	1996 NSW	1996 Cath.	Current Sample	1996 Total	1996 NSW	1996 Cath.
Boys get their path blocked by boys or boys corner them in ways that worry or embarrass them	3.1	a	-	-	8.1	-	-	-
Girls get their path blocked by girls or girls corner them in ways that worry or embarrass them	4.8	b	-	-	4.5	-	-	-
Girls get bullied or hurt by other girls	16.5	17.6	20.6	15.9	14.6	-	-	-
Boys get bullied or hurt by other boys	28.9	-	-	-	25.8	29.5	31.0	24.5

Note: The Collins Report results were provided only for girls on the item pertaining to girls bullying girls and only for boys on the item pertaining to boys bullying boys.

- a. The Collins Report results on this item were provided for the total 1996 Research Group: 11.0%.
- b. The Collins Report results on this item were provided for the total 1996 Research Group: 4%.

Table 5.16 shows that responses from the current research sample were lower on three of the four items in comparison to the 1996 sample and higher than the 1996 sample on the fourth item, that of girls blocking or cornering other girls. Particular note is made of the lower response in comparison to all other samples of the 1996 Catholic sector sample to the items relating to girls bullying girls and boys bullying boys.

Findings for Indicator Group 1: (d) Opposite Sex Bullying and Hurting

There are two tables in this section. The first (Table 5.17) provides a summary of the response of the students in the 35 participating schools to consideration of the frequency of opposite sex bullying and hurting and the second (Table 5.18) provides comparative data between the current research sample and The Collins Report research groups on the same issue.

Table 5.17 Indicator Group1: Incidence of Sex-Based Harassment: (d) Opposite Sex Bullying and Hurting

	Female Response (%)			Male Response (%)			χ^2 (2, N=961)
	Often	Sometimes	Never	Often	Sometimes	Never	
Girls get their path blocked by boys or boys corner them in ways that worry or embarrass them	10.4	38.0	51.6	5.4	40.2	54.4	7.80*
Boys get their path blocked by girls or girls corner them in ways that worry or embarrass them	2.0	23.9	74.1	4.9	24.4	70.7	6.47

*p<.025

In the current research, data were also tabulated for blocking/cornering behaviours by boys to girls and by girls to boys. Table 5.17 demonstrates the difference in this experience for girls and boys. Two χ^2 tests were conducted on the items in this section of Indicator Group 1 and as shown in Table 5.17, statistically significant results between male and female students were found on one of these items.

In response to the item, *Girls get their path blocked by boys or boys corner them in ways that worry or embarrass them*, significantly more girls (10.4%) than boys (5.4%) reported that this was experienced often by girls. Although not statistically significant, an indicator of differing experiences and/or perceptions was reflected in response to the other item whereby more boys (4.9%) than girls (2.0%) reported that boys often had their path blocked by girls or that girls cornered them in ways that worried or embarrassed them.

There were 32 comments by girls and five by boys that addressed concerns about bullying and hurting. Two particular issues cited were being bullied for liking a boy or a girl and for one's cultural background. Other comments focused on the behaviour without addressing the reason:

Boys hurt students and tease them. I do not like this and ask for you to find a solution to this. (Girl, school 10)

The boys think they are tougher than the girls and expect us to be scared of them. (Girl, school 13)

Comparison with 1996 Results on (d) Opposite Sex Bullying and Hurting

Comparative data provided by The Collins Report for opposite sex bullying and hurting were only for the total 1996 group. Percentage results are given for the ‘often’ response.

Table 5.18 Comparison with 1996 Results on Sex-Based Harassment: (d) Opposite Sex Bullying and Hurting

	Female Current Sample	Male Current Sample	<i>Often Response(%)</i>		
			1996 Total Sample	1996 Total NSW	1996 Total Cath.
Girls get their path blocked by boys or boys corner them in ways that worry or embarrass them	10.4	5.4	11.0	-	-
Boys get their path blocked by girls or girls corner them in ways that worry or embarrass them	2.0	4.9	4.2	-	-

Note: The Collins Report results were not provided for the NSW sample or the Catholic sector sample.

In terms of opposite sex bullying, the results for the 1996 sample were very similar to those of the girls in the current sample for incidences of boys bullying girls and very similar to the boys in the current sample for the incidences of girls bullying boys. The Collins Report results were not given separately for girls and boys and so it is difficult to determine gender similarities and differences in response to these behaviours.

Discussion of Findings for Indicator Group 1: Incidence of Sex-Based Harassment

Student experiences of specific forms of sex-based harassment would seem to indicate that schools have responded to this gender policy priority area in a number of ways and that in some specific areas less progress is apparent. Verbal sex-based harassment was reported by both genders as occurring less often for boys and girls compared to the 1996 research samples. Of note were the lower percentage results on all items of this section for both samples from the Catholic sector, the current research group and the 1996 Catholic sector research group. In this particular section, gender differences were noted whereby girls’ perceptions of this experience for girls were higher than those of the boys whereas boys’ perceptions of this experience for boys were higher than those of the girls.

Gender differences were seen also in response to items relating to physical sex-based harassment whereby a higher percentage of girls reported that this happened to girls and a

higher percentage of boys reported that it happened to boys. Comparative data also demonstrated that little progress was evident in some areas of physical sex-based harassment.

Findings in the area of same sex and opposite sex bullying demonstrated shared perceptions of this experience for girls but a difference between girls' and boys' perception of the frequency of the occurrence of same sex bullying for boys. Nevertheless, the percentage response to all items reflected concerns expressed by students about this issue.

Comparative findings demonstrated that students in the current study and those in the 1996 Catholic sector sample reported a lower frequency response to many items on verbal sex-based harassment, physical sex-based harassment and same-sex bullying. The connection between Catholic culture, Catholic values and student experience of gender at school was a theme identified in this study and it could contribute to an understanding of responses in this particular indicator group. One particular area of concern for this study was the relationship between those findings that related to the Catholic context that emerged in this research phase and the data pertaining to teacher and principal experience of gender reform at school detailed in the next two chapters.

The issue of harassment as discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4, has been addressed in many gender policy documents, in a number of reports (*Girls in Schools Reports*, 1988-1994) and in studies which have addressed the impact of these policy directions on school practice (Cuttance, 1994; Kenway & Willis, 1993; Large, 1993; Milligan, 1992; The Collins Report). The reasons behind incidences of sex-based harassment as reported by students in this section being of a lower frequency rate would seem to indicate that schools may have put into place some appropriate strategies to address this issue. This finding is examined in the next section in light of discussion of student responses to Indicator Group 2: Addressing Sex-Based Harassment.

However, different perceptions of boys and girls to this experience at school were clearly evident in this indicator group. It would appear that lack of awareness and/or understanding of what is occurring for the opposite gender in terms of sex-based

harassment could be a factor in ongoing occurrences of this behaviour. That students require a deeper understanding of sex-based harassment and how it impacts on others is a clear challenge for schools and has implications for leadership for gender equity. The intersection of this consideration with other student questionnaire results as well as with data from the teacher and principal questionnaire should provide appropriate directions for principals to explore in addressing this gender issue.

Indicator Group 2: Addressing Sex-Based Harassment

There are two tables in this section. The first (Table 5.19) provides a summary of the response of the students in the 35 participating schools to consideration of specific school strategies to address sex-based harassment and the second (Table 5.20) provides comparative data between the current research sample and The Collins Report research groups on the same issue.

Table 5.19 Indicator Group 2: Addressing Sex-Based Harassment

	<i>Female Response (%)</i>			<i>Male Response (%)</i>			χ^2 (2, <i>N</i> =961)
	True	Not True	Don't Know	True	Not True	Don't Know	
I have been taught what sex-based (sexual) harassment is before today	69.2	30.8	-	65.7	34.3	-	1.34
There are clear rules and steps for dealing with sex-based harassment and kids and teachers know what they are	63.8	36.2	-	62.9	37.1	-	0.09
If kids complain about sex-based (sexual) harassment, nothing happens	9.6	66.5	23.9	13.1	61.3	25.6	3.99

Findings for Indicator Group 2: Addressing Sex-Based Harassment

Three χ^2 tests were conducted on items in this indicator group and data shown in Table 5.19 demonstrate similarity in response between males and females on these items. No differences were significant at $p < .017$.

Recognising and Naming Sex-Based Harassment

The first item in this section asked students to indicate if they had been taught what sexual harassment was. Data noted in Table 5.19 show that 65.7% of boys and 69.2% of girls believed that they had been taught this.

School Policies and Procedures for Dealing with Sex-Based Harassment

The second item invited students to indicate whether they knew if there were clear rules and procedures, known to both students and teachers, to deal with sex-based harassment at school. Table 5.19 demonstrates that 62.9% of boys and 63.8% of girls answered 'true' to this.

Follow Up Procedures for Complaints of Sex-Based Harassment

The third item asked student response to the statement that nothing happened if a student made a complaint about sex-based harassment. Table 5.19 indicates a very important finding, that although a low percentage of girls (9.6%) and boys (13.1%) indicated that nothing happened at their school in response to a student complaint about sex-based harassment, 23.9% of girls and 25.6% of boys reported that they did not know what happened if 'kids' complained about sex-based harassment. No student comments were made in relation to this Indicator Group.

Comparison with 1996 Results on Addressing Sex-Based Harassment

Data from The Collins Report were provided as percentages of girls and boys from each of the 1996 samples giving the 'often' response.

Table 5.20 Comparison with 1996 Results on Indicator Group 2: Addressing Sex-Based Harassment

	<i>'True' Response(%)</i>				
	Female Current Sample	Male Current Sample	1996 Total Sample	1996 Total NSW	1996 Total Cath.
I have been taught what sex-based (sexual) harassment is	69.2	65.7	72.2	71.8	71.1
There are clear rules and steps for dealing with sex-based (sexual) harassment and kids and teachers know what they are	63.8	62.9	65.3	62.1	59.7
If someone complains of sex-based harassment, action is taken	66.5	61.3	60.5	56.8	58.3

Table 5.20 shows that on one item, that pertaining to being taught what sexual harassment is, the 1996 samples indicated a higher percentage response than that of the current research sample. In terms of clear rules for dealing with sex-based harassment, comparative data indicate that the total 1996 sample had the highest proportion of students who believed that this was true and that the current research group had a higher percentage response than the other two 1996 research samples. A higher proportion of boys and girls from the current research sample than of all 1996 samples considered that at their school steps were taken if someone complained about sex-based harassment.

Discussion of Findings for Indicator Group 2: Addressing Sex-Based Harassment

The response of the current research sample to the area of addressing sex-based harassment is highlighted for particular mention. Although there are areas of improvement indicated in comparison to The Collins Report results, over 30% of girls and boys in the current research sample reported that they had not been taught what sexual harassment is, that they did not know of the existence of rules and procedures for dealing with sex-based harassment, nor did they see that something happens at school if someone complains about sex-based harassment. These particular findings reflect those of Cuttance (1995) whereby many secondary school students indicated that there was little understanding of grievance processes for sexual harassment and there was also clear agreement that they would not report harassment.

The review of literature in Chapter 2 and the Policy Analysis in Chapter 4 (Table 4.6, pp. 112-113) demonstrated that policy emphases over the last decade have focused on gender relations and specifically on the importance of addressing sex-based harassment. From Milligan (1992) through to the Butorac and Lymon (1998) study, a major outcome of gender research has been the acknowledgement of the impact of sex-based harassment on a student's ability to fully participate in the schooling process. It would appear however, that addressing sex-based harassment was still an issue in some of the participating schools. These findings accord with those of The Collins Report that demonstrated that Catholic schools had the lowest percentage response to documenting processes for addressing and reporting of sex-based harassment.

This is of particular importance when considered alongside two further findings from The

Collins Report which noted that teachers were most willing to take action in gender-related areas where there were clear school policies and procedures and that teachers from the Catholic system expressed the lowest rate of satisfaction with professional development in the area of sex-based harassment.

A further important observation made in The Collins Report was that there appeared to be a clear difference in levels of harassment between those States which had addressed the issue in comparison with those States that had not. Clearly, improvements in this critical area were demonstrated when a policy response had been formalised.

These findings have implications for leadership for gender equity at a local level, particularly for principals of those schools that have not formalised a policy to address harassment nor instituted actual procedures to deal with incidences of harassment. It would also be critical to ascertain whether school staff support those who make a complaint and if school staff have had appropriate professional development in order to have the understandings of the issue and to know how to respond appropriately. This theme, named as a direct management responsibility in The Collins Report, was taken up in Chapter 6 and 7 and the implications for principals in their leadership of gender equity were developed in Chapter 8.

Indicator Group 4: Provision of a Supportive Interpersonal Environment

There are two tables in this section. The first (Table 5.21) provides a summary of the response of the students in the 35 participating schools to consideration of provision of a supportive interpersonal environment and the second (Table 5.22) provides comparative data between the current research sample and The Collins Report research groups on the same issue.

Table 5.21 Indicator Group 4: Provision of a Supportive Interpersonal Environment

	Female Response (%)			Male Response (%)			χ^2 (2, N=961)
	True	Not True	Don't Know	True	Not True	Don't Know	
The same standard of behaviour is expected of girls and boys	89.8	10.2	-	85.2	14.8	-	4.72
Punishment is the same for girls and boys (if they do the same thing)	75.8	14.4	9.8	55.7	33.0	11.2	51.27*
Kids get hassled for talking to or caring about kids of the opposite sex	47.8	52.2	-	49.1	50.9	-	0.15
Kids are nice to all kinds of other kids not just to those who are like them	67.6	32.4	-	59.5	40.5	-	6.75
Teachers notice quiet students and check that they are OK	82.0	18.0	-	79.1	20.9	-	1.24
There are school staff who listen and know how to help when kids need to talk about their problems and feelings	81.9	18.1	-	78.3	21.7	-	1.94
There is an area where only girls are allowed at lunch time	4.7	95.3	-	8.6	91.4	-	6.03
Girls' uniform, or standard clothing, includes slacks or track pants, shorts or culottes	66.7	20.9	12.4	46.4	22.8	30.8	56.38*

* $p < .006$ *

Findings for Indicator Group 4: Provision of a Supportive Interpersonal Environment

This particular indicator group elicited much feedback from participants. A total of 57 comments were given by girls, representing 11% of the total sample of girls and 26 by boys, representing 6% of the total sample of boys.

Eight χ^2 tests were conducted on the data collected on the items in this indicator group and as shown in Table 5.21, statistically significant differences between male and female responses were found on two of these items. In response to the item, *Punishment is the same for girls and boys (if they do the same thing)*, significantly more girls (75.8%) than boys (55.7%) believed this to be true. Although not statistically significant, there was a difference in response which could indicate different gender experiences in behaviour expectations whereby a higher percentage of girls (89.8%) than boys (85.2%) considered that the same standard of behaviour is expected of boys and girls. This is clearly an issue

of concern, particularly in light of the fact that 44% of boys did not see that they are treated fairly in terms of punishment for the same misbehaviour as girls.

Eighteen comments were made by girls on this issue and 18 by boys. The majority (67%) of the girls' comments spoke of being treated fairly and equally, the remainder gave the opposite opinion. The majority (89%) of boys' comments expressed concerns about gender bias of teachers regarding student expectations and behaviour management. The breadth of these responses can be seen in the following examples:

I think it doesn't matter if you are a boy or girl because we all get treated fairly. (Girl, school 7)

I think some of the teachers at my school are sexist and boys get punished more than girls. Where a boy would get suspended, a girl cries and gets let off. (Boy, school 14)

I would just like to say that I am thankful for being treated the same as others. (Boy, school 18)

Some teachers like girls better or boys better. If they are a male teacher they like girls. A female teacher likes boys better. (Girl, school 21)

Two questions asked the participants about caring attitudes and interpersonal relationships between students. Although 49.1% of boys and 47.8% of girls said students were hassled for talking to or caring for students of the opposite sex, a higher percentage of boys (59.5%) and girls (67.6%) said students were nice to all kinds of students, not just to those who were like them.

Four boys and 21 girls made comments relevant to this issue. The majority of these comments by boys (75%) and girls (71%) focused on the positive aspects of student interpersonal relationships demonstrated by the following examples:

Well, I enjoy being myself as a boy and helping my opposite sex as well. (Boy, school 3)

I interact well with my friends at school and my parents are divorced. And when I am upset my two best friends comfort me and make me feel wanted! Also, sometimes I feel it's easy to get along with boys than girls. (Girl, school 23)

Two questions asked participants about caring attitudes and behaviours of school staff. When asked if teachers noticed quiet students and checked if they were OK the response of girls and boys were similar in that 82% of girls and 79.1% of boys said 'true'. Similarly, when asked if there were school staff who listened and knew how to help when students needed to talk about their problems and feelings, 81.9% of girls and 78.3% of boys replied 'true'. There were five comments focusing on this area, and the following example supports the experiences that students reported in their questionnaire responses:

Most of the time it is a fun and safe school and it (is) great to know you can have a friendly chat with (the) opposite sex and teachers about any problems or difficulties. (Girl, school 18)

The final two questions in this section explored issues specifically related to girls. Very few students (4.7% of girls and 8.6% of boys) reported that there was an area where only girls were allowed at lunchtime. There was a statistically significant difference between the percentage of girls (66.7%) and boys (46.4%) who said that the standard uniform for girls included slacks, track pants, shorts or culottes. As this item pertains to set school policy, it is difficult to explain why there was such a difference in perception. It could be that some boys were not aware of what school uniform requirements were for girls or that in some schools, girls exercised a choice and that different options were worn of which boys were not aware. It is important to note the high percentage of girls who apparently do not have the uniform option of slacks, track pants, shorts or culottes at their school. One student commented on this issue:

I don't like the girls' uniforms e.g. for sport I would rather wear shorts.
(Girl, school 32)

Comparison with 1996 Results on Provision of a Supportive Interpersonal Environment

Comparative data from The Collins Report for student response to provision of a supportive interpersonal environment were not provided separately for girls and boys.

Table 5.22 Comparison with 1996 Results on Provision of a Supportive Interpersonal Environment

	'True' Response(%)				
	Female Current Sample	Male Current Sample	1996 Total Sample	1996 Total NSW	1996 Total Cath.
The same standard of behaviour is expected of girls and boys	89.8	85.2	83.4	83.1	85.3
Punishment is the same for girls and boys (if they do the same thing)	75.8	55.7	62.6	63.0	63.3
It is normal to have friends of both sexes	47.8	49.1	48.8	46.8	50.8
Kids are nice to all kinds of other kids not just to those who are like them	67.6	59.5	56.2	55.0	59.1
Teachers notice quiet students and check that they are OK	82.0	79.1	72.2	69.3	71.0
There are school staff who listen and know how to help when kids need to talk about their problems and feelings	81.9	78.3	76.3	76.1	76.0
There is an area where only girls are allowed at lunch time	4.7	8.6	11.7	11.6	10.9
Girls' uniform, or standard clothing, includes slacks or track pants, shorts or culottes	66.7	46.4	66.9	63.7	58.6

Data recorded in Table 5.22 demonstrate clear differences across a number of the items. In particular, the two items asking about response of staff to students received a more positive response from the current research group, whereby almost 10% more students from the current group believed that teachers in their school noticed quiet students and checked if they were OK and a higher proportion of both boys and girls from the current group also considered that there are staff at their school who listen to and help students. The other item on which responses from the current group were comparatively higher was that which sought a response on whether, *Kids are nice to all kinds of other kids not just to those who are like them*.

Comparative data on the item relating to punishment for the same misbehaviour indicate that a higher proportion of girls from the current group in comparison to all 1996 samples believed that this was true whereas a lower percentage of boys from the current group than all 1996 samples gave the same response. Provision of a girls only area was certainly no more a priority for the participating schools than it was in the 1996 research and issues around flexibility for girls' uniform had not changed for the current research group.

Discussion of Findings for Indicator Group 4: Provision of a Supportive Interpersonal Environment

Discussion of policy directions in Chapters 2 and 4 highlighted gender relations as a specific policy emphasis of the 1980s and 1990s. *The national policy for the education of girls in Australian schools* (1987) signalled new policy directions that had an emphasis on supportive school environment which sprang from research findings highlighting the issue of sexual harassment of girls and *National plan for the education of girls 1993-7* (1993), gave critical attention to addressing the construction of gender. Although there appeared to have been some progress made in some aspects of this gender policy priority area, there still remained a large number of students who considered that students were hassled if they talked to students of the opposite sex.

The difference between the response of boys and girls to the issue of punishment is also worthy of note as only 55.7% of boys in comparison to 75.8% of girls saw that punishment was the same for girls and boys and 11.2% of boys indicated that they didn't know if punishment was the same for girls and boys. That some schools (as reported in Chapters 6 and 7) have initiated gender equity reform in response to perceived issues of gender inequality in student management highlights the importance of this issue. Teachers and principals at these schools also consider that evaluation and development of an equitable student management plan has enabled them to address issues of gender inequality and this points to directions that staff in other schools could follow. This response clearly highlights implications for leadership for gender equity in terms of initiating and facilitating an evaluation process on a whole school approach to student management.

Worthy of consideration in data analysis for this indicator group was the very positive response of participants to the items about staff at their school. A high proportion of students affirmed staff for their role in creating a supportive interpersonal environment and this gives credence to the importance of this policy direction in underpinning gender equity directions that are formed and based on respectful, caring relationships. Of interest, then is also the positive response given by the participants to the item asking how students treated each other, particularly those who were not like them. Further development of this theme, particularly as it relates to understandings around the culture of the Catholic

school, was undertaken in the next three chapters.

Indicator Group 6: Personal Concerns Related to Gender Construction at School

There are two tables in this section. The first (Table 5.23) provides a summary of the response of the students in the 35 participating schools to the questions asking participants to respond to how often they personally experienced particular feelings at school and the second (Table 5.24) provides comparative data between the current research sample and The Collins Report research groups on the same issue.

Table 5.23 Indicator Group 6: Personal Concerns Related to Gender Construction at School

	<i>Female Response (%)</i>			<i>Male Response (%)</i>			χ^2 (2, <i>N</i> =961)
	Often	Sometimes	Never	Often	Sometimes	Never	
I worry about kids being nasty to me	18.8	51.9	29.3	13.5	49.5	36.9	8.53
I worry about being bullied	15.2	38.5	46.2	13.7	33.9	53.5	5.05
I feel safe at this school	72.6	23.0	4.3	69.7	25.5	4.9	1.02
I worry about sexual harassment from boys	8.9	23.8	67.4	7.2	16.4	76.4	9.95
I worry about sexual harassment from girls	6.6	15.2	78.2	5.1	13.6	81.4	1.75
I feel happy when I'm at school	54.8	41.6	3.6	46.0	43.2	10.9	21.85*
I worry about how I look (too skinny, too fat, too short, too tall, not good looking, clothes not right, etc.)	28.8	42.4	28.8	20.3	32.7	47.0	34.18*
I worry about not being good at the things which make you popular at this school	17.7	32.7	49.6	14.3	31.3	54.4	2.88
I feel depressed when I'm at school	4.7	35.5	59.8	6.7	37.1	56.2	2.35
I feel able to be the person I want to be at this school	59.7	33.5	6.8	60.8	28.1	11.1	7.33

* $p < .005$

Findings for Indicator Group 6: Personal Concerns Related to Gender Construction at School

Ten questions asked participants to indicate if they often or sometimes worried about specific concerns at school. Seventy three comments were made by girls pertaining to this indicator group representing 14% of the total sample of girls. Of these comments, 45 (62%) spoke in a positive way regarding personal experiences of gender construction at

school. Thirty three comments were made by boys representing 8% of the total sample of boys. Of these comments, 28 (85%) spoke of personal experiences of gender construction at school in a positive way.

Ten χ^2 tests were conducted on the data collected on items in Indicator Group 6 and as shown in Table 5.23, statistically significant differences between male and female students were found on two of these items. The issue of personal appearance signalled a serious concern with significantly more girls (28.8%) than boys (20.3%) saying they often worried about the way they looked. This particular worry was commented on by 14 girls and two boys who wrote about being judged, teased, or concerned about aspects of their appearance shown in the following examples:

I wish boys would realise that when you've been called fatty and things like that since kindergarten it doesn't bother you anymore. (Girl, school 14)

YES! People hate the way I look. They say I look ugly. (Boy, school 7)

Sometimes I feel ugly and fat because people call me that. (Girl, school 15)

In school there is often a problem with how you look or what you weigh. (Girl, school 24)

Being a boy is hard especially when you get teased about being fat. (Boy, school 23)

The other item on which there was significant difference was that which asked of students how often, *I feel happy when I'm at school*. Significantly more girls (54.8%) than boys (46%) reported that they often experienced this feeling. Indeed, 10.9% of boys in comparison to 3.6% of girls reported that they never felt happy at school. Worrying about students being nasty to them was experienced often by 18.8% of girls and 13.5% of boys. Worrying about being bullied was experienced often by 15.2% of the girls and 12.7% of boys. Five comments were made pertaining to this item, each of which provided a personal reflection on bullying seen in the following examples:

I hate bullies. (Boy, school 21)

I always feel I'm going to be hurt. (Girl, school 17)

Whilst the percentage of students worrying about sexual harassment was lower than for the first two concerns, there were some important indicators in their responses. The percentage of girls (8.9%) and boys (7.2%) who worried often about sexual harassment from boys was similar. However, the percentage was higher for girls (23.8%) than boys (16.4%) worrying about this sometimes. A lower percentage of students reported worrying about sexual harassment from girls with 6.6% of girls and 5.1% of boys saying that they worried about this often.

Participants were asked how often they worried about not being good at the things that made you popular at their particular school and 17.7% of girls and 14.3% of boys replied 'often'. Eight comments were made by students regarding feeling pressure to do and to be what makes you popular or about the consequences when you do not. The following examples demonstrated the feelings around this issue:

Because I dance I get teased a lot because I am a male. (Boy, school 23)

Well I really only have problems with what people think of me. I worry a bit about it and sometimes feel down. Our school is also based on popularity. You feel sorry for people below you, but scared of the people higher than you. Especially when a boy says something and a girl laughs. I'm in the middle of this pop chart. (Girl, school 35)

Whilst the percentages of boys (6.7%) and girls (4.7%) who reported feeling depressed often at school were low, similar high percentages of both girls (35.5%) and boys (37.1%) reported feeling depressed sometimes at school. Five comments were made in this regard, the following example reflects the depth of feeling expressed:

I hate my school except friends. (Boy, school 10)

On the issue of the school being seen as a safe place, there was agreement between boys and girls with 72.6% of girls and 69.7% of boys saying that they felt safe often at school. This item received the highest percentage response at the 'often' scale in this section.

Twenty five girls and six boys wrote of feeling safe and happy at their school. This can be seen in the following examples:

I feel safe about being at school and I don't worry about sexual harassment.
(Boy, school 11)

I like being a girl at this school. I enjoy school. (Girl, school 10)

I am very happy and comfortable at this school. (Boy, school 3)

I think being a boy or girl at my school is safe because no-one is ever sexually harassed. And it's just a safe school. (Girl, school 29)

Responses of boys and girls were very similar to being asked if they were able to be the person they wanted to be at their school with 60.8% of boys and 59.7% of girls reporting that they experienced this often. In the student comments, 19 girls and 21 boys wrote positively about this experience at school. This is reflected in the following examples:

I feel comfortable being a boy and if I could change my sex I wouldn't.
(Boy, school 3)

It is great being who I am because everyone respects that. (Girl, school 10)

Comparison with 1996 Results on Personal Concerns Related to Gender Construction at School

The 1996 data were reported in terms of the percentage of the total samples that answered 'often' to seven of the items in this indicator group.

Table 5.24 Comparison with 1996 Results on Personal Concerns Related to Gender Construction at School

	<i>'Often' Response (%)</i>				
	Female Current Sample	Male Current Sample	1996 Total Sample	1996 Total NSW	1996 Total Cath.
I worry about kids being nasty to me	18.8	13.5	17.8	19.3	16.9
I worry about being bullied	15.2	12.7	13.7	15.0	11.0
I worry about sexual harassment from boys	8.9	7.2	10.2	10.9	7.3
I worry about sexual harassment from girls	6.6	5.1	5.5	5.1	3.9
I worry about how I look (too skinny, too fat, too short, too tall, not good looking, clothes not right etc.)	28.8	20.3	25.7 a	26.4	26.0
I worry about not being good at the things that make you popular at this school	17.7	14.3	17.5 b	18.6	14.9
I feel depressed when I'm at school	4.7	6.7	8.6	9.2	7.3

a. The Collins Report also provided female response for 1996 Sample: 32.0%.

b. The Collins Report also provided female response for 1996 Sample: 22.0%.

The Collins Report did not report on those items included in Table 5.23 which sought a response from students about feeling safe, happy, able to be the person they wanted to be. Most item responses were reported as the combined percentage of both genders but on two questions, the results were reported separately for girls and boys.

Of considerable importance is the lower percentage of responses given by boys in the current group in comparison to all other groups on four items indicating that comparatively fewer boys in the current research group worried about other students being nasty to them, about sexual harassment from boys, about their appearance or about not being good at the things that make you popular at school. With the exception of the 1996 Catholic sector results, boys from the current research group also recorded a lower frequency for worrying about being bullied or about sexual harassment by girls. Responses by both girls and boys in the current group were the lowest of all groups in terms of feeling depressed often whilst at school.

The comparative responses of girls in the current research sample were not as positive as those of the boys. On two items, worrying about being bullied and worrying about sexual

harassment from girls, the girls in the current research group recorded a higher 'often' response than all other samples. On a further two items, worrying about students being nasty to them, and about their appearance, girls in the current research group recorded a higher percentage of 'often' responses than two of the three 1996 groups.

Discussion of Findings for Indicator Group 6: Personal Concerns Related Gender Construction at School

In this indicator group, although gender differences were apparent and progress appeared to have been made for boys on many of the items, there were some ongoing concerns registered by students. These particularly centred on fear of being bullied, of students being nasty to them, of sexual harassment from boys and girls and of not being good at the things that made students popular. A particular concern was noted in that 10.9% of boys reported that they never felt happy at school.

It is important to note that these results have come from participants despite their very positive responses regarding the role of school staff in providing a supportive interpersonal environment at their school as noted in Table 5.21, p. 170 and Table 5.22, p. 173. There was an obvious need to return to this particular policy area and investigate in depth the factors contributing to student concerns related to gender construction, and to investigate the alignment of these findings with differing perceptions of boys and girls about fair disciplinary processes and their differing experiences of bullying, that would clearly impact on their experience at school, both within and beyond the classroom.

Particular pressure was reported by a high percentage of students about body image. Why these concerns remain such an issue despite clear gender policy directions, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, is an area to be addressed and is thus signalled for further discussion. There is the need to examine these experiences as reported by students in connection to student responses to other priority areas, particularly those that have implications for pedagogy and enhancement of gender relations. Specific policy documents highlighted the need for schools to address the ways to enhance the self-esteem of students, particularly girls, (Table 4.6, pp.112-113; Table 4.10, p. 119) and hence there are implications for school leadership and for further research in this specific Pastoral Care domain.

Indicator Group 11: Balance of Emphasis among Non-Academic Activities

There are two tables in this section. The first (Table 5.25) provides a summary of the response of the students in the 35 participating schools to student experience of the balance of emphasis among non-academic activities and the second (Table 5.26) provides comparative data between the current research sample and The Collins Report research groups on the same issue.

Table 5.25 Indicator Group 11: Balance of Emphasis among Non-Academic Activities

	<i>Female Response (%)</i>		<i>Male Response (%)</i>		χ^2 (1, <i>N</i> =961)
	True	Not True	True	Not True	
I have taken part in team sport	85.4	14.6	85.2	14.8	.02
I have taken part in other ways to keep fit	74.3	25.7	61.4	38.6	18.60*
I have been involved in helping others	94.7	5.3	87.4	12.6	16.61*
I have taken part in performances or displays	90.4	9.6	60.9	39.1	117.42*

$p < .013^*$

Findings for Indicator Group 11: Balance of Emphasis among Non-Academic Activities

The four items in this indicator group sought student response regarding opportunities for involvement at school beyond the classroom. Four χ^2 tests were collected on data collected on the items in this indicator group and as shown in Table 5.25, statistically significant differences between male and female students were found on three of the four items.

There was agreement between girls and boys in terms of opportunities at school to become involved in team sport with 85.4% of girls and 85.2% of boys answering ‘true’ to this item. If this response reflects opportunities for students to do so within the formal K-6 curriculum of Personal Development, Health, Physical Education or within the school’s sport program, it would be important to question why 14.6% of girls and 14.8% of boys replied ‘not true’ on this item.

There was a clear difference in the experience of girls and boys in terms of participating in other ways to keep fit whereby a smaller proportion of students answered ‘true’.

Significantly more girls (74.3%) than boys (61.4%) indicated that this was true for them at their school. It would be of interest to examine whether this response was because of a difference in opportunities offered at school or because of motivation. For example, the link could be explored between girls' response to this item and their concerns around pressures to conform to a particular body image as reported in Table 5.23, p. 175 and Table 5.24, p. 179.

There was also a difference for girls and boys participating in displays or performances with significantly more girls (90.4%) than boys (60.9%) answering 'true' to this item. Responses to this item call for further examination. In terms of the rationale behind this gender policy direction, there is a need to determine why boys are not engaging in performances or displays.

It would be of benefit to explore the connection between these responses and those to earlier items to understand if this result is connected to lack of opportunity, little encouragement, teacher views that boys won't behave appropriately, other activities seen to be more appealing to boys, perceptions by boys that these activities are for girls, or other factors. The item to which the highest percentage response was given by girls and boys related to the experience of helping others at school. However, significantly more girls (94.7%) than boys (87.4%) indicated that this was true for them at their school.

There were three comments made, all by girls, pertaining to this indicator group. Two reflect a perception that opportunities in creative performance could be broadened and one indicates satisfaction with existing opportunities:

I think they should make a (dance) group for girls and boys who enjoy it.
(Girl, school 22)

We don't do any dancing at our school and we do other sports. (Girl, school 26)

The boys and girls in Year 6 often get involved in things. (Girl, school 15)

Comparison with 1996 Results on Balance of Emphasis among Non-Academic Activities

The Collins Report results gave emphasis to examining girls' experience of participation across non-academic activities. This can be seen in Table 5.26.

Table 5.26 Comparison with 1996 Results on Balance of Emphasis among Non-Academic Activities

	<i>Female 'Often' Response (%)</i>				<i>Male 'Often' Response (%)</i>			
	Current Sample	1996 Total	1996 NSW	1996 Cath.	Current Sample	1996 Total	1996 NSW	1996 Cath.
I have taken part in team sport	85.4	87.9	85.2	87.9	85.2	-	-	-
I have taken part in other ways to keep fit	74.3	72.0	69.6	69.1	61.4	63.0	-	-
I have been involved in helping others	94.7	87.0	87.1	84.0	87.4	78.0	-	-
I have taken part in performances or displays	90.4	86.0	82.2	80.4	60.9	73.0	-	-

Note: The Collins Report results were not provided for boys from all 1996 samples.

The comparative results indicate that there has not been obvious change in the participating schools in the opportunity for participation in team sport since The Collins Report. In the other three areas, however, participation in performances or displays, participation in other ways to keep fit, and involvement with helping others, the data show a higher proportion of girls in the current study indicated that this was true for them at their school. Conversely, on two of these items, participation in performances or displays and participation in other ways to keep fit, a lower proportion of boys in the current study recorded that this was true for them at their school than students in all other samples.

On one item, involvement in helping others, the current research sample response indicated a higher percentage involvement and where percentages are reported separately for girls and boys, these demonstrated that this experience was more frequent for both genders in the current research sample.

Discussion of Findings for Indicator Group 11: Balance of Emphasis Among Non-Academic Activities

The authors of The Collins Report saw results in this particular indicator group as providing feedback on the extent to which schools have moved from an emphasis on competitive sport, traditionally seen as a masculine domain, to a balance of emphasis among a range of non-academic activities. They saw, too, that it was important to gain information on whether schools were placing importance on a range of caring activities, more traditionally seen as a female domain. Results from the current research group indicate that there has been little movement since the 1996 research in terms of student participation in team sport but improvement in other areas, particularly for girls.

Responses to Indicator Group 3 indicated that there had been some response by schools to provision of equal encouragement and support to participation and achievement of girls' sports teams (Table 5.1, p. 131) but this does not appear to be indicated in these results. Of concern is the high percentage of boys who indicated that they did not participate in ways other than sport to keep fit or participate in performances or displays. The reasons that these choices were still so clearly gender based are important questions for principals and teachers to address and provide possibilities for ongoing research at school level.

Of note is the positive response by boys and girls to participation in an activity focused on caring for others. Although no comment related to this area was made by students, the very high percentage response indicates that this is encouraged and supported at school level. In terms of the stated values of Catholic schools, an emphasis on care and concern for others is fundamental. This finding is highlighted as contributing to the emerging theme of the relationship between the Catholic foundational values of the schools participating in the current study and formation of student gender understandings and school response to gender equity issues.

SUMMARY

In this chapter there has been a detailed analysis and discussion of the responses of 961 Year 6 students from 35 participating schools to the student questionnaire. The results have been reported and discussed utilising indicator group headings based on gender

policy priority areas that formed the basis for analysis in The Collins Report. A connecting link between this analysis for Research Phase 2 and policy analysis in Research Phase 1 as well as teacher and principal questionnaire analysis in Research Phase 3, was provided by the framework of the Policy Analysis Template for data reporting and discussion utilising the four major headings of the Policy Analysis Template. Table 5.27 provides a summary of these key results.

Table 5.27 Summary Results on Students' Experience of Gender at School

Significant Gender Differences	Improvement Since 1996	Little or No Improvement Since 1996
<i>School Organisation and Administration</i>		
Provision to girls of sports equipment/ space to play	Equitable support and affirmation of girls sports teams	Provision of safe/private toilets
	Girls' use of computers out of class	
<i>Teaching and Learning</i>		
Taught how to present point of view	Taught about different ways of being male/female	Class discussion about being male/female
	Taught how to handle gender expectations	Taught about sexual behaviour and development
	Taught how to present point of view	Boys disrupt classes
Boys' attention-seeking behaviour	Girls/boys make fun of others' answers/ tease others	
Discussion in class of work expectations	Girls disrupt classes/ attention-seeking behaviour	
Work is made interesting	Gender-aware teaching strategies	
<i>Pastoral Care</i>		
Verbal sex-based harassment of girls	Verbal and written sex-based harassment of boys/girls	Physical sex-based harassment of boys and girls
Interference of girls' clothing	Interference of girls' and boys' clothing	Blocking/cornering of girls by girls
Blocking cornering of boys by boys	Blocking cornering of boys by boys	Boys bullying/hurting boys
	Girls bullying/hurting girls	Opposite sex bullying
Blocking cornering of girls by boys	Teaching about sex-based harassment	Addressing sex-based harassment
Equitable punishment	Provision of supportive interpersonal environment	Flexibility in girls' uniform
Feel happy at school		Personal concerns related to gender construction at school
Concerns about personal appearance		
Involvement in helping others/ displays/other ways to keep fit	Involvement in helping others	Balance of emphasis among non- academic activities

Research Phase 2 has provided a clear picture of the gender experiences of students in the participating schools. There have been specific understandings developed about experiences on which there was strong agreement among girls and boys and other areas on which there was significant difference. There has also been a detailed comparison of the results of the current research group with those of The Collins Report research groups. This has resulted in developing understandings about those gender policy directions which have impacted on student experience of gender at school as well as those that appear to not have taken hold.

Student experience of gender at school provided an important and useful lens through which to gauge schools' responses to gender policy directions and thus to discern implications for school leadership for gender equity. Across the ten indicator groups examined, detailed information emerged as to the extent to which gender policy reform directions have influenced students' experience of gender at school. Statistical analysis of individual questionnaire items and content analysis of student comments facilitated the development of understandings of the connection between policy and practice.

In the next chapter there is a detailed analysis and discussion of teacher response to gender policy directions as ascertained through data from the teacher questionnaire. Appropriate comparison with student response as discussed in this chapter forms an important foundation for formulating recommendations for leadership for gender equity detailed in Chapter 8.

CHAPTER 6

TEACHER EXPERIENCE OF GENDER AT SCHOOL RESEARCH PHASE 3 (a): FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

Following participation by students in Research Phase 2, Student Experience of Gender at School, 61 teachers from 16 participating schools participated in Research Phase 3(a), Teacher Experience of Gender at School. This chapter outlines and discusses the data that emerged from the results from the teacher questionnaire. The information gathered allowed for the analysis and synthesis of action taken by staff in schools in response to gender policy directions. In discussion of the findings, particular attention was paid to the voices of the teachers as they reflected on their understandings of the role of the school principal in the gender reform process.

Critical to this approach was the cultural perspective provided by Willis, Kenway, Rennie and Blackmore (1992) whose focus was on building theories that explained the process of gender reform in schools from an empirical base. They determined that gender reform is read differently by different people depending on their cultural position and so they analysed policy from the macro political level of external policies and from the micro political level of the school.

The connection of the teacher questionnaire to policy documents has been clearly established in this study and in this chapter the emphasis was on participants' reading of gender reform. Analysis of responses thus focused on the dual policy levels, macro and micro, and the interpretation of findings was informed by participants' reflection on their understanding and experience of gender reform.

The cultural perspective suggested by the Willis, Kenway, Rennie and Blackmore (1992) model meant that in interpreting the data in Research Phase 3 (a), the meaning that each

teacher ascribed to the gender reform process was viewed as reflecting the interaction between his/her own cultural position and that of the school culture. Therefore, these meanings were understood to be not necessarily shared or owned by other members of the school community.

Also important was the operational definition of policy by Shaw (1997, p. 64) which was adopted for this study, that “policy is a broad and general direction given to someone to carry out or implement”. This understanding of the parameters of policy enabled examination of the implementation processes and their outcomes as well as of the varying understandings that participants had of gender policy and practice. Particular importance was thus given to policy implementation as process and as outcomes, both seen to be important research focuses in reviewing the efficacy of gender policy directions.

In each section of this chapter, results from the teacher questionnaire have been reported under the appropriate questionnaire heading and utilising the major headings from the Policy Analysis Template. Within each section, results have been presented in table form followed by an overview of the findings in more detail. Detailed discussion of the implications of the findings follows the presentation of the data. The chapter concludes with analysis of the responses to the open-ended questions, the final section of the teacher questionnaire.

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE STRUCTURE

The research tool used to explore teacher experience of gender reform in school was the teacher questionnaire (Appendix H). This survey instrument was developed from policy analysis conducted in Research Phase 1, Gender Policy Analysis. The development process for teacher questionnaire has been detailed in Chapter 3.

There were four overall aims of Research Phase 3 (a) Teacher Experience of Gender Reform in School:

1. To ascertain the response of teachers to gender policy directions in their schools.

2. To seek teachers' understanding and reflection on experience of the role of the principal in the school gender reform process.
3. To compare and contrast teacher responses with those of principals provided in Research Phase 3 (b) and with those of students provided in Research Phase 2.
4. To determine implications for leadership for gender equity in schools.

The teacher questionnaire was structured in four sections:

Section 1: Perceptions of Gender Experiences of Girls and Boys at School

Section 2: Teacher Experience of Professional Development in Specific Gender Issues

Section 3: Priority Given by the School to Specific Areas

Section 4: Open-Ended Questions

Each of the four sections was informed by implications for school practice extracted from the Gender Policy Analysis conducted in Research Phase 1. Reporting of the findings within each section was thus organised utilising the same structure as that developed for the Policy Analysis Template under the four major headings of:

- School Development
- School Organisation and Administration
- Teaching and Learning
- Pastoral Care

Because each questionnaire item had a specific area of focus in terms of policy implications for practice, not all major headings of the framework of the Policy Analysis Template were covered in each questionnaire section. The rationale behind the development of items and their placement within each of the different headings according to the framework of the Policy Analysis Template was described in Chapter 3 (pp. 87–91).

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION 1: PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER EXPERIENCES OF GIRLS AND BOYS AT SCHOOL

Perceptions of Gender Experiences of Girls and Boys at School: Findings

Table 6.1 Teacher Questionnaire Section 1: Perceptions of Gender Experiences of Girls and Boys at School

	<i>True for Boys (%)</i>				<i>True for Girls (%)</i>			
	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
<i>School Organisation and Administration</i>								
Students are awarded/recognised for sporting achievements*	89	11	0	0	84	16	0	0
Students are awarded/recognised for academic achievements	81	12	5	2	88	5	5	2
Students are awarded/recognised for creative achievements	41	44	13	2	49	46	5	0
Students use the school sporting equipment at recess/lunch	56	23	16	5	25	42	27	6
Students play active games at recess/lunch	95	5	0	0	43	43	13	1
Students play music at school liturgies*	15	25	36	24	17	24	35	24
Students dance at school liturgies*	29	46	20	5	52	40	8	0
Students read at school liturgies*	90	8	0	2	95	3	0	2
Students have access to all playground space at recess/lunch	74	21	3	2	67	23	8	2
<i>Teaching and Learning</i>								
Students actively participate in PE programs that emphasise health skills and fitness	92	8	0	0	73	25	2	0

Note: * Questionnaire items developed from gender policy documents written specifically for Catholic schools and/or developed to address the specific Catholic school context.

School Organisation and Administration

Opportunities for girls' and boys' participation in a specific context, that of school liturgies, revealed an insight into creative experiences and opportunities. Teachers' responses demonstrated some similarities and differences to perceptions of boys' and girls' involvement. In particular, only 17% of teachers considered that girls frequently played music at school liturgies and 15% considered that boys frequently played music at

school liturgies, yet 90% saw that boys frequently read at school liturgies at their school and 95% saw that girls frequently read at school liturgies at their school. There were thus only slight differences in how teachers saw this experience for girls and boys. This was contrasted with the large difference in how teachers saw the frequency of student opportunity for dancing at liturgies with 29% of teacher responses indicating that boys did this frequently whilst 52% of teacher responses indicated that this was done frequently by girls.

Perceptions of awarding and recognising students for sporting and academic achievements were similar for both genders where the ‘frequently’ scores were given for both girls and boys by more than 80% of teacher participants. In terms of awarding and recognising students for creative achievements this was reported as occurring frequently at their schools for girls by 49% of participants and for boys by 41% of participants.

Differences in the experience of gender at school for girls and boys was certainly highlighted via responses to items asking about the use of recreational time and facilities. A small difference was recorded in terms of access to playground space at lunchtime with 7% more teachers saying that this happened frequently for boys. A larger difference was seen in student use of sporting equipment at lunchtime whereby 56% of teachers considered that boys did this frequently but only 25% considered that this was a frequent occurrence for girls. Similarly, whereas 95% of respondents considered that boys frequently played active games at recess/lunch only 43% of respondents considered that girls did this frequently.

Teaching and Learning

The last item in this section sought a response related to active participation in Physical Education Programs that had a breadth of emphasis across health, skills and fitness. This was seen to be a frequent occurrence for boys with 92% of teachers recording that this was experienced frequently by boys but only 73% of teachers reported that this happened frequently for girls.

Teacher Questionnaire Section 1: Discussion

The particular considerations in this section were clearly linked to the focus of gender policy in the 1970s on equal opportunity for girls and to that of the 1980s on inclusive curriculum. Policy analysis undertaken in Chapter 4 demonstrated how this was translated into specific school implications for practice (Table 4.4, page 107; Table 4.8, p.116). The language of policy emphasised equality of opportunity, of provision and of access (Gilbert, 1996). Gender policy focused on differential provision to address the specific needs of girls (Hayes, 1996), as well as the elimination of sexism and bias in schools through addressing perceived discriminatory practices. It is surprising that the responses to items in teacher questionnaire Section 1 demonstrated teacher perceptions that boys and girls had different experiences at school in a number of specific areas that had been addressed in many gender policy documents for schools.

A direction for further consideration of these responses could well be provided by Yates (1996) who saw that the limitation of the approach which focused on addressing the disadvantage of girls was that its emphasis was on the message to students about gender inequity rather than on the processes that created the situation. Clearly there are implications for school leadership from these findings that rest on the role of stewardship of the resources and facilities of the school.

Two particular themes are raised for closer attention:

School Organisation and Administration: Sporting Equipment and Recreational Facilities

An assumption reflected in policy documents was that “gender inequities can be resolved when boys and girls are guaranteed equal access to resources and equal rights to participate in activities” (Alloway, 1996, p. 17). Yet despite the emphasis on this domain across many policy documents, teachers saw that girls’ use of sporting equipment at lunch, participation in active games at lunch, and participation in specific areas of Physical Education programs was much less frequent than that of boys.

These findings reflect those of Butorac and Lymon (1998) who found there still remained issues of inequity in schools in terms of playground practices. There is a clear connection

between teacher perceptions and student response in this area as noted in discussion of student questionnaire results in Chapter 5 (pp. 131-135).

School Organisation and Administration: Encouragement and Reward for Participation in Particular Areas of School Life

It is of interest that girls were seen to be awarded/recognised for academic achievements more frequently and boys were seen to be awarded/recognised for sporting achievements more frequently. Boys were seen by teachers to engage in dancing at school liturgies far less frequently than girls. In only one area, reading at school liturgies, did teachers see that boys and girls participated with similar high frequency.

These responses raise some important questions around school awareness and school initiatives in the area of equitable participation in the life of the school. This has been a particular focus for school practice over numerous policies commencing in the 1970s as discussed in Chapter 4 (Table 4.4, p.107; Table 4.8, p. 116). In participating schools, teacher responses suggested that many areas for student involvement, participation and recognition were still along gender stereotyped lines. This was collaborated by students in their responses to similar questionnaire items as discussed in Chapter 5 (pp. 181-184) and reflects the findings of Milligan (1992).

Implications for leadership for gender equity arise from consideration of this data. The review of literature highlighted those areas of gender reform where principals were seen to be instrumental in moving a school forward in addressing gender equity concerns (Clark, 1990; Kenway & Willis, 1993; Large, 1993). In terms of the very basic requirement for all students to be given equal access to all school resources and facilities and to be encouraged to make full use of these, it is clear that the principal plays a pivotal role. Of particular importance is the feedback presented in the *Girls in schools reports* 1988-1991, 1993, that demonstrated whole school support for initiatives where a principal showed interest and ensured appropriate provision of resources to enable directions for gender equity to proceed.

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION 2: TEACHER EXPERIENCE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SPECIFIC GENDER ISSUES

Teacher Experience of Professional Development in Specific Gender Issues: Findings

Table 6.2 Teacher Questionnaire Section 2: Frequency of Teacher Experience of Professional Development in Specific Gender Issues

Since being at your current school have you participated in PD activities/meetings/discussions in the following areas:	Frequently %	Sometimes %	Rarely %	Never %
The specific educational needs of girls	2	18	24	56
The specific educational needs of boys	8	21	27	44
Non-sexist education strategies/teaching practices for gender equity	8	32	17	43
Examining your assumptions about boys and girls	8	34	30	28
Developing teaching styles that allow for gender difference	16	36	21	27

School Development

There were five items in this section, each referring to a specific area of professional development in gender equity. In acknowledgement of the many different means by which teachers add to their professional understandings, the scope of professional development experiences examined in this section was kept broad to embrace not only formal professional development activities but also meetings and discussions.

On all five items, teachers recorded a low frequency rate. Least attended was in the area of the specific educational needs of girls, with over half the respondents (56%) indicating that they had never attended any professional development in that area. Fewer than 50% of the respondents had frequently or sometimes participated in professional development on the specific educational needs of boys, on non-sexist teaching strategies or on examining assumptions about boys and girls. In these same three areas, 44% reported that they had never participated in professional development on the specific educational needs of boys, 43% had never participated in professional development on non-sexist teaching strategies and 28% had never participated in professional development on examining their assumptions about boys and girls.

The most frequent area of participation was in developing teaching styles that allow for gender difference with just over half the teachers (52%) reporting that they had done this frequently or sometimes. Yet in this same area, 27% of teachers reported that they had never participated in professional development.

Teacher Questionnaire Section 2: Discussion

School Development: Professional Development

Professional development in the area of gender equity has received particular attention in many gender policy documents for schools and has been a consideration in much of the gender equity research (Brannock, 1992; Cuttance, 1994; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1995; Kamler et al., 1994; Large, 1993; The Collins Report). One specific implementation report, *Girls in Schools 1993* (1994a) raised professional development as a strong emerging theme reflecting the commitment of teachers, schools and systems to implement change. The data obtained as a result of the analysis of policy documents demonstrated that professional development directions occurred in all 11 gender policy documents (Table 4.3, p. 105). These policy directions demonstrated recognition of the importance of provision of opportunities for development of teacher awareness, understanding, knowledge and expertise in a range of areas pertinent to gender equity. Research findings endorsed the perception that the teacher's role in gender reform required "sound knowledge and understanding and a great deal of sensitivity and skill" (Kenway & Willis, 1993, p. 47).

Despite this clear policy emphasis, participation in professional development was not a frequent occurrence in participating schools. This response was more in line with the findings of Cuttance (1994) who reported that professional development opportunities for teachers and principals in the area of gender equity were limited and The Collins Report which found that professional development in issues of gender was least attended by teachers from the Catholic sector. The explanation for this may well be one of lack of opportunity and provision rather than lack of motivation, preparedness or encouragement to attend. This particular gender equity direction emerged as a dominant theme in the current study and has clear implications for the role of the school principal.

The one area in which just over half the teachers participated frequently or sometimes was that which focused on developing teaching styles for gender equity. This particular area of professional development has a direct focus on teaching; perhaps this has had a stronger sense of immediacy for teachers. This would certainly be reflected in student questionnaire responses discussed in Chapter 5 (pp. 150-154) where the use of gender-aware teaching strategies was shown to be a policy area demonstrating obvious progress.

The next questionnaire section, Section 3, is identical to Section 1 of the principal questionnaire. This enabled the opportunity to not only gauge teachers' perceptions of gender priority areas but to compare and contrast their responses with those of principals.

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION 3: PRIORITY GIVEN BY THE SCHOOL TO SPECIFIC AREAS

Priority Given to School Development: Findings

Table 6.3 Teacher Perceptions of School Development Priorities

	4	3	2	1
	Highest Priority			Lowest Priority
Encouraging staff participation in PD on gender issues	8	31	41	20
Developing a school gender equity policy	3	23	44	30
Developing a school gender equity plan	5	13	52	30
Evaluating school gender equity processes	3	21	48	28
Providing parents with information about issues of gender equity	15	27	40	18
Ensuring Gospel values are reflected in gender policies and practices *	30	31	30	9

Note. * Questionnaire item developed from gender policy documents written specifically for Catholic Schools.

Of the six items in this section, the one that was deemed to be the highest priority for schools was the one extracted from the Catholic policy documents, *Ensuring Gospel values are reflected in gender policies and practices*, with 30% of participants seeing this as the highest priority and 31% seeing it as the second highest and only 9% seeing it as the lowest priority for their school.

In contrast, all other school development priorities were deemed to be of the second lowest or lowest priority in their schools by over half the respondents. Of particular note were the combined scores in the two lowest priority categories for the development of a school gender equity plan (82%), evaluating school gender equity processes (76%) and developing a school gender equity policy (74%).

Priority Given to School Organisation and Administration: Findings

Table 6.4 Teacher Perceptions of School Organisation and Administration Priorities

	4	3	2	1
	Highest Priority		Lowest Priority	
Ensuring teaching resources are allocated equally to boys and girls	53	30	15	2
Distributing all staff duties among men and women	64	19	14	3
Ensuring women and men have the same opportunities for leadership experience	68	20	7	5
Ensuring equal participation of girls and boys in liturgies *	69	24	7	0

Note. * Questionnaire item developed to address the specific Catholic school context.

In the area of School Organisation and Administration, there was little difference in response on two of the items with over 80% of respondents seeing that distributing all staff duties and sharing of leadership experiences among women and men was of the highest or second highest priority. There was strong agreement among teachers about the priority given by their school to ensuring equal participation of girls and boys in liturgies with 93% of teachers indicating this was of the highest or second highest priority at their school.

Of note was the comparatively lower response given by teachers in this section to the item asking about perceptions of the priority given by the school to ensuring that teaching resources are allocated equally to boys and girls. This was considered to be of the highest priority by only 53% of respondents but 30% did recognise it as the second highest priority.

Priority Given to Teaching and Learning: Findings

Table 6.5 Teacher Perceptions of Teaching and Learning Priorities

	4	3	2	1
	Highest Priority		Lowest Priority	
Ensuring posters, display materials give equal representation to girls and boys, men and women	31	29	32	8
Ensuring girls and boys have equal hands on experience in practical subjects *	67	31	2	0
Developing a culture of respect between boys and girls in the classroom*	79	19	2	0
Creating a learning environment that is equally caring of boys and girls	75	23	2	0
Teaching students about being male and female	50	42	8	0
Exploring gender issues	20	43	32	5
Providing girls and boys with equal opportunities to participate in all curriculum areas	74	20	3	3
Teaching students about women's role in historical events and in society	29	35	29	7
Emphasising co-operation and self development in teaching and assessment rather than competition *	65	26	7	2
Teaching students about women's role in the Church *	25	37	30	8

Note. * Questionnaire item developed from gender policy documents written specifically for Catholic Schools.

There were ten items that related to priority areas in Teaching and Learning. On six of these items, over 90% of respondents classified them as being of the highest or second highest priority. Three of these items related to establishing an appropriate learning environment that would foster a culture of respect and care in the classroom. Two items looked at the breadth of curriculum offerings for girls and boys, one by addressing the need to ensure that girls and boys were provided with equal opportunities to participate in all curriculum areas, and the other specifically looking at the need for girls and boys to have equal hands on experience in practical subjects.

Teaching students about being male or female was also seen to be of the highest or second highest priority by the majority of participants. A specific approach to teaching and assessment, one based on co-operation and self-development as distinct from competition,

was specified in gender policy for Catholic schools, This was seen to be of the highest priority by 65% of teachers and the second highest priority by 26% of teachers.

Four items were seen to be given low priority by respondents' schools, with over 36% reporting that they were of the lowest or second lowest priority. Two of these related to the teaching about and depiction of the role of women, within the Church and in history and society, one addressed the need to ensure that display material gave equal representation to women and men, girls and boys and the fourth related to exploring gender issues. A differing response was given to two seemingly similar items in this section. Whereas 92% of teachers saw that teaching students about being male and female was of the highest or second highest priority, in contrast, exploring gender issues was seen to be of the highest or second highest priority by a smaller percentage of teachers (63%).

Priority Given to Pastoral Care: Findings

Table 6.6 Teacher Perceptions of Pastoral Care Priorities

	4	3	2	1
	Highest Priority		Lowest Priority	
Developing a school sexual harassment policy	13	22	43	22
Ensuring the same standards of behaviour are expected from boys and girls	70	25	5	0
Ensuring girls and boys are equally valued	76	25	5	0
Ensuring boys' and girls' needs are equally addressed	70	25	3	2
Ensuring boys and girls are disciplined in similar ways	74	20	6	0
Ensuring sexist remarks and behaviour are challenged by staff	58	30	5	7
Teaching students how to challenge sexist remarks and behaviour	33	40	15	12
Ensuring gender based teasing is challenged and rejected by staff	58	26	13	3
Teaching students how to challenge and reject gender based teasing	33	45	17	5
Developing a range of extra curricular activities that responds equally to the interests of girls and boys *	45	33	18	4

Note. *Questionnaire item developed from gender policy documents written specifically for Catholic Schools.

There were ten items that related to priorities in the Pastoral Care area of the school. Of these, there were four that over 90% of respondents saw as the highest or second highest priority in their schools. Two of these related to behaviour expectations and discipline procedures needing to be seen as the same for girls and boys and two related to the need for boys and girls to be equally valued and to have their needs equally addressed.

Of interest were the items that respondents saw as, by comparison, having low priority in their schools. One related to the call for schools to develop a range of extra curricular activities that responded equally to the interests of girls and boys where only 45% of teachers saw that this was given the highest priority at their school.

Two items referred specifically to the need for staff to challenge and reject sexist remarks and behaviour where 58% of teachers indicated that this was of the highest priority and yet teaching students how to challenge and reject gender based teasing was deemed to be of the highest priority at their schools by only 33% of respondents. Similarly, the need for staff to challenge and reject gender based teasing was seen as a comparatively higher priority for their schools (58% of teachers placed this in the highest priority category) than teaching students to do the same (33% of teachers placed this in the highest priority category). The call for schools to develop a sexual harassment policy was deemed to be the highest priority at their schools by only 13% of respondents and 65% reported it as being the lowest or second lowest priority.

Teacher Questionnaire Section 3: Discussion

Teacher questionnaire Section 3, which asked teachers to assess the priority given by their schools to specific gender equity initiatives, highlighted some important findings.

School Development: Gender Equity Planning

Recognition of the importance of developing, monitoring and evaluating school equity plans became a focus of gender policy documents in the mid 1980s and continued into the 1990s (Table 4.3, p.105). Attention is drawn to the particularly low priority accorded to work on developing a school gender equity policy and plan and to evaluating school gender equity processes, reflecting the findings of Cuttance (1995) who stated that the lack of attention to specific policy directions was attributable to little systematic monitoring.

Directions around planning for gender equity have been recommended for schools in a number of policy documents, and their importance has been signalled in some of the research (Clark, 1990; Large, 1993). An important theme addressed in the current study was a critical questioning of what prompts gender equity work in schools if formal processes for planning and ongoing development have not been put into place. Of most importance in terms of the research question, was the place of the principal in initiating facilitating and providing encouragement and support for a process of gender equity planning in the school.

Aligned to this finding also was the low priority assigned to provision of parent information about gender equity and encouragement of staff participation in professional development on gender equity. The issue of development of an overall school plan for gender equity which includes ongoing education of parents and teachers was taken up in principal questionnaire analysis in Chapter 7 in terms of gender policy directions specifying priorities in this area (Table 4.3, p. 105; Table 4.7, p.115) and the implications of these findings were further developed in the final chapter.

School Organisation and Administration: Equitable Resource Allocation

Since the mid 1980s, gender policy documents have recognised the importance of equitable resource allocation in schools across all areas from physical resources, recreational facilities, teaching resources, through to allocation of roles and responsibilities (Table 4.4, p. 107; Table 4.8, p. 116). Particular areas of school life that have implications for gender equity were seen to have high school priority by participating teachers. These included equitable distribution of teacher duties and opportunities for leadership responsibilities. Yet responses demonstrated teacher perceptions that specific equitable teaching resource allocation was seen to have a lower priority in their schools. There was no scope within the questionnaire to ascertain the meaning behind this response but it is an important finding and it links to other areas such as provision of equitable sporting and recreational facilities discussed in other sections of this chapter.

Teaching and Learning: Gender-Aware Teaching Strategies

The policy analysis in Chapter 4 demonstrated that teaching and learning implications for practice occurred frequently in policy documents (Table 4.5, pp. 109-110; Table 4.9,

p.117). From the 1970s there has been recognition of the role of the teacher in creating a gender inclusive classroom and in developing gender-aware teaching strategies. This particular policy area has been seen as critical in responding to equity issues in schools. From the 1980s when gender reform focused on inclusive education, there was an increased emphasis on pedagogy (Spender, 1982; Suggett, 1987b).

Teacher questionnaire responses indicated that teachers saw some areas of teaching and learning as being of high priority, particularly those that concentrated on creating a positive learning environment for girls and boys where a culture of respect is developed and co-operation is fostered. High priority was also seen to be given to enabling all students to have opportunities to participate in all curriculum areas and to have equal hands on experience in practical subjects. Caution could be sounded in noting these results in reference to the Brannock (1992) and Kamler et al. (1994) research which demonstrated that there was a gap between teachers' perceptions of equitable classroom practices and the perceptions of an observer. However, teacher responses from participating schools were supported by the experiences reported by students in the teaching/learning domain as evidenced in student questionnaire responses examined in Chapter 5 (pp. 149-154).

These particular findings on classroom practice contrast with those of Cuttance (1995) who found that gender equity issues were not addressed in the classroom, indeed, teacher expectations of student behaviour and achievement were along traditional gender lines. In addition, the Butorac and Lymon (1998) research and Milligan (1992) found that the classroom experience of girls was adversely affected by their gender. The Collins Report, however, certainly demonstrated fairer access by girls to teacher attention. Other teaching and learning areas by contrast were seen to be of low priority by teachers in participating schools. These included use of display material that gave equal representation to boys and girls, men and women and exploring gender issues and teaching about the role of women – in the Church, in historical events and in society.

The review of literature pertaining to the phases of gender reform demonstrated that the second policy reform phase, focusing on inclusive education, gave clear directions about curriculum integration of the knowledge and experience of women and girls with a perceived need to value and recognise women's knowledge, experience and achievements

(Yates, 1990). There was acknowledgement that education systems had responded to the educational needs of boys utilising male knowledge (Gilbert, 1996) and therefore there was a recognition of a clear need to address the needs of the girls who had previously been excluded by curriculum (Foster, 1992).

Clearly this is a policy direction that has not been heeded by all teachers. It highlights issues of classroom practice that have been reflected in responses of students. In some instances, teaching about an issue (for example, what it is like to be a boy/girl) appears to have occurred, however, enabling and encouraging students to participate in exploring the meaning of this knowledge, appears not to have happened to the same extent. This particular understanding is foreshadowed as a means to interpret findings related to school response in addressing issues of sex-based harassment in the next section of this chapter.

An important research consideration was the relatively high priority assigned by participating schools to development of a positive classroom culture. The critical importance of a supportive, respectful classroom culture has been highlighted previously in terms of its connection to the stated values on which Catholic schools are founded. There was a high positive response by teachers to the particular item which focused on co-operation in contrast to competition. This accorded with similar high priority responses given to questionnaire items in other sections that were formed from the Catholic school policy documents and which sought understandings and experiences of gender reform that focused on implications for practice with a values foundation. Responses of students, teachers and principals to issues of gender equity that were formed by an understanding of and a commitment to Catholic beliefs was a specific theme developed throughout this study.

Pastoral Care: Sex-Based Harassment

From the late 1980s, gender policy documents for schools have addressed gender equity issues through a focus on the social construction of gender. Policy documents addressed sex-based harassment and violence as well as dominant constructions of gender. A small number of implications for practice were mentioned in a number of documents; these focused on the issue of harassment and on the need for schools to address harassment through education of students, through formation of policy and by development of

appropriate reporting and grievance procedures (Table 4.6, pp. 112-113; Table 4.10, p. 119).

Responses of teachers and principals in participating schools to policy directions pertaining to sexual harassment merit close attention considering that this agenda was raised by a number of policy documents over many years. Two items were seen by teachers to be of a high priority; these involved the staff in challenging sexist remarks and behaviour and gender based teasing.

However, teaching students how to do likewise was seen to be of a lesser priority. Of particular note was the very low priority assigned to the development of a school sexual harassment policy. This result mirrored the findings of Butorac and Lymon (1998); Cuttance (1994); Milligan (1992) and The Collins Report. Thus, as for previous items, there appears to have been a particular approach to gender reform by teachers in participating schools. Provision of knowledge about a specific issue has occurred at the classroom level. However, ensuring that this knowledge is internalised, understood and developed into actual school and classroom practice is a process that has not been given similarly high priority. This particular insight into gender reform processes in schools was an important finding from the questionnaire responses and has been developed into recommendations for leadership action discussed in Chapter 8.

Pastoral Care: Student Expectations and Discipline

One specific policy direction since 1975 has highlighted the need for schools to develop similar fair disciplinary practices and behaviour management policies for boys and girls that take place within a gender equity network (Chapter 4, Table 4.6, pp. 112-113; Table 4.10, p.119). This policy direction was seen by teachers to have taken effect in participating schools. Those areas of Pastoral Care that pertained to addressing the needs of boys and girls, developing expectations and disciplinary processes which were equitable and ensuring that boys and girls were equally valued were seen by respondents to be of high priority. This view however, is contrasted to that of the students where there was a significant difference between perceptions of the girls who considered that there existed fair disciplinary procedures at their school and those of the boys who did not share this view, reflecting findings of The Collins Report. This particular difference in

perception by boys has previously been highlighted as potentially relevant in establishing the reasons behind the number of boys reporting that they are never happy at school.

Pastoral Care: Supportive School Environment

Policy reform emphases in the 1980s moved to a focus on developing structures and practices that fostered care and support for all students enabling them to feel valued, safe and confident to challenge and deal with conflict, bullying and harassment. This was further refined in the 1990s when policy attention was given to the need for schools to teach students how to experience safer gender relations (Gilbert, 1996; Lemaire, 1994).

Teacher questionnaire responses indicated that schools appeared to have made particularly positive responses to the agenda focusing on ensuring students feel valued and confident that their needs are responded to. This specific priority has been highlighted in terms of a clear link between school response to these specific policy directions and the values of the participating schools which are based on their Catholic ethos.

It is important to question the reason for the trends evident in different priority areas. Why some policy implications for school practice have been taken up readily by schools while others have not been addressed has been a critical question for this study. It was beyond the scope of the current research to investigate this issue in depth but the implications for such decisions were more fully explored in Chapter 8 in terms of addressing the role of the school leader in responding to specific gender equity issues.

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION 4: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Open-Ended Questions: Findings

In the final section of the questionnaire, teachers were invited to provide responses to six questions. The majority of respondents answered at least some of the questions. These responses were analysed using the Policy Analysis Template framework as detailed in Chapter 3 (demonstrated in Sample Teacher Comment Analysis, Appendix K).

Question 1: *Could you give an example of an effective gender equity strategy that has been implemented at your school.*

Of the 36 responses to this question, 24 gender equity strategies were provided.

School Development

Four responses highlighted School Development initiatives, focusing on whole school commitment to particular gender equity ideals, on development of staff attitudes towards gender expectations and one that utilised a visiting expert on boys' education. One particular comment reflected the importance of appropriate attitude:

Just an attitude that anything can be achieved by either girls or boys.
(School 1)

School Organisation and Administration

The seven School Organisation and Administration initiatives included addressing roles of male and female teachers as well as developing an equitable staff dress code. Other strategies looked at equitable opportunities for student participation across a range of areas and ensuring equitable acknowledgement for participation and achievement. Included here too was an attempt to ensure equitable use of playground space and equipment. The range of school strategies is reflected in the following two comments:

Spreading male teachers across the grades so children have equal role models of men and women. (School 32)

All playgrounds and equipment are available for students to use regardless of gender. (School 27)

Teaching and Learning

The five Teaching and Learning strategies addressed equity across specific subject areas, the purchasing of engaging reading materials for girls and boys, the promotion of a culture of equality in the classroom and the development of a unit of work on bullying. The explicit approach to gender equity through pedagogy is seen in the following comment:

Within my own classroom I try to ensure equal allocation girl/boy for selected jobs; reading etc. Particularly conscious in group work with resources trying to ensure equal distribution and use between girls and boys. (School 2)

Pastoral Care

There were eight strategies identified in Pastoral Care. Two strategies addressed equitable student management policies and practices, one looked at the development of an anti-bullying program, two initiated the development of non-competitive, skills based physical fitness and sports programs and three addressed the need for equitable opportunities for student involvement and participation across a breadth of school endeavours. An emphasis on rights and responsibilities and on particular actions can be seen in the following two comments from teachers in the same school:

An effective Student Management Policy which recognises the rights and responsibilities of all children has been implemented at our school. (School 10)

Our discipline policy is exactly the same for boys and girls. Their behaviour is what is taken into account – not their gender. (School 10)

Three responses to Question 1 focused on the lack of school response to gender issues, reflecting that it had not been an explicit focus, that specific gender strategies had not been implemented, and that there had not been developed a whole school strategy for gender equity.

Gender equity has not been an explicit focus (School 2)

Questions 2 and 3: *What do you consider to be the most critical gender issue currently facing your school community? How is your school community addressing this issue?*

A total of 48 responses was given to these questions and a breadth of issues and responses to them was recorded by teachers. These responses spanned the four major headings of the Policy Analysis Template.

School Development

In School Development, seven different issues were highlighted. Some of these were connected with teacher attitude, in particular teacher expectations of students based on gender, reflected in the following comment:

Expectation by some staff members that boys are 'naturally' naughty, inartistic, active and that girls are 'naturally' nurturing, passive. (School 1)

Teachers expressed concern about awareness of boys' needs and awareness of the need to continue to be fair. Concern was expressed about the male vision of women in society and the formation of particular gender attitudes by students at home demonstrated in the following:

Attitudes based on cultural differences that are modelled to the students at home. (School 2)

Also highlighted was the absence of a school gender equity policy and the lack of staff professional development in gender equity. Many of the school responses to School Development issues focused on opportunities for professional development for staff, through readings, meetings and formal opportunities. Teachers also wrote of the commitment to providing strong female role models, ensuring equal recognition of girls and boys at sport and developing clear policies. One response worthy of note addressed the effect of having a school culture of equality:

This survey will probably put it on the agenda, however there is a strong culture of equality in this school, although it would be interesting to analyse it and evaluate it as a whole staff to see if we are 'getting it right'. (School 5)

School Organisation and Administration

Of the five School Organisation and Administration concerns, shortage of male teachers and thus the difficulty in provision of appropriate male role models was mentioned as a pressing concern, reflected in the following two comments:

Staffing. I am the only male on the staff of 20. I enjoy it personally but I feel more male primary teachers are essential. (School 16)

Ratio of men to women on staff – doesn't really promote a gender equal environment for children to witness. (School 2)

Three concerns related specifically to boys – their domination of playground space and equipment, their lack of involvement in liturgies and the restrictions on their play activities. One teacher cited a concern with the shortage of women in leadership positions.

There were limited responses by schools to these issues. To the shortage of male teachers some acknowledged that it was beyond the scope of the school to address, one saw the principal as assuming an important role as male role model and another cited the employment of a male assistant principal as a step forward. In response to cited concerns about boys, teachers saw that these were best addressed by ensuring that staff remain informed of the specific needs of boys and girls and are thus able to develop appropriate strategies to address specific issues of concern.

Teaching and Learning

There were three Teaching and Learning concerns. One focused on the need to engage boys in learning, one cited the need to challenge girls to be more actively engaged in maths and science and the third raised the need to address classroom teaching structures. Responses to these issues highlighted the critical importance of formal teacher professional development as well as informal staff discussion in order that appropriate classroom strategies could be developed and implemented.

Pastoral Care

There were nine Pastoral Care concerns. One focused on the lack of a variety of activities for boys and girls, one highlighted the different treatment of boys and girls at the school, and one concerned the need for girls to develop a belief that they could do anything. The other six concerns all focused on problems with gender relationships in terms of harassment and bullying and lack of respect as seen in the following comments:

Teaching children how to deal with conflict (both physical and verbal) in a variety of settings. (School 33)

Bullying: physical by the boys, verbal by the girls. (School 1)

School responses to these specific Pastoral Care issues were many and varied. The role of the principal was seen by many respondents to be important in providing support to teachers and in working with students who bully and harass. Staff professional development, particularly in the area of behaviour modification and choice theory, was utilised as a school response. Also seen as important was the teacher's role – in addressing individual students and the whole class as the need arises, in challenging and discussing unacceptable behaviour, in utilising the school discipline policy, in teaching anti-bullying behaviours and in encouraging and providing opportunities for success among all students.

Encouraging at all times, that all children can do their best and giving opportunities whereby all children can achieve. (No.16)

Overall response to Questions 2 and 3 stressed the importance of the role of the teacher as reflected in the following comment:

The most critical issue would be teacher bias towards one gender. This isn't the case with all staff but some do treat boys and girls differently. It is being addressed by putting clear policies and procedures in place which deal with all students, not a particular gender. (School 2)

Further Comments to Questions 2 and 3

A small number of teachers ($N=4$) spoke of not being aware of any gender issues at their schools. Many more teachers who had proposed a particular gender issue facing their school community, commented that it was not currently being addressed ($N=11$).

We don't have a school based gender equity policy and have done very little professional development in this area. (School 5)

Five responses referred to specific issues that teachers believed called for teacher professional development and in some cases, a need for change in attitude This was across

a range of issues spanning gender equity policy, boys' educational needs, teacher assumptions, attitudes and responses to boys and girls.

I feel staff need to be informed about the specific behaviour/needs of boys and girls to develop an understanding/ appropriate strategies to meet children' needs and to address the issue. (School 10)

Question 4: *What are the major factors that have contributed to your school's level of response to gender equity issues over the last few years?*

Responses to this question fell into two distinct categories, firstly, those factors that facilitated school gender equity reform and secondly, those factors that hindered gender equity reform. Responses were categorised under the four main headings of the Policy Analysis Template.

Factors That Were Seen to Facilitate Gender Equity Reform

School Development

Five respondents reflected on the role that staff played in identifying and seeking a response to gender equity issues, including the expressed intention to provide all students with equal opportunities, the particular attitudes that staff had about gender equity issues, and in one case the interest by the Year 6 teacher.

One teacher wrote of the school principal addressing specific issues with staff. Eight responses focused on professional development, noting the importance of input by guest speakers, research on boys, issues raised in the media, information from the Catholic Education Office, and the role of professional learning teams.

One response mentioned directives from beyond the school, two referred to feedback from parents, one considered it was just the 'right time' to do it and one mentioned that schools must be aware and responsive to gender equity issues because it is a "politically correct era" (School 5).

School Organisation and Administration

Three responses focused on the issue of gender of staff including the absence of males on staff and the dominance of male students. One male teacher reflected on the role that he considered he played in bringing a male point of view to staff discussions and another wrote of the impact on the school of the gender of the principal. Another response mentioned particular structural issues including incorporating Year 5 and Year 6 boys into the school which necessitated catering for their academic and physical needs.

Teaching and Learning

Three respondents mentioned the importance of teaching/learning issues as factors in influencing the school's response to gender equity reform. Specific areas referred to included good teaching and learning strategies which allowed for different learning styles and addressing the implications of test results (including Basic Skills).

Pastoral Care

Issues around managing student behaviour were seen to be the basis for gender equity responses by six respondents. Specific factors included development of a student management policy, the need to address bullying, issues around sexist remarks and teasing, perceived need to develop more consistent approaches in dealing with all students and dealing with over-representation of boys in playground misbehaviour.

It is important to note that some responses focused on the Catholic ethos of the school, specifically the commitment to justice, equity and love as the important factor in the school's response to gender equity issues and the belief by teachers that this had to be reflected in school practice, seen in the following comments:

I believe as a staff we all try to treat all children equally and for them to have the same respect. (School 33)

Because of Gospel values underpinning the school philosophy, behaviour management/pastoral care policies allow scope for dealing with gender equity issues within this broad context. (School 2)

Factors That Were Seen to Hinder Gender Equity Reform

One respondent reflected on the competing agendas facing primary schools resulting in the need to prioritise which agenda received attention. Another commented on the specific time commitment needed to address KLA concerns.

A number of respondents commented that they believed that their school was not addressing gender equity as an issue, reflected in the following:

I have only been here two years. I don't feel that our school does address gender equity issues as much as we might. Perhaps though, because our children tend not to fall into stereotyped roles and sexism it is not much of an issue for them as it is elsewhere. (School 1)

Question 5: *What do you consider the role of the principal to be in responding to issues of gender equity in the school?*

As in all issues, if the principal is interested, then it will be addressed.
(School 9)

A total of 46 teachers commented on the role of the principal in gender equity reform. Their expectations fell substantially into the area of School Development, focusing on the leader's role in articulating a vision, understanding and communicating the issues and managing change.

The Principal as Role Model

Five teachers commented on the need for the principal to be an appropriate role model in the area of gender equity, living and demonstrating this in practice.

The principal must first look at his/her own attitudes and responses to gender issues. (School 22)

Sixteen comments focused on specific attitudes and qualities required of the principal. Those mentioned were commitment to equity, sensitivity to gender issues, fairness, even handedness and considered judgement.

The role of the principal is to model equity between male and female in the way she treats all people. (School 16)

Awareness of Gender as an Issue and the Need for Professional Development

Creating awareness among teachers, reflective practice with programming to ensure teaching and learning strategies are designed to promote and motivate learning in boys and to educate parents about this. (School 3)

Nineteen teachers wrote of the role of the principal in promoting and supporting professional development for gender equity. They expected the principal to be educated in and aware of issues of gender, to see it as a priority, to promote and participate in staff development on gender equity issues, and to provide support for parents in developing understandings of gender issues.

Six teachers also mentioned the need for the principal to initiate reflection on gender issues in the school that springs from an appreciation of the total school picture. Specifically mentioned was the need for the principal to oversee the formulation of a school policy and to ensure its implementation by all staff.

The principal should develop within staff, awareness and strategies to deal with issues, to ensure current policies take into consideration gender equity and related behaviour. (School 2)

Planning for Gender Equity in Action

The role of the principal is to encourage all children, whether they be boy or girl, to do their very best. (School 16)

Seven comments reflected a perception that principals need to deal with issues with a firm understanding of and commitment to gender equity. This included a need to respond to issues valuing input from members of the school community and to follow up with staff any unfair gender practice. There was recognition that principals needed specific skills/abilities to address issues of gender equity including management of change.

Teaching and Learning

Two teachers communicated an expectation that the principal would promote gender equity practice in the classroom.

The principal's role is pivotal in ensuring that gender equity issues are given a priority throughout the curriculum and community aspects of the school. (School 9)

Question 6: *Have you any further comments you would like to add on the issue of gender and education?*

A number of respondents chose to add further comment. Seven related to concerns about boys. These canvassed a number of issues: boys' needs not being met, boys not achieving at school, the perception that boys were expected to think and act in a 'girl' sort of way, the need for boys to be provided with more space in which to be physically active, the value of professional development on boys' issues, learnings about boys' preferred learning styles and about the urgent need for male role models.

In primary schools we badly/urgently/desperately need male role models for the boys and also so the girls can see what is appropriate behaviour between adult males and females. When our Year 5 and 6 girls see males 13 years and older they don't know what is appropriate, they flirt etc. quite blatantly. (School 1)

Some comments referred to the positive response of their schools to issues of gender equity and gave examples of specific strategies and of perceived reasons for success. One teacher spoke of the expectation by the school that all students were encouraged to do their best in all areas of school life, sporting, academic, spiritual and one spoke of how

rewarding it was to observe a group of boys and girls participating in a mixed sporting team:

It is rewarding and interesting to observe a group of boys and girls (mixed team) playing a co-operative and physically active game i.e. soccer. (School 10).

One teacher spoke of the importance of understanding and utilising gender-aware approaches to pedagogy:

Through different KLAs children's awareness of gender issues can be raised and practices challenged when observed. Concepts can be clarified and strategies/knowledge to help minimise it. Staff development in learning styles as related to gender – current research results etc. Suggested strategies for teachers to help prevent gender bias. Ensuring fair and equal use of resources in mixed groups of students. Boys seem to be more 'hands on' confident than girls when using concrete materials. (School 2)

One comment referred to the competing demands of schools and the pressure of time in addressing them:

These are big issues in our schools – and need to be discussed/addressed – TIME is a factor when there are so many demands made on staff. (School 25)

Teacher Questionnaire Section 4: Discussion

An important observation was the number of teachers who chose to complete the open-ended questions and to do so in some detail. Their opinions and experiences added a breadth of understanding to the results of the three other questionnaire sections and provided a fuller picture of responses to gender policy directions in their schools. There were some important themes that emerged from these comments.

Shared School Values

Contrary to the findings of Cuttance (1994) that teachers were unable to articulate a clear understanding of the meaning of gender equity, participating teachers were able to express

a vision for gender equity and to explain how this vision was translated into actual school and classroom practice. This vision was closely aligned to teachers' understanding of the values on which their school was founded.

The culture and climate of the school was perceived by many teachers to determine the school's response to issues of gender equity. There was a strong belief that the values proclaimed by the school community, particularly those of justice and equity, should effectively ensure that gender equity was addressed in the school's policies, processes and relationships. This is particularly of interest given the very positive response to the specific questionnaire items drawn from the Catholic policy documents that addressed the issue of values identification, clarification and infusion.

Of interest, given the focus of gender policy critiques on the dominant masculine paradigm driving schooling priorities, was the focus of teacher response on quality relationships more so than on describing progress in terms of academic results. This is certainly in contrast to the Kenway and Willis (1997) findings where measurements of success followed traditional notions such as academic achievement in high status subjects.

The importance of school response to gender equity issues being underpinned by shared school values was an important theme of this study. In sharing understandings and experiences of gender reform, teacher participants have aligned their responses to the core values and foundational beliefs of Catholic schools. It is the shared values that define a Catholic school community, that make it distinctive and from which it derives its ethos (Duncan, 1998). The theme of teacher responses, echoing those previously given by student participants, signalled that gender directions had been grounded in the core values of respect for all, promotion of human dignity, and commitment to justice.

School Development: School Planning for Gender Equity

Clark (1990) and Large (1993) stressed the importance of a whole school approach to gender reform with the need for clearly articulated goals and directions for practice. Teacher questionnaire responses indicated an obvious sense of pride and achievement in the work that many schools had undertaken in gender equity. This work had been

undertaken for many different reasons, mostly in response to perceived need at the particular schools or at the instigation of particular members of staff.

The planning that had been undertaken had not been formulated in terms of a school gender equity plan, nor did it appear to be in response to any specific policy directions. These findings reflected those of Cuttance (1994) and Butorac and Lymon (1998) who found there to be little systematic whole school development of gender equity policy or systematic monitoring of response to gender equity directions and few gender reform efforts were seen to be undertaken in response to specific policy directions. They also reflect responses to section 3 of the teacher questionnaire in which the majority of teacher participants indicated that their school accorded low priority to the development of a school gender equity policy or plan. Many open-ended responses also reflected the findings of the Kenway and Willis (1997) study that gender reform efforts appeared to be most successful when they were from below and where schools were open to new ideas.

The Boys' Agenda

Teacher responses highlighting concerns about boys mirror the evidence about this agenda detailed in the review of literature (Biddulph, 1994, 1998; Brown & Fletcher, 1995; West, 1999, 2000). Boys' issues were obviously of concern to many teachers and in a number of schools this had been the catalyst for gender equity reform efforts. Teachers expressed a number of concerns about poor behaviour, negative attitudes and unsatisfactory response to learning expectations. They also wrote in a very positive way of the influence of professional development in this area.

There was a call from many teachers for more male teachers as a way to address the boys' agenda. The expectation that the presence of male role models was the way to address the increasing concerns about boys was a common response. This particular issue is signalled as an area that merits urgent research attention in terms of addressing the assumptions underlying these calls, exploring the means by which to attract males to the profession and investigating the factors influencing their choice not to. In addition, it would be of interest to examine the experience of staff and students in those schools that have undertaken gender reform through addressing the construction of masculinity (Connell, 1994, 1997, 2000).

The Role of the Principal

Teachers had very clear opinions about the role of the principal in the gender equity process. Reflecting the findings of the Clark (1990) and Kenway and Willis (1993) study, many of the teachers' responses were within the context of leadership for change. They saw that gender equity reform would proceed where principals were committed to it in principle and in practice. There was a reliance on the principal to espouse specific values and attitudes and to encourage and expect others to do likewise. They articulated a vision for leadership for gender equity that encompassed an understanding of the principal as role model, raising awareness and planning for gender equity in action.

Teacher recommendations for leadership for gender equity presupposed a commitment to professional development in issues of gender equity and an expectation of challenge and support for teachers and parents to be educated about similar areas. The emphasis on the need for professional development was of particular interest given teachers' responses to questionnaire items related to professional development which would indicate that this was not seen as a high priority.

These responses mirror the Large (1993) findings where the principal was seen to be a barrier to effective gender reform in schools precisely because he/she offered little or no support for professional development, did not allow for dissemination of gender equity information or support materials and did not acknowledge gender equity initiatives or efforts.

SUMMARY

In examining teacher experience of gender reform, a number of themes emerged that confirmed particular gender equity reform agenda foreshadowed by student response described in Chapter 5. Responses to questionnaire items and to the open-ended questions provided clear understandings about teacher experience of gender reform at their schools. Specific research themes that emerged from teacher questionnaire responses can be summarised as follows:

Gender Policy Directions Receiving School Response

- Recognising and awarding academic and sporting achievement

- Equitable distribution of teacher duties and leadership opportunities
- Creation of positive learning environment
- Opportunities for participation in all curriculum areas
- Attention to gender inclusive teaching practices
- Staff challenging of sexist remarks, behaviour, gender based teasing
- Development of equitable student management policies and practices
- Development of supportive school environment

Gender Policy Direction Receiving Little/No School Response

- Development of school gender equity policy, plan, evaluation procedures
- Provision of parent information on gender equity
- Teacher participation in professional development in gender issues
- Girls' use of playground space, engagement in active games
- Equitable distribution of teaching resources
- Exploration and discussion of gender issues in class
- Display material that gives equal representation to both genders
- Development of school sexual harassment policy
- Equitable participation by students in the full life of the school

Gender Issues of Concern to Teachers

- Absence of school gender equity policy
- Lack of professional development in gender related issues
- Shortage of male teachers
- Lack of school attention to gender equity issues and specific factors inhibiting a school response
- Teacher expectations of students based on gender
- Formation of student gender attitudes
- Particular boys' issues: lack of engagement in learning, lack of male role models, provision of appropriate recreational environment for boys, behaviour issues

Further to these findings was the focus on the Catholic ethos that underpinned many teacher responses. There was expressed a commitment to justice, equity and love as the

foundation to a school's response to gender equity issues and a belief by teachers that this had to be reflected in school practice.

The factors contributing to the lack of response in some areas and committed action in others need to be investigated in much more detail. Directions for further research in this area have already been signalled in the review of literature where it was found that gender equity was not well understood by teachers (Cuttance, 1995). For the purpose of this research however, the focus was the role of the principal in leading the school response to gender equity reform.

The responses of teachers provided some very clear understandings and directions for leadership. Teachers saw that the role of the principal for gender equity included assuming responsibility for creation of a culture of equity, provision of support to teachers, especially in terms of responding to issues of bullying and harassment, raising and addressing gender concerns with staff, planning for gender equity and ensuring for the provision of professional development in this area. Overall, teachers saw that the principal must be a role model for gender equity, living and demonstrating this in practice. The review and discussion of the principal questionnaire in the next chapter add to the understandings of school responses to gender policy directions as well as providing learnings for school leadership for gender equity.

CHAPTER 7

PRINCIPAL EXPERIENCE OF GENDER AT SCHOOL RESEARCH PHASE 3(b): FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

Following participation of students in Research Phase 2, Student Experience of Gender at School, 21 principals participated in Research Phase 3 (b) Gender Practice in Schools. This chapter outlines and discusses the data that emerged from the results from the principal questionnaire. The information gathered allowed for the analysis and synthesis of action taken by principals and teachers in schools in response to gender policy directions.

In discussion of the findings, particular attention was paid to the voices of the principal participants as they reflected on their understandings of the role of the school leader in the gender reform process. Critical to this approach was the cultural perspective provided by Willis, Kenway, Rennie and Blackmore (1992) whose focus was on building theories that explained the process of gender reform in schools from an empirical base. This was explained in the previous chapter as was the importance of adopting the operational definition of policy by Shaw (1997, p.64), that “policy is a broad and general direction given to someone to carry out or implement”.

In each section of this chapter, results have been reported under the appropriate questionnaire section heading. For each of these section headings, results are presented in table form followed by an overview of the findings in more detail. As per the teacher questionnaire and as explained in Chapter 3, the results for the principal questionnaire were calculated in percentages. Following the presentation of the data, there is detailed discussion of the implications of the findings. The chapter concludes with analysis of the responses to the open-ended questions, the final section of the principal questionnaire. The research tool used to explore principal experience of gender reform in schools was the

principal questionnaire (Appendix I). This survey instrument was developed from the policy analysis conducted in Research Phase 1, Gender Policy Analysis, as detailed in Chapter 3 .

There were four overall aims of Research Phase 3 (b):

1. To ascertain the response of principals to gender policy directions in their schools.
2. To seek principals' understanding and reflection on the role of the principal in leading a school for gender equity
3. To compare and contrast principal responses with those of teachers gained in Research Phase 3 (a) and with those of students gained in Research Phase 2.
4. To utilise findings in order to determine implications for leadership for gender equity in schools.

PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE STRUCTURE

The principal questionnaire was structured in four sections:

Section 1: Priority Given by the School to Specific Areas (as per section 3 of the teacher questionnaire)

Section 2: Frequency of Teacher Involvement in Specific Gender Equity Strategies

Section 3: Frequency of Consideration of Gender Equity Strategies in Planning, Programming, Teaching

Section 4: Open-Ended Questions (as per teacher questionnaire)

As for the teacher questionnaire, each of the four sections was informed by implications for school practice extracted from Gender Policy Analysis conducted in Research Phase 1. The development of the questionnaire and the placement of items according to the framework of the Policy Analysis Template were described in Chapter 3. Reporting of the findings within each section was organised utilising the same structure as that developed for the Policy Analysis Template under the four major headings of:

- School Development
- School Organisation and Administration
- Teaching and Learning
- Pastoral Care

Because each questionnaire section had a specific area of focus in terms of policy implications for practice, not all four major headings from the Policy Analysis Template were necessarily covered in each questionnaire section. The rationale behind the development of questionnaire items and their placement within different headings according to the framework of the Policy Analysis Template was described in Chapter 3 (pp. 87-90).

PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION 1: PRIORITY GIVEN BY THE SCHOOL TO SPECIFIC AREAS

As detailed in Chapter 3, principal questionnaire section 1 was identical to section 3 of the teacher questionnaire. It was considered advantageous to have one section that could be utilised for purposes of comparison. This enabled comparison between teacher and principal responses on perceptions of school gender equity priorities. It thus facilitated close attention to be paid to areas of close alignment and obvious difference.

Priority Given to School Development: Findings

Table 7.1 Principal Perceptions of School Development Priorities

	4	3	2	1
	Highest Priority (%)			Lowest Priority (%)
Encouraging staff participation in PD on gender issues 16	0	47	37	
Developing a school gender equity policy	5	26	58	11
Developing a school gender equity plan	0	37	58	5
Evaluating school gender equity processes	0	53	42	5
Providing parents with information about issues of gender equity	15	20	60	5
Ensuring Gospel values are reflected in gender policies and practices*	61	33	6	0

Note: * Questionnaire item developed from gender policy documents written specifically for Catholic

schools.

In the area of School Development, 61% of principals considered that ensuring Gospel values were reflected in gender policies and practices was given the highest priority by their school. Provision of information to parents on issues of gender equity was seen by 35% of principals to be of the highest or second highest priority for the school.

More principals named the following areas as the lowest or second lowest priority for their school: encouraging staff participation in professional development on gender issues (53%), development of a school gender equity policy (69%) and school gender equity plan (63%) and evaluation of school gender equity processes (47%).

Priority Given to School Organisation and Administration: Findings

Table 7.2 Principal Perceptions of School Organisation and Administration Priorities

	4 Highest Priority (%)	3	2	1 Lowest Priority (%)
Ensuring teaching resources are allocated equally to boys and girls	65	25	10	0
Distributing all staff duties among men and women	80	20	0	0
Ensuring women and men have the same opportunities for leadership experience	90	5	5	0
Ensuring equal participation of girls and boys in liturgies *	85	15	0	0

Note: *Questionnaire item developed to address the specific Catholic school context.

Three questionnaire items were seen to be of the highest priority for their school by over 80% of principals and none were seen to be the lowest priority. Almost all respondents (90%) saw that ensuring women and men had the same opportunities for leadership experience was given highest priority at their school. The lowest percentage response in this section was associated with the equitable allocation of teaching resources. That principals considered that their schools saw this as a lower priority is important to note, particularly in light of student responses to experiences of gender equitable teaching practices reported in Table 5.9 (p. 150).

Priority Given to Teaching and Learning: Findings

Table 7.3 Principal Perceptions of Teaching and Learning Priorities

	4 Highest Priority (%)	3	2	1 Lowest Priority (%)
Ensuring posters, display materials give equal representation to girls and boys, men and women	44	44	6	6
Ensuring girls and boys have equal hands on experience in practical subjects *	85	15	0	0
Developing a culture of respect between boys and girls in the classroom	95	5	0	0
Creating a learning environment that is equally caring of boys and girls	90	10	0	0
Teaching students about being male and female	79	16	5	0
Exploring gender issues	10	60	25	5
Providing girls and boys with equal opportunities to participate in all curriculum areas	90	10	0	0
Teaching students about women's role in historical events and in society	35	35	25	5
Emphasising cooperation and self development in teaching and assessment rather than competition *	85	15	0	0
Teaching students about women's role in the Church *	40	30	25	5

Note: * Questionnaire item developed from gender policy document written specifically for Catholic schools.

There was a marked difference in perceptions of school priority in the ten items covering the area of Teaching and Learning. Seen as of the highest priority for their school were development of a culture of respect between boys and girls in the classroom (95%), creating a learning environment that was equally caring of boys and girls (90%), provision of equal opportunities to enable girls and boys equal participation in all curriculum areas (90%), emphasis on co-operation and self development rather than competition in teaching and assessment (85%) and ensuring girls and boys had equal hands on experience in practical subjects (85%).

Teaching students about being male and female and ensuring display material gave equal representation to both girls and boys, women and men, were seen to be of the highest or second highest priority for their schools by the majority of respondents. However, responses were quite different for the following three items where 30% of principals saw that these issues were of lowest or second lowest priority at their school: teaching about

women's role in the Church, in historical events and in society and exploring gender issues.

Priority Given to Pastoral Care: Findings

Table 7.4 Principal Perceptions of Pastoral Care Priorities

	4	3	2	1
	Highest Priority (%)			Lowest Priority (%)
Developing a school sexual harassment policy	15	40	40	5
Ensuring the same standards of behaviour are expected from boys and girls	95	5	0	0
Ensuring girls and boys are equally valued	95	5	0	0
Ensuring boys' and girls' needs are equally addressed	85	15	0	0
Ensuring boys and girls are disciplined in similar ways	85	15	0	0
Ensuring sexist remarks and behaviour are challenged by staff	90	10	0	0
Teaching students how to challenge sexist remarks and behaviour	30	55	15	0
Ensuring gender based teasing is challenged and rejected by staff	80	15	5	0
Teaching students how to challenge and reject gender based teasing	53	42	5	0
Developing a range of extra curricular activities that responds equally to the interests of girls and boys *	74	21	0	5

Note: * Questionnaire item developed from gender policy documents written specifically for Catholic schools.

There were ten Pastoral Care items in this section. Of these, there were five that were considered to be of the highest priority at their schools by over 85% of principals. Two related to student expectations and consequences: ensuring the same standards of behaviour from boys and girls (95%) and ensuring that boys and girls were disciplined in similar ways (85%). Two items focused on responding to the individual needs of each student, ensuring that girls and boys were equally valued (95%) and that their needs were equally addressed (85%).

One item seen to be of highest priority by 90% of respondents specifically related to the role of staff in challenging sexist remarks and behaviour. Principals also considered that addressing gender based teasing was a high priority at their schools.

A total of 95% of respondents reported that ensuring gender based teasing was challenged and rejected and that teaching students how to do likewise, was of the highest or second highest priority. The two items that appeared to be of a lesser priority at participating schools both related to addressing sexual harassment. Teaching students how to challenge sexist remarks and behaviour was seen as the highest priority by only 30% of respondents however, 55% saw it as the next highest priority. Only 15% of principals saw that their school gave the highest priority to developing a school sexual harassment policy and 45% placed it in the two lower priority categories.

Principal Questionnaire Section 1: Discussion

It is quite clear that Principals perceived particular gender equity issues to be of the highest priority at their schools whilst other gender equity issues were seen as very low priority. In addition, the important theme of shared school values that emerged in the two previous research phases was evident in principal responses in this section.

Shared School Values

The response given by principals to policy directions from the Catholic policy documents mirrored responses of students discussed in Chapter 5 and teachers' responses discussed in Chapter 6. There was high priority given to ensuring that Catholic values underpinned the work of the school in gender equity. This was reflected in the emphasis given to promoting co-operation and self development over competition in teaching and assessment and in ensuring equitable experiences for all students in practical classes, in extra curricular activities and in liturgy participation. However, teaching about women's role in the Church was not viewed to be of high priority.

School Development: School Planning

Recognition of the importance of developing, monitoring and evaluating school equity plans became a focus of gender policy documents in the mid 1980s and continued into the 1990s. This could be seen in the *National policy for the education of girls in Australian schools* (1987) which aimed to establish mechanisms for evaluating and reporting progress on improved educational outcomes for girls.

Of particular note, therefore, is the relatively low priority that was seen to be given to

school planning for gender equity initiatives in terms of formal policy, plans and evaluation processes. Gender policy documents have signalled the critical importance of this planning process and the need for schools to develop action plans in order to implement gender reform, which has been supported by research (Clark, 1990; Cuttance, 1995; Large, 1993) and yet over half the principals have recorded that this was given a very low priority.

This finding deserves to be explored in more depth; in particular, there is a need to ascertain in the light of this, the context in which schools have undertaken gender equity reform. Also of importance is how gender reform priorities have been identified and prioritised, how responses have been determined and how the reform process has been evaluated. Of particular importance is determination of the role of the school principal in this process.

School Development: Staff Professional Development

Another important finding was that of the role of staff professional development in promoting gender equity in schools. This area is one that has received particular and ongoing attention in gender policy documents since 1975 (Table 4.3, p. 105) and much of the research on reception of gender reform in schools including that of Cuttance (1994), Gilbert and Gilbert (1995) and Large (1993), has indicated the importance of staff professional development in school gender reform.

It was of surprise, therefore, to note that no principal cited professional development to be of the highest priority and 16% put it in the lowest priority category. This theme was taken up in examination of findings in other sections of the principal questionnaire and in light of findings from the teacher questionnaire. In looking to develop understandings about leadership for gender equity, this theme appeared to be one of the most important areas of interest in this study.

School Organisation and Administration: Equitable Resource Allocation and Organisational Procedures

Since the mid 1980s, gender policy documents have recognised the importance of equitable resource allocation in schools across all areas from physical resources,

recreational facilities, teaching resources, through to allocation of roles and responsibilities (Table 4.4, p. 107). The high priority seen to be given by participating schools to the equitable allocation of teaching resources mirrors the findings of The Collins Report.

Teaching and Learning: Gender-Aware Teaching Strategies

The policy analysis conducted in Chapter 4 demonstrated that teaching and learning implications for practice occurred frequently in policy documents (Table 4.5, pp. 109-110, Table 4.9, p.117). From the 1970s there has been recognition of the role of the teacher in creating a gender inclusive classroom environment and developing gender-aware teaching strategies. This particular policy area has been seen as critical in responding to equity issues in schools (Suggett, 1987b).

Principals saw that high priority has been accorded many areas of curriculum and pedagogy including provision of equitable access to all areas of the curriculum and the creation of a classroom culture that encourages and enables all students to be valued and respected. These findings reflected similar results to The Collins Report which found that inclusive classroom practices had received much attention. These findings, however, were at variance to those of Butorac and Lymon (1998) and Cuttance (1995) who reported that gender equity issues had not been addressed at the classroom level.

There was less clarity in terms of perception of high priority around exploring gender issues with students and in terms of teaching them about women's role in historical events, in the Church and in society. This latter policy implication was one of the most often mentioned in the gender policy documents and has received attention in policy critique (Yates, 1990) so it was of particular interest that it did not seem to have been taken up by a number of schools.

Pastoral Care

There were a large number of areas in Pastoral Care that were seen by Principals to be given the very highest priority. These included ensuring that boys and girls were equally valued, that expectations of them were the same and that consequences for not meeting expectations were also similar.

Pastoral Care: Expectations of Students

One specific policy direction since 1975 has signalled the need for schools to develop similar fair disciplinary practices and behaviour management policies for boys and girls that take place within a gender equity framework (Table 4.6, pp. 112-113). Positive principal responses in this area echoed those of teachers where there was general agreement that expectations of and responses to student behaviour were similar for boys and girls. Attention is drawn to the fact that there was a significant difference between how boys and girls viewed this issue, with boys disagreeing with perceptions of fairness in disciplinary procedures (Table 5.21, p. 170) reflecting similar findings to those of The Collins Report.

Pastoral Care: Sex-Based Harassment

From the late 1980s gender policy documents for schools have attempted to address gender equity issues through a focus on the social construction of gender. Specific implications for practice were mentioned in a number of documents; these focused on the issue of harassment and on the need for schools to address issues of harassment through education of students, through development of policy and by development of appropriate reporting and grievance procedures (Table 4.6, pp. 112-113; Table 4.10, p. 119).

It is in the area of the school's response to sexual harassment that there was some lack of clarity. Whilst staff challenging of gender based teasing and sexist behaviour and remarks was seen to be given the highest priority, a lower priority was accorded to teaching students how to challenge and reject gender based teasing and sexist remarks and behaviour. Of even lower priority was the development of a school sexual harassment policy.

This finding accords with student response discussed in Chapter 5 and teacher response discussed in Chapter 6 and reflects research findings of earlier studies including Cuttance (1994) and Butorac and Lymon (1998). This was a particular finding that needed critical examination. This gender policy direction has appeared with greater frequency in the last decade and it was therefore important to investigate the background to the response of schools to what has been identified as an important issue. It would appear that this range of school responses followed a particular order. Actual teaching practice in terms of content

in the area of sexual harassment was accorded the highest priority, teaching about the issue was perceived to be of lesser importance and developing formal policy to address the issue was seen to be of the lowest priority. This priority order of response was similar to school responses to other teaching and learning issues. An appreciation of the background to development of school action priority reflected in these responses has been utilised in discussion and recommendations in the following chapter.

COMPARISON WITH TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES ON SECTION 1

Principal questionnaire Section 1, Priority Given by the School to Specific Areas, was identical to teacher questionnaire Section 3. It was deemed to be important to compare and contrast perceptions of principals and teachers regarding priority given by schools to specific areas. On most items, principals and teachers demonstrated the same trends towards priority areas, however, on most of these items, principal response was higher, indicating a more pronounced perception of higher priority order. Of particular interest for purposes of comparison, were those items where there was noticeable difference in response at both ends, the highest priority (4) and the lowest priority (1).

Comparative Priority Given To School Development: Findings

Table 7.5 Principal and Teacher Perceptions of School Development Priorities

	Principal Response (%)				Teacher Response (%)			
	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
	Highest			Lowest	Highest			Lowest
Encouraging staff participation in PD on gender issues	0	47	37	16	8	31	41	20
Developing a school gender equity policy	5	26	58	11	3	23	44	30
Developing a school gender equity plan	0	37	58	5	5	13	52	30
Evaluating school gender equity processes	0	53	42	5	3	21	48	28
Providing parents with information about gender equity	15	20	60	5	15	27	40	18
Ensuring Gospel values are reflected in gender policies and practices*	61	33	6	0	30	31	30	9

Note: * Questionnaire item developed from gender policy documents written specifically for Catholic schools.

On most items, there was close agreement between principal and teacher responses at the highest end. On only one item, relating to ensuring Gospel values were reflected in gender policies and practices was there clear difference. Whereas 61% of principals saw this as of the highest priority in their school, it was seen as the highest priority by only 30% of teachers.

However, there was clear difference between principal and teacher response on a number of items at the lowest end. This was most marked on the items relating to developing and evaluating a school gender equity plan. In terms of developing a school gender equity policy, 30% of teachers and 11% of principals considered that their schools saw this as the lowest priority, 30% of teachers gave the same response for developing a school gender equity plan compared to only 5% of principals and 28% of teachers and 5% of principals placed evaluating gender equity practices as lowest priority.

Comparative Priority to School Organisation and Administration: Findings

Table 7.6 Principal and Teacher Perceptions of School Organisation and Administration Priorities

	Principal Response (%)				Teacher Response (%)			
	4 Highest	3	2	1 Lowest	4 Highest	3	2	1 Lowest
Ensuring teaching resources are allocated equally to boys and girls	65	25	10	0	53	30	15	2
Distributing all staff duties among men and women	80	20	0	0	64	19	14	3
Ensuring women and men have the same opportunities for leadership experience	90	5	5	0	68	20	7	5
Ensuring equal participation of girls and boys in liturgies *	85	15	0	0	69	24	7	0

Note: * Questionnaire item developed to address the specific Catholic school context.

There was no discernible difference in response between teachers and principals at the lower end for the four items in this section. In fact, the three items that none of the principals accorded the lowest priority, were deemed to be the lowest priority by less than 5% of teachers. The item on which there was complete agreement at the lowest end of the scale was that pertaining to ensuring equal participation of boys and girls in liturgies. However, although there was a nil response by teachers and principals at this end of the scale, there was a difference in perceptions of its priority at the other end in that 69% of

teachers and 90% of principals considered this was given the highest priority at their school.

A higher proportion of principals (90%) than teachers (68%) considered that their school gave highest priority to ensuring men and women had the same opportunities for leadership experience. In terms of equal distribution of staff duties among men and women, this was seen to be of the highest priority at their school by 80% of principals and 64% of teachers.

Comparative Priority Given to Teaching and Learning: Findings

Table 7.7 Principal and Teacher Perceptions of Teaching and Learning Priorities

	Principal Response (%)				Teacher Response (%)			
	4 Highest	3	2	1 Lowest	4 Highest	3	2	1 Lowest
Ensuring posters, display materials give equal representation to girls and boys, men and women	44	44	6	6	31	29	32	8
Ensuring girls and boys have equal hands on experience in practical subjects *	85	15	0	0	67	31	2	0
Developing a culture of respect between boys and girls in the classroom	95	5	0	0	79	19	2	0
Creating a learning environment that is equally caring of boys and girls	90	10	0	0	75	23	2	0
Teaching students about being male and female	79	16	5	0	50	42	8	0
Exploring gender issues	10	60	25	5	20	43	32	5
Providing girls and boys with equal opportunities to participate in all curriculum areas	90	10	0	0	74	20	3	3
Teaching students about women's role in historical events and in society	35	35	25	5	29	35	29	7
Emphasising co-operation and self development in teaching and assessment rather than competition *	85	15	0	0	65	26	7	2
Teaching students about women's role in the Church *	40	30	25	5	25	37	30	8

Note: * Questionnaire item developed from gender policy documents written specifically for Catholic schools.

On eight of the ten questionnaire items in this section, principal response was between 13% and 29% higher than teachers in the highest priority category. However, there was clear agreement in the last category of every item which indicated that none of the items

was seen as the lowest priority by more than 10% of respondents and on four items, none of the respondents saw the specific teaching/learning action as the lowest priority. In this section of ten items, the responses of principals and teachers followed the same trends.

Of note were the similar trends in response to the final two items, each derived from the policy directions for Catholic schools. Whereas 85% of principals and 65% of teachers considered that their schools gave the highest priority to emphasising co-operation and self-development in teaching and assessment, the policy item focusing on the importance of teaching students about women's role in the Church was seen to be the highest priority in their schools by only 40% of principals and 25% of teachers.

Comparative Priority Given to Pastoral Care: Findings

Table 7.8 Principal and Teacher Perceptions of Pastoral Care Priorities

	Principal Response (%)				Teacher Response (%)			
	4 Highest	3	2	1 Lowest	4 Highest	3	2	1 Lowest
Developing a school sexual harassment policy	15	40	40	5	13	22	43	22
Ensuring the same standards of behaviour are expected from boys and girls	95	5	0	0	70	25	5	0
Ensuring girls and boys are equally valued	95	5	0	0	70	25	5	0
Ensuring boys' and girls' needs are equally addressed	85	15	0	0	70	25	3	2
Ensuring boys and girls are disciplined in similar ways	85	15	0	0	74	20	6	0
Ensuring sexist remarks and behaviour are challenged by staff	90	10	0	0	58	30	5	7
Teaching students how to challenge sexist remarks and behaviour	30	55	15	0	33	40	15	12
Ensuring gender based teasing is challenged and rejected by staff	80	15	5	0	58	26	13	3
Teaching students how to challenge and reject gender based teasing	53	42	5	0	33	45	17	5
Developing a range of extra curricular activities that responds equally to the interests of girls and boys *	74	21	0	5	45	33	18	4

Note: * Questionnaire item developed from gender policy documents written specifically for Catholic schools.

In this particular questionnaire section, there was clear agreement between teachers and principals on some items and marked differences on others. Whilst few principals and

teachers saw that their school gave the highest priority to developing a school sexual harassment policy (13% of teachers, 15% of principals) and to teaching students how to challenge sexist remarks and behaviour (33% of teachers, 30% of principals) more teachers saw both of these as of the lowest priority (22% of teachers and 5% of principals for the former item and 12% of teachers and no principals for the latter). On all other items in Pastoral Care there was clear agreement between principals and teachers at the lowest end where all items were seen as of the lowest priority by 7% or less of respondents.

There was however, a clear difference of response at the upper end on a number of items. In response to the item, *ensuring sexist remarks and behaviour are challenged by staff*, 90% of principals cited this as the highest priority but only 58% of teachers did. Other items related to expectations of behaviour by girls and boys and educating them about appropriate responses where 95% of principals considered that their schools gave the highest priority to ensuring girls and boys are equally valued in comparison to 70% of teachers and 95% of principals considered that their school gave the highest priority to ensuring that the same standards of behaviour are expected from boys and girls in comparison to 70% of teachers.

One other item related to this area also showed difference in perception of school priority whereby 53% of principals considered that their school gave the highest priority to teaching students how to challenge and reject gender based teasing in comparison with a response by only 33% of teachers. The only other item with noticeable difference was that connected with developing a range of extra curricular activities that responds equally to the interests of boys and girls. Whereas 74% of principals considered that this was of the highest priority for their schools, only 45% of teachers responded in similar fashion.

Comparison with Teacher Questionnaire Responses to Section 1: Discussion

Overall, principals' and teachers' responses to items in the section that focused on school priorities indicated similar trends in terms of perception of priority given to particular areas. However, in most cases, principals appeared to have a stronger perception of priority than teachers, with a larger percentage of principal responses in the two higher priority areas and a larger percentage of teacher responses in the two lower priority areas. Reasons for this particular difference can only be surmised.

It could well be that principals had a more optimistic view of what was actually taking place in their schools and that they were more inclined to portray this optimistic view to a researcher. It could be that teachers were more inclined to see school issues and practices in a less optimistic light and were comfortable communicating this to a researcher. It may be that principal and teacher experience of specific gender equity issues and strategies was different and therefore both perceptions were accurate from different points of view. In terms of the cultural perspective provided by Willis et al. (1992), these differing responses could well reflect the different meanings that each participant ascribed to the gender reform process in which they were participating.

Clearly within the school context, principals and teachers have different priorities and different experiences. The responses of participating principals and teachers may well have been reflecting this reality. It is also important to note the findings discussed in Chapter 2 regarding teacher perception of gender reform where there appeared to be an observable gap between what teachers say they believe and what they are observed to do in the classroom (Brannock, 1992; Kamler et al., 1994; Kenway & Willis, 1997). Of particular interest in terms of principal and teacher response to school gender equity priorities are the following key areas:

School Development: School Planning for Gender Equity

There would appear to be a shared perception between principals and teachers of the low priority given to gender policy planning, development and evaluation. Teachers saw this as an even lower priority than did principals. This particular finding around school planning and policy development for gender equity was further developed in discussion of the recommendations of the study.

Also of note was the low priority recorded by both principals and teachers for the provision of information about issues of gender equity to parents. This was clearly linked to the overall planning process that involved the school's understanding of and response to parents' role in gender equity.

School Development: Staff Professional Development

Similar findings were recorded for the low priority given by the school for encouraging

staff participation in professional development in the area of gender equity. This important finding for leadership for gender equity was raised in many sections of this study and its full implications for school leadership were developed in the next chapter.

Pastoral Care: Sex-Based Harassment

It was in the Pastoral Care area that sharper differences appeared between principal and teacher responses. The specific area of note was that concerning sexual harassment. There were two items relating to staff responses to gender based teasing. On both of these, perceptions were noticeably different. Whereas 90% of principals perceived that the highest priority was given to ensuring sexist remarks and behaviour are challenged by staff, only 58% of teachers saw this as the highest priority and whereas 80% of principals saw that the highest priority was given to ensuring gender based teasing is challenged and rejected by staff, only 58% of teachers saw that this was given the highest priority.

There was however, a shared perception of the lower priority given to teaching students how to challenge and reject sexist remarks and behaviour and gender based teasing and to the development of a school sexual harassment policy. Thus, there has been established confirmation that policy directions around sex-based harassment have not been seen as a high priority by participating schools and even in those specific areas that principals perceived to be of the highest priority, there was not agreement by the teachers.

Although this has certainly been a high priority in policy documents for a number of years, research discussed in Chapter 2 signalled that this was problematic. Findings demonstrated that there were teachers who displayed little awareness of sex-based harassment or grievance processes and that sex-based harassment was still a critical issue for a number of students (Butorac & Lymon, 1998; Cuttance, 1995; The Collins Report). The implications of this finding for leadership for gender equity were seen to be critical and thus were further developed as recommendations in Chapter 8.

PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION 2: FREQUENCY OF TEACHER INVOLVEMENT IN SPECIFIC GENDER EQUITY STRATEGIES

Frequency of Teacher Involvement in Specific Gender Equity Strategies (School Development): Findings

Table 7.9 Frequency of Teacher Involvement in School Development Strategies

How often does the staff at your school	Frequently (%)	Sometimes	Rarely	Never (%)
Examine ways to improve the specific educational outcomes of girls	5	40	45	10
Examine ways to improve the specific educational outcomes of boys	5	45	40	10
Collaboratively identify the values of the Gospel which have meaning for them in their lives*	60	40	0	0
Examine the ways in which the values of the Gospel are reflected in the school’s relationships, policies, practices*	90	10	0	0
Participate in professional development on issues of gender equity	5	45	45	5

Note: * Questionnaire item developed from gender policy documents written specifically for Catholic schools.

In the School Development area, the items related to involvement of staff in specific gender equity strategies. The two questionnaire items extracted from the Catholic policy documents received a very strong response with 90% of principals reporting that the staff frequently work to examine ways in which Gospel values are reflected in school relationships, policies and practices and 60% of principals reported that the staff frequently collaboratively identify those Gospel values that have meaning for them in their lives.

However, 55% of principals reported that their staff rarely or never examine ways to improve the educational outcomes of girls, 50% of principals reported that the staff rarely or never examine ways to improve the educational outcomes of boys and 50% of principals reported that the staff rarely or never participate in professional development on issues of gender equity.

Frequency of Teacher Involvement in Specific Gender Equity Strategies (School Organisation and Administration): Findings

Table 7.10 Frequency of Teacher Involvement in School Organisation and Administration Strategies

How often does the staff at your school	Frequently(%)	Sometimes	Rarely	Never (%)
Review access for boys to playground space	40	55	5	0
Review access for girls to playground space	35	60	5	0
Review access for girls to teaching resources	26	42	32	0
Review access for boys to teaching resources	30	40	30	0

There was clear agreement by principals as regards teacher involvement in School Organisation and Administration strategies with 95% of all principals noting that the staff frequently or sometimes review access for boys and girls to playground space. The response for reviewing access for students to teaching resources showed that 68% of principals saw that this was done frequently or sometimes for girls and 70% saw that it was done frequently or sometimes for boys.

Frequency of Teacher Involvement in Specific Gender Equity Strategies (Teaching and Learning): Findings

Table 7.11 Frequency of Staff Involvement in Teaching and Learning Strategies

How often does the staff at your school	Frequently (%)	Sometimes	Rarely	Never (%)
Examine ways that learning can be more co-operative, less competitive*	60	40	0	0
Use teaching styles that allow for gender differences	50	45	5	0

Note: * Questionnaire item developed from gender policy documents written specifically for Catholic schools.

There were two items examining involvement of staff in gender equity strategies related to Teaching and Learning. All principals saw that the staff participate frequently or sometimes in examining ways that learning can become more co-operative and less competitive which was extracted from the Catholic policy documents. The other item, using teaching styles that allow for gender difference, produced almost the same response with the exception of 5% of principals who saw that staff do this rarely.

Frequency of Teacher Involvement in Specific Gender Equity Strategies (Pastoral Care): Findings

Table 7.12 Frequency of Staff Involvement in Pastoral Care Strategies

How often does the staff at your school	Frequently (%)	Sometimes	Rarely	Never (%)
Examine ways to develop girls' self esteem	50	45	5	0
Examine ways to develop boys' self esteem	55	40	5	0

The two Pastoral Care items related to the work of the staff in examining ways to develop the self esteem of girls and of boys. There was little difference between the response of principals to both items, with a slightly higher response for frequent participation in examining the self esteem of boys (55%) as compared to 50% of principals who saw this is done frequently for girls. Overall however, 95% of principals saw that staff do this frequently or sometimes for girls and boys.

Principal Questionnaire Section 2: Discussion

Shared School Values

Most principals considered that identifying specific values that have meaning for staff and examining ways in which they are reflected in the policies, practices and relationships in the school occurred frequently whilst fewer would see that this at least happened sometimes. This would accord with the response to the priority item from the previous questionnaire section (Table 7.9, p. 238) which indicated that principals perceived that staff gave a high priority to ensuring that Gospel values were reflected in all that happened in the life of the school.

There have emerged strong understandings around Catholic values and the importance of these to a school community's response to gender equity issues. The implications of these findings in terms of the Catholic school context as well as for leadership for gender equity were highlighted throughout this research and the implications for leadership for gender equity have been further developed in the final chapter.

School Development: Professional Development

Professional development in the area of gender equity has received particular attention in

many gender policy documents for schools and was a consideration in much of the gender equity research referred to in Chapter 2. The Policy Analysis Template demonstrated that professional development directions occurred in all 11 gender policy documents (Table 4.3, p. 105). These policy directions signalled recognition of the importance of provision of opportunities for development of teacher awareness, understanding, knowledge and expertise in a range of areas pertinent to gender equity.

Principal responses to specific questionnaire items reinforced the previous findings from teacher questionnaire responses on staff involvement in professional development or professional discussion on gender equity issues. It was clear that many staff in participating schools only sometimes or rarely engaged in discussion of specific gender equity issues relating to improving educational outcomes for girls and boys and very few staff did this frequently. In addition, most staff only sometimes engaged in review of student access to recreational space and teaching resources. Clearly, most staff only sometimes or rarely participated in professional development on issues of gender equity and very few staff did this frequently.

PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION 3: FREQUENCY OF CONSIDERATION OF GENDER EQUITY ISSUES IN PLANNING/PROGRAMMING/ TEACHING

Frequency of Consideration of Gender Equity Issues in Planning/Programming/ Teaching (Teaching and Learning): Findings

Table 7.13 Frequency of Consideration of Specific Gender Equity Issues in Planning/ Programming/ Teaching (Teaching and Learning)

How often are the following considered	Frequently (%)	Sometimes	Rarely	Never (%)
Ensuring a balanced reference to women's and men's achievements and contributions to society	55	30	10	5
Reflecting a balance of boys' and girls' interests	75	20	5	0
Reflecting a balance of boys' and girls' experiences	75	20	5	0
Raising questions about sex roles and stereotypes	40	50	10	0
Including information about life paths that challenges gender stereotypes	28	56	11	5

Table 7.13 (Continued) Frequency of Consideration of Specific Gender Equity Issues in Planning/ Programming/ Teaching (Teaching and Learning)

How often are the following considered	Frequently (%)	Sometimes	Rarely	Never (%)
Educating about family responsibilities for men and women	31	53	16	0
Using the experiences of boys and girls in assessment	47	37	11	5
Encouraging girls to participate in Maths/ Science/ Technology	89	11	0	0
Encouraging boys to participate in Humanities	80	20	0	0
Developing teaching styles that allow for gender difference	45	40	10	5
Examining the degree of emphasis given to particular values across the curriculum*	40	50	10	0
Providing opportunities to study Church teaching on men and women*	15	60	20	5

Note: * Questionnaire item developed from gender policy documents written specifically for Catholic schools.

In this particular section, there was a clear trend identified. Across all 12 items, over 75% of principals indicated that the specific gender equity issues were taken into consideration frequently or sometimes when planning, programming, and teaching. Of interest, however, was the response at both ends of the frequency scale to particular items.

The highest response came in relation to involvement of students in traditionally gender stereotyped subjects where 89% of principals indicated that staff frequently consider the involvement of girls in Maths/ Science/ Technology and 80% of principals indicated that staff frequently consider the involvement of boys in Humanities. On both of these items, there was a nil response to this being considered by staff rarely or never. At the other end of the frequency scale, only 15% of principals saw that staff frequently considered opportunities to study Church teaching on men and women and indeed, 25% indicated that this was rarely or never considered. This particular item was extracted from the Catholic policy documents.

An important finding in terms of the Catholic context of the study was that pertaining to values across the curriculum where 90% of principals considered that teachers frequently or sometimes considered the degree of emphasis given to values across the curriculum in their planning, programming or teaching.

Frequency of Consideration of Gender Equity Issues in Planning/Programming/Teaching (Pastoral Care): Findings

Table 7.14 Frequency of Consideration of Specific Gender Equity Issues in Planning/Programming/Teaching (Pastoral Care)

How often are the following considered	Frequently (%)	Sometimes	Rarely	Never (%)
Teaching girls and boys how to resolve conflict arising from gender differences	45	45	10	0
Teaching boys and girls that violence is unacceptable	100	0	0	0

In this particular section, all principals reported that the staff frequently considered the inclusion in planning, programming and teaching the need for children to learn that violence is unacceptable. However, the response to teaching students how to resolve conflict arising from gender difference was much more varied with only 45% of principals reporting that this was frequently considered and 10% reporting that it was rarely considered.

Principal Questionnaire Section 3: Discussion

Shared School Values

Of note were the very clear responses recorded for the policy implications for practice which came from the Catholic policy documents. The response to the Catholic policy implication which focused on the degree of emphasis given to particular values across the curriculum reinforced the picture that emerged from responses to previous questionnaire items. There was certainly a strong perception that staff in participating schools perceived the importance of identifying values that underpin education at their schools and then to examine to what effect these values are apparent in what actually takes place. Less emphasis was given to the specific agenda around studying Church teaching on men and women which mirrored the response given to a previous item on educating about the role of women in the Church which was also seen as being of low priority in respondents' schools.

Teaching and Learning: Gender-Aware Teaching Strategies

As noted in other sections of this chapter, teaching and learning implications for school

practice have occurred frequently in policy documents since 1975 (Table 4.5, pp.109-110; Table 4.9, p. 117). It was in the area of curriculum and pedagogical implications for practice that schools appeared to have responded to gender policy implications for practice, a finding which replicates that of The Collins Report.

Almost all strategies described in this particular section were seen by principals to be frequently or sometimes addressed in their schools. These strategies spanned a breadth of considerations including encouraging participation by boys and girls in traditionally gender stereotyped subjects, use of the interests and experiences of boys and girls in programming, teaching and assessment, addressing issues around male and female roles and post school pathways including family responsibilities and using teaching styles that allow for gender difference.

Why Teaching and Learning implications for practice appeared to have been readily responded to by schools was an area of importance in this research and thus was further developed in terms of implications for leadership for gender equity in the final chapter.

Pastoral Care: Sex-Based Harassment

In the particular domain that addressed student relationships and where policy responses have focused on the social construction of gender, specific findings emerged from all participants. In the Pastoral Care area there was a noticeable difference between the frequency with which students were seen to be taught that violence is unacceptable and how often they were taught how to actually resolve conflict that arises from gender difference. This particular finding mirrors the response from students and teachers and findings from previous research (Butorac & Lymon, 1998; Cuttance, 1994; The Collins Report) and the implication of this for school leadership for gender equity was seen to be one of highest importance.

PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION 4: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Open-Ended Questions: Findings

In the final section of the questionnaire, principals were invited to provide responses to six questions. The majority of respondents answered at least some of the questions. Responses

were analysed utilising the Policy Analysis Template framework as detailed in Chapter 3 (demonstrated in the Sample Principal Comment Analysis, Appendix L).

Question 1: Could you give an example of an effective gender equity strategy that has been implemented at your school.

Of the 22 responses to this question, the majority focused on initiatives in school organisation and administration. Of note were two very different general comments, which highlight the varied response to gender equity agenda:

I don't think that we are very gender conscious. (School 1)

We have always been inclusive in all areas. (School 30)

School Development

One comment in this area mentioned the emphasis given by the school to professional development and one spoke of the school's focus on 'people' as distinct from being gender specific about issues and events.

School Organisation and Administration

Seven comments focused on the positive response to mixed sporting teams such as netball, basketball, soccer, cricket, touch football as well as opportunities for both female and male staff to coach teams. One principal spoke of the importance of the expectation that both boys and girls participate in liturgical dance. Three principals cited organisation of equitable use of recreational space and one commented that:

From kindergarten no distinctions between boys and girls re seating in classrooms, in allocation of jobs. (School 15)

Other initiatives mentioned were equal distribution of student awards among girls and boys, specifically 'Aussie of the Month' and at one school, the staff had deemed it appropriate to address the staff dress code:

Because ladies were not required to wear ties, neither were men. (School 22).

Teaching and Learning

There were three specific initiatives mentioned in this section. One school had culled the library collection and purchased new books and resources using gender issues as one of the criteria. Another school had trialled separate gender lesson groups in Year 6 for literacy and numeracy whilst another focused on inclusive use of technology in primary classrooms.

Pastoral Care

Three principals spoke of the work that had been done to address issues of student management. One principal described the school's student management policy, based on Glasser's Choice Theory, which deals with rights and responsibilities, owning one's behaviour and respect for others, a second spoke of an inclusive student management policy where the same expectations and consequences exist for both genders and the third mentioned the importance of giving lessons on respect.

One principal referred to the school's student leadership policy whereby the school captain positions must have an even number of girls and boys. Two others focused on the policy of the school to allocate jobs and responsibilities equitably among boys and girls as well as the need to provide activities for all children.

Questions 2 and 3: *What do you consider to be the most critical gender issue currently facing your community? How is your school addressing this issue?*

To say I'm uncertain is to admit there is probably an issue of which I am unaware and that may well be the case. (School 6)

Responses to these questions focused on a small number of specific issues across the four Policy Analysis Template headings.

School Development

Six principals wrote of their concern that cultural attitudes formed in the home were influencing students' gender understandings and that this sometimes influenced what occurred at school.

Parent perception that appears to reflect that males are more important. The attacking (verbal) of female teachers by both male and female parents. Sometimes it appears ethnically based. (School 19)

Responses included the principal addressing the issue with parents and staff, supporting staff and challenging parents where necessary and appropriate, ensuring appropriate role modelling by staff, using the curriculum to teach gender understandings and formation of attitudes. One school used a specific pedagogical approach:

Teaching RESPECT for all individuals. Drama lessons – role playing of varying situations and discussing implications of negative and positive consequences. (School 11)

Two principals reflected on a concern with particular attitudes of staff and the need for principals to address this:

Addressing the gender bias of teachers (some) who continually choose girls to do special jobs in the school. Some teachers who evaluate children's development by "quiet, neat, compliant" (often girls) as opposed to "noisy, untidy, difficult" (mostly boys). (School 13)

These principals spoke of school response in terms of policy around inclusiveness and specific directions for equitable allocation of roles/responsibilities to boys and girls.

School Organisation

Two particular issues of concern were cited. Firstly, three principals mentioned the need for more male teachers for primary schools to provide appropriate male role models for young people as reflected in the following comment:

Effective male role modelling. We are a small primary school and over the

last five years we have had only one male on staff. (School 1)

Principals were not clear how to address this issue apart from continuing to look for good male teachers and providing professional development on the educational needs of boys.

The other main issue of concern mentioned in three comments was that of provision of adequate recreational space and equitable use by both girls and boys which had been addressed in the schools by discussion and compromise and through provision of more playground space for everyone.

Teaching and Learning

Four principal comments mentioned teaching and learning issues. These concerns related to the participation and achievement of both boys and girls in maths, science and technology, achievement levels of boys in reading, boys' achievement levels as a whole and educating students not to stereotype roles. Principals noted that this had been addressed through specific encouragement of girls in maths, science and technology, ensuring teachers address the interests of both boys and girls in their teaching, through the professional reading and awareness raising being done by the principal, assistant principal and Year 6 teachers, and by the use of inclusive language and correction of sexist remarks.

Pastoral Care

In this domain one principal spoke of the need to improve students' belief in their own ability, to increase their self esteem and to encourage them to pursue their interests. This school had responded in a specific way:

In most areas of the KLAs and discipline we are conscious of the gender issue and endeavour to treat each person justly and equally. (School 33)

The other concern highlighted was boys' attitudes to girls which the school addressed through staff role modelling and through the curriculum. A further concern was the need to ensure that student leaders were assigned roles of equal value.

Question 4: What are the major factors that have contributed to your school's level of response to gender equity issues over the last few years?

Nineteen principals answered this question and their responses fell into a small number of specific areas, mainly in the School Development domain.

School Development

Ten principals reflected on the importance of school planning, raising a heightened awareness of gender equity issues and a specific approach to inclusivity. Specific members of the school community were mentioned by five respondents as having raised the issue, these included the Year 6 teacher, parents, the principal and the students themselves. Two principals cited the social composition of the school community and family issues as having influenced the school's response to gender equity issues.

Three principals spoke of the commitment by the school to specific values, seen in the following comments:

A deliberate consciousness to treat all as equally as possible from day one.
(School 30)

Staff understanding of justice and equity. (School 26)

Being inclusive on all matters. (School 6)

School Organisation and Administration

Three responses spoke of the agenda around playground rights, specifically domination by boys and disadvantage of girls and one highlighted the impact of a mainly female staff.

Teaching and Learning

Specific teaching/ learning factors mentioned in one principal's response were boys' literacy levels and the reluctance of boys to participate in creative arts because of peer pressure and the reluctance of girls to participate in Science/Technology activities. Another principal spoke of the work that was done on learning:

Rather than looking at learning from a gender perspective, looking at how children learn. (School 10)

Pastoral Care

Four responses referred to staff attention to discipline issues; specifically an awareness of the need for consistency, the problem of boys' bullying and the discipline problems that arise if equity issues are not addressed.

A general response to Question 4 was provided by two principals who commented that gender equity issues had not been considered as high priority at their school:

Gender equity issues not high on our priority list over recent years – because we don't perceive them to have been a major problem. (School 18)

Question 5: *What do you consider the role of the principal to be in responding to issues of gender equity in the school?*

Being alert to issues (Problems? Effects?) and where necessary suggesting (Professional Development), challenging (e.g. individuals) and promoting (e.g. Policy Development). (School 18)

Responses to this question focused on a number of clear, specific roles, most of which focused on working with the school community to develop an awareness of gender equity issues and developing appropriate responses.

School Development

To facilitate opportunities to examine gender issues and to critically evaluate school policies with staff and look at ways to address these issues. (School 32)

Nine principals spoke of their role as one of articulating a vision for gender equity and then ensuring that it is lived in practice in the school community. Part of this process was seen as being responsible for the development of a school gender equity policy and action plan. In order to ensure teachers and parents are able to participate fully in this process, four principals saw that it was essential that the principal encourages professional development in this area and that he/she participate in it.

Nine principals considered that their response involved challenging assumptions, remarks, behaviour of staff and/or students and/or parents or educating them about specific gender issues and at other times consulting staff, students and parents about specific gender issues and working together to develop a response or supporting staff on a particular gender issue.

Six principals named particular qualities needed for leadership for gender equity. These included an ability to observe and listen and to be proactive and supportive. Particular qualities were articulated in the following comments:

One of support and raising awareness of gender issues. Modelling justice and equity. (School 16)

Articulating the inherent values. (School 27)

Model inclusiveness. (School 29).

These responses accord with questionnaire responses discussed in other sections which have highlighted the importance of specific values on which the schools are founded. That so many responses regarding gender equity reform directions were articulated in the language of values and Catholic philosophy has raised important directions for this study and the implications of these for school leadership for gender equity have been developed into research recommendations in Chapter 8.

Teaching and Learning

One principal identified a responsibility to work with teachers to avoid stereotyping in program development.

Pastoral Care

One area that was highlighted by one respondent was the need for principals to identify opportunities for boys and girls to participate in different activities and by another, the need to ensure equity in the responsibilities that are assigned to girls and boys.

Question 6: *Have you any further comments you would like to add on the issue of gender and education?*

Of the ten comments made in response to this question four acknowledged the importance of addressing the issue of gender equity and one highlighted the fact that this was only one of the issues that teachers face.

Two principals sounded caution about losing ‘balance’ seen in the following comments:

A commonsense approach to access and equity will succeed. Fanaticism will not work. (School.27)

There needs to be a BALANCE maintained in the whole debate. We tend to tip the scales overly to one side then we overreact and overcompensate and do exactly the same but in the reverse direction. (School 22).

One principal made a comment about the questionnaire tool itself saying that it would have been easier to complete by high school participants.

The final comment highlights the attempt by one principal to tease out some of the issues facing principals when addressing gender equity issues in primary schools:

I recognise that there needs to be a common understanding of gender issues. I am a little unsure of how much emphasis should go into primary (separating boys and girls) issues. I also accept that we are the ‘grounding time’. I guess I’m fairly confused. (School 1)

Principal Questionnaire Section 4: Discussion

Principal responses to the open-ended questions spanned a breadth of considerations, some

of which have already been raised for consideration. Overall, it was clear that most principals were confident that their schools were addressing specific gender issues and most principals were able to reflect on the context of gender equity reform efforts.

There were a number of comments that contributed to issues raised for consideration earlier in the chapter, specifically, those relating to shared school values, the perceived role of the principal in gender reform, staff professional development, school planning for gender equity and responses to harassment.

Shared School Values

One theme that emerged from the principal responses was that of commitment to fostering and building a values-based community. Many principals demonstrated this in their responses to the specific item questions constructed around policy implications for practice from the Catholic policy documents and many explored the issue in their open-ended responses.

Principals expressed a belief that if the school is built on a particular values platform and if it continues to ensure that the values are lived in practice, gender equity issues will be addressed because of the specific values that are being lived by all members of the school community.

This particular finding was seen to be one of the most important of the study. It brought together the responses of students, teachers and principals who all articulated an understanding and experience of gender equity which was based on the core beliefs and foundational values on which their schools were based.

That response to gender issues was seen to be determined more by the culture of the school than through a systematic, planned process developed in response to policy directions is of significance. This finding has implications for leadership for gender equity in general and in a particular way, for principals of Catholic schools. It reflects learnings from the literature as regards the role and purpose of Catholic schools (Dorr, 1991; Duncan, 1998; Flynn, 1993; Treston, 1997) and it highlights the place of espoused beliefs in determining responses to policy directions.

The Role of the Principal

Principals saw the role of the principal clearly in terms of leading the school community in responding to issues of gender equity. They wrote of this role as one of articulating a vision for gender equity and modelling this in practice. This would reflect the considerations of Kenway and Willis (1993) who described the leader as a valuable resource for gender equity and Clark (1990) who highlighted the importance of the school leader in initiating, leading and supporting change.

Principals considered that the principal has the responsibility to raise awareness of gender equity issues and to engage the school community in developing and following through on appropriate responses. The directions for school leaders were very similar to those outlined by teachers in Chapter 6. There was a perceived need for the principal to articulate an informed vision for gender equity and to ensure school policies, practices and procedures reflect this vision in practice. Significantly, both teachers and principals spoke of the leader as being called to model gender equity in words and actions.

School Development: Professional Development

As regards professional development, principal comments referred to staff participation in discussion on gender equity issues that in some cases prompted reform efforts. It would appear that in most cases, gender reform efforts began with the acknowledgment that there was an issue that needed to be addressed, a finding that mirrors the finding of the Butorac and Lymon (1998) study. This covered such a variety of considerations as student management, provision of recreational space, staff dress, and participation of boys and girls in specific subjects and in the sporting arena.

Participation in professional development and engaging in professional reading was mentioned by a small number of principals as happening or needing to happen. Reflecting the findings of Large (1993), that professional development of principals was a pressing need, these principals highlighted a need to raise awareness and to participate in professional development and planning for gender equity.

Pastoral Care: Sex-Based Harassment

Issues of harassment were mentioned as of concern by a number of principals. These

included boys bullying girls, parents harassing teachers, domination by the boys in the playground, and the negative, stereotyped attitudes of the boys to girls and women. Principals saw that they have a number of roles to play in response including community consultation and education, challenging inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour and modelling the values on which the school is based, specifically those of justice and equity.

SUMMARY

This chapter has reviewed the research findings for Research Phase 3 (b) and linked these with findings from Research Phase 1, Research Phase 2 and Research Phase 3 (a). A number of themes have emerged across all three Research Phases and these have been explored in detail to gain understandings about gender policy and practice in schools. Of particular interest has been examination of the shared perceptions of principals, teachers and students regarding gender issues and gender reform directions in schools.

The findings in this chapter have clearly highlighted the varying responses that specific gender policy directions have received in schools. According to principal response, whilst some particular directions have been fully embraced by school communities, other policy concerns have not been taken up at all. Particular understandings around this school response have been explored, particularly in terms of the theoretical framework of Willis, Kenway, Rennie and Blackmore (1992) which drew on a cultural perspective and demonstrated that the different meanings that teachers ascribe to gender reform can influence their involvement in the actual process. Certainly, these conclusions and those of a number of other researchers (The Collins Report; Yates, 1993) around the role of teachers in the gender reform process have been validated.

The following summary provides an overview of specific principal responses to the questionnaire items and open-ended questions:

Gender Policy Directions Receiving School Response

- Equitable resource allocation
- Equitable allocation of staff roles and responsibilities
- Creation of positive classroom climate that ensures all students are valued and respected

- Provision of equitable access to all areas of the curriculum
- Teacher involvement in examining how learning can be cooperative
- Use of teaching styles that allow for gender difference
- Teacher use of gender equitable teaching strategies
- Development of equitable student management policies and processes
- Staff challenging of gender based teasing and sexist remarks and behaviour
- Staff examination of ways to enhance the self esteem of girls and boys
- Teaching students that violence is unacceptable
- Examination and incorporation of Gospel values across policies, programs, processes

Gender Policy Directions Receiving Little/No School Response

- School planning for gender equity including formal policy, plan and evaluation processes
- Staff development in promoting gender equity
- School review of boys' and girls' access to teaching resources
- Exploring gender issues with students
- Teaching students about the role of women in history, the Church and society
- Development of school sexual harassment policy

Comparative Results for Teacher and Principal Response to Priority Areas

Shared Perception of High Priority

- Equitable distribution of staff duties, roles and leadership responsibilities among staff
- Creation of respectful, inclusive classroom environment
- Provision of equitable access to all areas of the curriculum

Shared Perception of Low Priority

- Gender Policy Planning and Evaluation
- Provision of gender equity information to parents
- Encouraging staff development in gender equity
- Teaching students how to challenge and reject sexist remarks and behaviour
- Exploring gender issues with students

Items Demonstrating Different Perceptions of Priority

- Developing an equitable range of extra curricular activities
- Ensuring sexist remarks are challenged and rejected by staff
- Teaching students how to challenge and reject gender based teasing
- Ensuring Gospel values are reflected in gender policies and practices

Chapters 6 and 7 have also highlighted some themes for leadership for gender equity that have emerged from the research. When teachers and principals were invited to reflect on the specific role of the principal in leading the school in response to gender equity needs, most responses fell into the area of School Development. It would seem that this role was seen as one of articulating a vision for gender equity that is founded on the school's core values, providing opportunities for the school community to discuss and share ownership of this vision and ensuring that this vision is able to be translated into practice.

This work with parents and teachers in raising awareness of gender equity issues and planning the development of appropriate responses is critical for the directions that a school takes. Of particular importance was the emerging theme of shared school values as providing a language for shared understandings and meanings of gender equity and for informing a school's response to gender reform directions.

The final chapter, Chapter 8, links these twin areas of concern – specific issues that have arisen in responses to gender policy directions in schools and perceptions of the role of the leader in leading a school for gender equity. These specific reflections form the foundation for the development of research conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a summary of the findings of the three research phases utilising the framework of the Policy Analysis Template. In addition, it provides an overview of the specific issues and broad themes raised by the study and it offers detailed recommendations for leadership for gender equity in schools that were derived from the findings of each of the research phases.

RESEARCH SUMMARY

The overall focus of the study was leadership for gender equity in schools. The major research aim was to determine implications for leadership for gender equity in schools from a study of school response to implications for school practice contained in 11 gender education policy documents published in Australia from 1975 to 1997. Awareness of gender concerns in Australian education was raised in 1975 with the release of the first government sponsored inquiry into gender and school, *Girls, school and society*. Since that time, numerous policy documents addressing gender equity in schools in Australia have been published at local, state and national level.

Because the gender agenda in Australia has been reflected so clearly in policy documents for schools, the policy lens was seen to be an appropriate foundation for this study. Critical to the policy analysis process was the direction provided by Prunty (1985), recognising the role of the school in the gender implementation process through an examination of values underpinning policy. Content analysis of 11 key gender policy documents for schools provided rich data on the breadth and depth of reform responses that schools have been called to make to gender issues since 1975. In addition, the Policy Analysis Template

developed for the first research phase provided the framework for analysis and discussion of findings for the next two research phases.

Research Phases 2 and 3 utilising survey methodology, allowed a detailed examination of the response of students, teachers and principals in a sample of 35 Catholic K-6 schools to gender policy directions. The student questionnaire, completed by 961 Year 6 students, provided rich data on student experience of gender at school. The teacher questionnaire, completed by 61 teachers from 16 schools and the principal questionnaire, completed by 21 principals, provided detailed information, not only on their schools' response to gender policy directions, but also on their perceptions and experiences of the role of the principal in the gender reform process.

Underpinning assumptions of this research was the direction provided by the conclusion of The Collins Report (p. xiv), that "attention to gender issues by systems, schools and individual teachers does make a difference to the gender experiences of students in schools".

RESEARCH FINDINGS: IMPLICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP FOR GENDER EQUITY IN SCHOOLS

The research findings examining implications for school practice derived from the initial policy analysis have been discussed in detail in previous chapters utilising the framework of the Policy Analysis Template. In addition, important learnings have emerged as regards the policy implementation process. Of major importance for this study were the implications for leadership for gender equity in schools that emerged in examination of the findings from the three research phases.

Specific directions for leadership have been developed through examining the response of schools to specific gender policy directions. In examining those policy directions which have been taken up by schools and those which appeared to have been neglected or indeed ignored by schools, reference has been made to various critiques of specific gender policy directions and gender policy documents which highlighted the varying discourses informing policy directions and the different agenda which were embraced by the policies.

The three distinct phases of gender policy reform, reflecting changes in how gender was theorised (Alloway, 1996; Gilbert, 1996), were seen to be an appropriate means of understanding the changing terminology, semantic shifts and differing assumptions of the gender policy documents.

An overview of the research findings serves to illustrate the extent of the data that emerged from this study. This discussion commences with consideration of the dominant research theme that emerged in participant responses in Research Phases 2 and 3, that of shared values underpinning gender understandings and practice. This is then followed by a detailed summary of data pertaining to the varying degrees of school response to particular gender policy directions.

Shared Values Underpinning Gender Understandings and Practice

Of major importance to this research has been the emerging discovery of the connection between a school community's articulated values and its understanding of and response to gender equity issues. Indeed, shared values as the basis for a school's response to gender equity agenda became the unifying theme of participant response in the study. Students, teachers and principals engaged in reflection on gender equity by articulating the values of the school and by connecting these stated values to actual equity practices. Responses from participants demonstrated linkage between an understanding of gender justice based on foundation values of the school and actual school gender equity practice.

This linkage was demonstrated specifically by student responses to the open-ended questions which utilised the language and meanings of Gospel teachings to explain their particular experience of and position on issues of gender equity. It was also evident in teacher and principal response to questionnaire items specifically derived from the two Catholic gender policy documents analysed in Research Phase 1 which demonstrated clear understanding of and commitment to the calls for action unique to these two documents. The responses of teachers and principals to the open-ended questions also used Gospel values as the reference point for reflections on equity ideals and practice.

The research findings pertaining to shared values reflected similar experiences for this group of participating schools. The shared meanings and understandings of equity

demonstrated a perspective that appears to have been shaped and formed through experience of school within a Catholic context. This context emerged as an important factor in participant response to issues of gender equity whereby their response to gender equity issues came from an expression of their core values and foundational beliefs. This emerging theme reinforced the understandings around the purpose of Catholic schools which were outlined in the opening chapter as integral to the lived vision of the Church (Duncan, 1998; Flynn, 1993; Treston, 1997) whereby teaching about justice is through “lived witness to its beliefs, its values and its opinions” (Dorr, 1991, p. 39).

This finding was seen to have important implications for further reflection and research. It would seem to call for attention to what is at the very heart of Catholic schools which are committed to a specific faith and values platform. What the findings of this research have highlighted is a strong indication that the shared meanings and faith commitment that are the basis for Catholic schools have informed and shaped action in its broadest sense. What has been demonstrated in this study is that shared values informed response by the participant schools to gender equity issues. This was contrasted with school response to a number of policy directions contained in specific documents, which demonstrated that some implications for practice had been assigned low priority, were not known or were ignored.

In its broadest sense, this finding leads to further research directions on the nature and purpose of Catholic schools as it highlights and affirms that in terms of gender equity, the stated vision and mission of the participating schools informed and impacted on practice. It would be of interest to investigate at greater depth the foundations to participants’ understanding of gender justice. There is much to be learnt from a study of the formation of these expressed values to determine if they had been shaped through specific Catholic Church teaching on gender or indeed if they had developed from membership of a community which professes and commits to practices based on specific values.

The implications of this finding for leadership critically impact on the nature of the role of the Catholic school principal which in turn has a direct link to leadership for gender equity. Leaders of Catholic communities whose faith platform is clearly based on Gospel

values and Church teachings can take direction from the clear connection that has been established between articulated values and gender equity practice.

Gender Policy Directions and School Practice

The research results demonstrated that some gender policy directions have had an impact on school practice whilst others seem to have had little or no impact on school responses to gender equity issues. What is not clear, however, is the link between suggested reform strategies as detailed in gender policy documents and the processes that have taken place in schools that have resulted in some implications for gender equity practice being heeded, some addressed in a limited way and some not being known or acknowledged. The scope of this particular research was limited to an investigation of the response of schools to gender policy directions. There was sufficient evidence to demonstrate a wide range of school responses to gender policy documents and to highlight the need for further investigation into the process of policy implementation into school practice.

Nevertheless, the research findings have highlighted some particular gender policy directions that are reflected in gender equity practice in participating schools and that have had an impact on student experience of gender at school. There are other gender policy implications for practice that appear to have received little attention in participating schools.

There are implications for school leadership that can be derived from developing understandings about the background to particular gender policy initiatives being taken up by participating schools and about the particular implementation processes utilised in these schools. Further leadership implications are suggested by considering those particular gender reform strategies as detailed in gender policy documents that appear not to have been addressed by participating schools.

Gender Policy Implications Reflected in School Practice

Classroom Practice

Contrary to the earlier work of Byrne (1987), Spender (1982), and the findings of Brannock (1992) and Kamler et al. (1994), participating schools demonstrated clear and positive response to the policy implications for classroom practice, specifically in terms of

pedagogy, reflecting later findings highlighted in the *Girls in schools reports* (1988-1991) and The Collins Report. There was acknowledgement by teachers and principals of initiatives and work in this area which was well supported by student response. Gender-aware teaching strategies were cited by teachers, and where teachers attended professional development for gender equity, it was most often in this area. Students were able to reflect on examples of gender-aware teaching strategies and the impact that these had on their own experience of gender at school. There were, however, indications that particular strategies were not universally implemented across participating schools. Student responses indicated that in some schools, marks were given more frequently for tests than for other forms of assessment. In addition, a lower proportion of girls than boys considered that what they learn is made interesting to both girls and boys.

The School Environment

A number of specific gender policy directions focused on the development of respectful, caring relationships, and promotion of student self esteem. It would appear from participant responses that this was a natural part of the daily fabric of life at school. Respondents expressed a belief that the culture of their particular school was one that promoted positive and supportive relationships. There would appear to be a link between the positive experience of the school environment and the expressed values around respect, care and justice that were communicated by many of the participants. Whether school response in this particular area had any connection to stated policy directions was not established.

One particular concern expressed by some of the participants in their open-ended responses highlighted conflict and potential for breakdown of quality respectful relationships. These comments referred to cultural differences. For the students this resulted in name calling and bullying, for the teachers and principals different parent gender expectations and understandings due to cultural background resulted in instances of non support for school policies and practices. The implications for leadership action highlighted the need for parent education about gender issues as well as creation of opportunities for parent involvement in school planning, evaluation and development in response to gender policy directions. The fact that students used cultural differences as a

source of bullying behaviour highlighted the need for principals to encourage a review and evaluation of pastoral care policies and practices.

Gender Policy Implications Receiving Little School Response

The research findings indicated that some specific gender policy directions did not appear to have impacted on school practice.

School Planning for Gender Equity

Teachers and principals shared a perception that schools had not engaged in systematic evaluation of gender issues nor had there been progress towards developing a school gender equity plan. This particular policy agenda had not been embraced by school communities and, of interest, where schools had made progress in addressing gender equity issues, the impetus was seen to be not that of formalised gender equity planning but instead a specific gender related issue. The findings also indicated that parent education in terms of gender understandings was not seen as a high priority in participating schools, nor the involvement of parents in planning and evaluating school responses to gender policy directions.

This important finding would seem to accord with those findings discussed in Chapter 2 that demonstrated that gender issues in school appeared to be initiated by teachers and principals who showed interest rather than through an approach reflecting whole school awareness (Cuttance, 1995; Yates, 1993). Relevant leadership implications were provided by Kenway and Willis (1997) who demonstrated that gender reform efforts were most successful when reform was from below and where schools were open to new ideas.

Equitable Access to Equipment, Resources, Facilities

Closely mirroring the research conclusions of Butorac and Lymon (1998), Byrne (1987) and The Collins Report it was found that there existed concerns around girls' access to school resources (specifically computers) and recreational space and facilities, around differential opportunities existing for girls' and boys' school participation and around what areas of participation and achievement were affirmed for students. It should be noted that the term 'access' did not differentiate between perceptions of opportunity, provision and

choice. The qualitative comments by some of the participants, however, reflected a perception that the issue was one of lack of opportunity.

There were particular areas of progress noted by some schools, specifically in the move to mixed sporting teams, and heightened awareness around equitable avenues for student involvement which reflected the findings of The Collins Report. Of note is the fact that in a number of participating schools, the impetus for staff reflection on gender equity issues had been concerns about inequitable use of playground space and the need to create opportunities that were appropriate for all boys and all girls.

Professional Development

Lack of participation in professional development opportunities in areas of gender equity was highlighted by both principal and teacher participants. However, there was less certainty about the reasons for this and the specific questionnaire items did not elicit this information. However, qualitative data from teachers and principals would seem to suggest that the issue was certainly not one of lack of commitment or motivation but more probably that of lack of opportunity or provision. The implications of this finding extend beyond individual schools and directions have been signalled by the research conclusions of Cuttance (1994), who found that opportunities for professional development for teachers in developing gender understandings were limited and by Large (1993) who demonstrated that teachers did not look for opportunities for professional development in gender equity because it was not supported by the principal.

It is of interest that these three policy directions, school planning for gender equity, equitable access and professional development, commenced in the two reform phases, equal opportunity and inclusivity. A window into understanding limited school response was provided by Alloway (1996) who saw that the first two reform phases, equal opportunity and inclusivity, reflected an understanding of gender as two distinct categories of all girls and all boys and that approaches to reform were dependent on top down response and on close monitoring and surveillance of teachers, some of whom may not have shared a commitment to reform. Future directions for school response need to be informed by the potential that exists within the understandings of the third policy reform phase, the social construction of gender.

Sex-Based Harassment

Of particular note was the apparent lack of school response to policy directions for sex-based harassment which closely mirrored the findings of Butorac and Lymon (1998); Cuttance (1994); Milligan (1992) and The Collins Report. This was one of the most conclusive findings in terms of shared perceptions expressed by students, teachers and principals. This policy agenda, clearly situated in the third reform phase of social construction of gender, would appear not to have had the implementation constraints seen by Alloway (1996) as existing for the first two reform phases. The reasons behind the apparent lack of action by schools were not taken up by the current research but this issue is signalled as one of highest priority for future research.

Specific Student Concerns

Two particular policy concerns arose only in student questionnaire responses, but because of the extent of these responses it was deemed important to highlight them for attention.

Toilet Facilities

Many students wrote of unsatisfactory provision of toilet facilities that afforded little privacy and in some cases, little sense of safety. This policy agenda was first raised in the 1970s and it is of surprise and concern that this was still an issue in some participating schools.

Body Image

Many girls and a smaller number of boys wrote of concerns about body image, about being teased for what they looked like and about needing to change their appearance. Specific concerns for girls focused on the size and shape of their bodies. This particular issue has been addressed in a number of different forums as well as in specific gender policy documents; however, students participating in this study freely expressed anxiety and unhappiness associated with pressure to attain an ideal body.

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS: LEADERSHIP FOR GENDER EQUITY IN SCHOOLS

The research findings are seen to be of importance in the ongoing work of striving for gender equity in schools. As gender policy continues to change form and focus and to be shaped according to current gender agenda in schools, it is critical that there is a clear understanding of a number of issues raised in this chapter.

The recommendations that follow are based on two specific themes that have been intertwined in this research. These are the role of the school leader in creating and sustaining a community committed to educating about and living the ideals of gender equity and the connection between this role and the translation of gender education policy into school practice. These two themes have underpinned the detailed exploration of school response to gender policy implications for practice in Research Phases 2 and 3.

It is to be noted that where the role of the principal surfaced in the implementation literature, the principal was often viewed as the barrier to gender reform in schools (Large, 1993). Conversely, Kenway and Willis (1993) saw the potential in the role of the leader as initiator and supporter of gender reform efforts and as such, “ a valuable resource which must be nurtured” (p. 89).

It is hoped that the research findings and the recommendations that follow may assist principals, school communities and education systems to continue to address gender equity in schools and to understand the role of the principal in this process.

LEADERSHIP RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM GENDER POLICY

The recommendations in the next four subsections are specifically linked to gender policy directions. In keeping with the Policy Analysis Template framework utilised throughout the study, the recommendations have been ordered under the four main headings of the template.

School Development

School Development: Staff Formation for Gender Equity

Important research findings demonstrated a need for principals in schools to assume responsibility for ensuring that teachers are kept abreast of gender equity issues in all their complexity. This includes being aware of gender policy directions and understanding the implications for practice contained in gender policy documents. Teacher and principal questionnaire responses indicated that staff professional development in areas of gender equity was not deemed a high priority in their schools, yet the reasons behind this were not clear. However, directions were indicated in responses to open-ended questions where a number of participants spoke of the need for professional development, the value of staff discussion, the impact of information from various sources, and the contribution made by professional reading undertaken by the principal and groups of teachers.

These conclusions reflected the findings of researchers who demonstrated that school gender reform efforts generally are influenced by principals and teachers who show interest and have commitment to gender equity rather than by systematic policy implementation informed by a whole school gender equity plan (Yates, 1993).

There are a number of specific recommendations that arise from these findings:

- Principals need to determine an efficient, effective means of disseminating information on gender issues to staff, including specific information relating to gender policy directions. Time needs to be assigned at meetings for discussion of gender issues and planning for school and staff response. Of importance is the need for principals to allow time and opportunity for staff to discuss gender understandings and to critically analyse current gender practice to allow for the expression, development, challenging and affirmation of attitudes and understandings.
- Principals need to be abreast of professional development opportunities for staff in this area and to encourage staff to attend these and to then share their learnings with others. Opportunities also could be found to allow for the sharing of good practice between teachers. The development of gender-aware teaching strategies and the creation of a gender inclusive classroom were found to be two areas of progress in the study. It is

important that this positive experience be celebrated, affirmed, publicised and shared with others.

- One specific gender issue raised by many participants was that of concerns about boys which mirrored findings discussed in the review of literature (Biddulph, 1994, 1998; Brown & Fletcher, 1994; Connell, 1994, 1997, 2000; West, 1999, 2000). The reality for many teachers was clearly demonstrated as one of struggling to determine the appropriate responses to particular behaviours and attitudes perceived to be inappropriate at best and unacceptable at worst. Other issues that emerged were concerns about boys' lack of progress, particularly in reading and their perceived domination of playground space. Students themselves observed boys' involvement in bullying of girls and of boys. Of relevance was the observation that in a number of schools, gender equity became part of the agenda for staff as a result of needing to address specific concerns about boys.

The policy focus area, the social construction of gender, (Alloway, 1996; Gilbert, 1996; Kenway, 1994) allows schools the possibility to move from the restrictions of the focus of boys as a group in competition with girls as a group. Of note is the observation that the questionnaire instruments themselves utilised for this research took a dichotomous approach in some sections in terms of separation of the genders. These reflected the historical and contextual background of gender policy reform in Australia since 1975 (Alloway, 1995; Foster, 1992) as well as the necessity to ascertain the impact of gender policy on each of the genders. Possibilities exist for further research at school level and beyond that addresses implementation of gender policy directions in schools utilising different frameworks. The Policy Analysis Template could well be adapted for development of research instruments that take a different focus to that of measuring differences and similarities in gender experiences of girls and boys at school.

In examining the possibilities and potential of an approach to reform based on the social construction of gender, schools have the opportunity to work with students to help them to better understand gender relations and to critique existing relationships (Connell, 1994, 1997, 2000). In addition, what has been signalled in many school

responses is that concerns for and about boys are well addressed through whole school approaches to reform in particular areas. Highlighted for consideration are the areas of progress made by schools in relation to boys' issues through the following school initiatives: consideration of utilisation of playground space that serves the needs of all girls and all boys, staff professional development and planning to develop gender-aware teaching strategies and the development of a student management policy.

It is recommended that principals initiate and encourage discussion of specific concerns about boys and attempt to address them in terms of an approach based on the social construction of gender. Particular learnings can be found from sharing experiences of other schools and much benefit could be gained from publicising progress experienced by schools that have addressed the most common concerns about boys around behavioural issues, around relationships and around academic progress.

School Development: School Planning for Gender Equity

Data obtained in Research Phase 3 demonstrated that few principals had initiated a school process for responding to gender equity that was planned and systematic. In addition, there were specific concerns raised by respondents from some participating schools about gender conflicts and non support of school expectations and policies by parents that were seen to arise from cultural differences. Although the reasons and basis for school response to issues of gender equity appeared to be complex and associated with context, there are policy directions for school equity planning that may well provide structure and clarity to this process. Specific implications arising from this are as follows:

- That schools known to have developed accessible, workable gender equity plans that include clearly articulated goals, roles, responsibilities, frameworks for action and evaluation processes be identified. Possibilities of working in partnership with these schools could be explored by principals. This highlights the need for communication across schools and systems in terms of school responses to gender policy directions.
- As part of the ongoing evaluation process, principals of K-6 schools, in partnership with principals of high schools, could initiate a process of monitoring student progress

following their entry into high school. It would be an enlightening and fruitful exercise to initiate a longitudinal study of a small group of students and to work with the appropriate high school in determining outcomes to be measured. It could well be that there may be a specific emphasis on one variable (e.g. student leadership experience, sport involvement, or literacy results).

- The 961 students who participated in Research Phase 2 demonstrated an enthusiasm to be involved and to provide feedback on their experiences and a reflectiveness and sensitivity to their particular school culture. In terms of evaluation of gender equity policies and processes, the students themselves were a valuable resource. Principals are encouraged to work with staff to formulate some appropriate, easily administered student evaluation tools and to involve students in planning gender equity directions.
- Parents in many schools were not seen to be involved in gender equity planning, education or evaluation. This involvement would be seen to be essential if schools are to initiate effective gender equity policies and processes. In order for schools to ensure that there is indeed a whole school approach to gender equity, parents not only need to be accorded a partnership role, but they also need to be provided with the necessary understandings and knowledge to support this role. This would be of particular importance in those schools where cultural differences are seen to impact on gender understandings. Principals have a particular responsibility in instigating the necessary information processes for parents and in encouraging a role of involvement that enables this partnership to be ongoing and worthwhile.

School Organisation and Administration

In the particular area of School Organisation and Administration, the study demonstrated that some important progress was achieved and as such, the role of the principal is suggested as one of monitoring ongoing developments. There are some specific areas, however, that are seen to require direct principal response.

School Organisation and Administration: School Resources and Facilities

- Specific concerns were raised in the study about equitable access to computers both within and beyond the classroom. It is suggested that principals elicit feedback on this

from teachers and students and where needed, initiate appropriate responses and provide teachers with the relevant knowledge and understandings to be able to ensure equitable usage of such important resources.

- Many participant responses indicated a perception of inequity in the area of provision and utilisation of recreational facilities, resources and space although there was lack of clarity pertaining to reasons for this and indeed, many schools had initiated gender evaluation because of concern around this very issue. It would appear that addressing this concern could well afford principals and school staff the opportunity to evaluate and initiate appropriate gender equity directions.
- One surprising finding was the number of students who communicated that their toilets were not private or safe. This would seem to be an important consideration that would require prompt and direct responses from principals.

School Organisation and Administration: Organisational Structures

- Promotion of the ideals of gender equity was certainly reflected in the equitable distribution of roles and responsibilities to members of staff. Principals were seen to have an important role in ensuring that the practice of rotation of important responsibilities allows women and men on staff the opportunity to model gender equity and to have experiences in a number of important areas. This particular responsibility needs to be an ongoing one for all principals. Aligned to this consideration was the concern expressed by many participants at the lack of male teachers in their schools. This issue goes beyond individual schools and calls for action at other levels. However, it is acknowledged that the scarcity of male teachers impacts on schools' responses to gender equity agenda.

School Organisation and Administration: Recognising Achievement

- School support of and recognition for student endeavours, participation and achievement provides very clear messages to the community about what is valued. Research findings demonstrated that in many schools, this was still along gender lines. It is recommended that principals conduct an audit of school awards in order to

determine if these are inclusive of gender and also if they reflect an equitable valuing of all areas of school life.

Teaching and Learning

It is in the area of Teaching and Learning that the most obvious progress was seen to have been achieved in the participating schools. There was a clear picture of teachers implementing gender-aware teaching strategies, of classrooms being places of care and support and of school structures being developed to facilitate access to the full curriculum by all boys and all girls. It would appear however, that there were some Teaching and Learning implications that had not been so readily taken up, particularly those concerned with the specific curriculum content areas of gender and sexuality and women's contributions to history and society. In addition, concerns surfaced in many of the participating schools about teacher response to managing student behaviour issues. There are learnings for leadership in these findings and from those particular areas that point to little or no progress.

Teaching and Learning: Gender-Aware Teaching Strategies

The role of the teacher is pivotal in creating a classroom culture that enables all students to participate and to experience success. Despite teachers and principals signalling that there had been little professional development in this area, progress was clearly demonstrated in creating gender inclusive classrooms where students were actively engaged in their learning. Principals, as the educational leaders of the school, have a clear role to play in ensuring that quality teaching and learning occurs in all classrooms. Therefore it is suggested that:

- Where classroom experiences for girls and boys are clearly positive and where students all have the opportunity to achieve success, the factors contributing to the specific response by schools and teachers should be identified and communicated. Principals are encouraged to explore avenues for sharing these learnings. Most importantly, the teachers themselves need to be encouraged to share their wisdom, experience and expertise with other classroom practitioners. Principals are also encouraged to look for ways and means to acknowledge and celebrate good teaching and learning – on a whole school level and with individual teachers. Where it is clear

that a teacher struggles with gender understandings and has not been able to demonstrate gender-aware teaching strategies, the principal could look to expertise already on staff. The role of peer mentor is suggested as a possible means of formation in this area.

- Particular concerns were raised by students pertaining to the need for specific gender-aware teaching strategies. The need for teachers to evaluate assessment approaches to ensure variety as well as teaching and learning activities to ensure that they gain the interest of all students was certainly implied in responses to specific questionnaire items. Shared reflections on practice and encouragement of informal and formal professional development on these specific pedagogical issues could be a direction for principals to initiate.
- Despite attention given by teachers to gender-aware teaching strategies, there remained a serious concern around disruptive, dominating behaviours by boys and in some cases, passivity on the part of girls and attention seeking behaviour by both girls and boys. There is a clear need for principals to address this issue. It is suggested that this occur within the appropriate context of gender inclusiveness, whereby the focus does not exclude consideration of either boys or girls and where learnings and understandings around the emphasis on social construction of gender inform teacher response. There are two responses that provide direction in this area.

First, principals should ensure that teachers have access to appropriate, current knowledge and understandings about classroom management. This information could become the focus of whole school professional development where appropriate expertise is provided at the school level. This work needs to be ongoing and closely monitored and evaluated.

In addition, principals are encouraged to explore the opportunity for schools to form clusters to address the issue in a more systematic, organised way. A direction for response could involve a shared Staff Development Day where input is provided by a number of experts in the field as well as by teachers and principals from schools that have addressed this issue and made progress. This would also enable teachers and

principals from a group of schools to share experiences and learnings and to formulate action plans utilising their shared wisdom and experience.

Teaching and Learning: Curriculum Content

- There were varying degrees of school response to teaching about gender and sexuality. As there are syllabus content areas that cover this in some detail, the different responses may reflect the degree of emphasis given to this in particular schools or by particular teachers. Some students commented that they had not been given the opportunity to discuss issues around this topic in class and as such, principals would need to be sensitive to this potential gap in student experience and to address it, if and where appropriate. Findings highlighted an important insight whereby teaching the content of an issue was given the highest priority by teachers yet teaching about the issue in terms of enabling the students to discuss and internalise their understandings and relate them to actual practice was accorded lesser importance. It is suggested that principals use this insight in initiating evaluation of teaching practice in this area.
- There was one other curriculum content area that the findings signalled as not being addressed, that of the role of women in historical events, in society itself and specifically in church history and structures. This implication for practice has been mentioned in various ways in numerous policy documents and it is clearly seen by the policy makers as important in contributing to gender equity understandings. Facilitating awareness raising about this by the principal at the time of program writing and program evaluation would seem to be important.

Pastoral Care

In the area of Pastoral Care, there were specific issues that were common to all respondents and a very clear picture emerged of the major priorities to be addressed. Implications for leadership are reflected in the following recommendations:

Pastoral Care: Sex- Based Harassment

One of the most critical issues raised in the study was that of the lack of response by schools to issues of sex-based harassment. There are some very clear directions for the principal to follow:

- There needs to be clear acknowledgement that sex-based harassment is an issue in schools. Data from this study and other research demonstrate that many students experienced sex-based harassment and that this has had an impact on their experience of school. This message needs to be given to all members of the school community. The response to sex-based harassment needs to be a responsibility shared by the whole school community. Avenues need to be explored for awareness raising and education of teachers, parents and students.
- Principals are seen to play an important role in leading the school in a process of developing a sex-based harassment policy. The sex-based harassment policy needs to clearly state the expectations and responsibilities of both staff and parents. It is important to note that The Collins Report demonstrated that teachers were more likely to take action in gender related areas when there were clearly established policies and procedures to follow.
- Education of students about sex-based harassment is critical. This should be planned in terms of what is age appropriate. However, all students need to be taught how to make appropriate responses to issues of gender based teasing and sexist comments and behaviour.
- Sex-based harassment grievance procedures need to be developed by and for each school community. These procedures need to be clear and accessible for both staff and students. The educative process is clearly of highest priority in setting the school response to this agenda. Almost 40% of students communicated that they could not recognise or name sex-based harassment, nor were they aware of school policies and procedures to deal with sex-based harassment. Over 20% of students reported that they did not know what happened if a student made a complaint about sex-based

harassment. Principals need to lead the school community in addressing the reasons behind this.

- Professional development for staff in this area is signalled as a particular need. Data from this research demonstrated that this had not been seen as a high priority by teachers in the participating schools. Findings from the Collins Report are important as they demonstrated that not only did teachers from the Catholic sector have the lowest attendance rate at professional development but that they gave the lowest rate of satisfaction to professional development on sex-based harassment.

Pastoral Care: Conflict and Bullying

Although some progress was apparent in student experience of resolving conflict arising from gender differences and to issues of same sex and opposite sex bullying, responses indicated that there is still work that needs to be done in this area. This is both a curriculum content and a pastoral care policy issue that could be addressed at many levels. Questionnaire responses indicated that in many areas, the curriculum content addressed an issue. However, the students did not perceive that they had experienced an opportunity to work with and internalise this knowledge.

- The principal is seen as a key figure in initiating ongoing school responses to conflict and bullying. An approach needs to be determined whereby the curriculum content covers the issue but just as importantly, teaching approaches need to ensure that the students understand the implications of the knowledge and apply it to their own situation and context. Furthermore, stated school policies and processes need to reinforce the curriculum message so that there is consistency in what is being taught and learnt and in what the students perceive as happening in practice.

Pastoral Care: Extra Curricular Involvement

- Many students spoke very positively of their experience of a breadth of extra curricular participation at their school and of the importance that this served in fostering positive relationships between girls and boys. Implications for school leadership are clear from those responses that reflected on unequal opportunities for either boys or girls. Evaluative processes for gender equity need to include an acknowledgement that a full

range of school experiences contributes to a positive experience of gender at school as well as contributing to learnings about gender and a review of these opportunities is obviously an important part of the gender equity evaluative process.

Pastoral Care: Body Image

One finding that emerged, mainly from student comment, was that concerning body image, reflecting the findings of The Collins Report and indeed, signalling a higher percentage of concerned students than in the 1996 study. A large proportion of girls and a small number of boys communicated the pain and stress that this caused them. Addressing this issue is multi-faceted and includes awareness raising and education of staff and the development of a framework for response that involves curriculum content and a planned use of pastoral care structures. There are recommendations for leadership that follow this finding:

- Principals need to investigate opportunities for sharing of information and professional development in this specific area. Evaluation of curriculum areas that deal with body image and awareness of eating disorders is signalled as a priority as is the need to address the issue via pastoral care structures and processes. Attention also needs to be given to developing an appropriate whole school response which would need to involve parents for the care of those students who indicate signs of concerns with body image.

Pastoral Care: Supportive School Environment

A most positive finding in this area was consensus among respondents that their school fostered a supportive interpersonal environment where all students were valued and cared for. Principals are the cultural leaders of their schools and as such there are clear directions for leadership:

- The principal has many avenues to reflect on and to share understandings of the school's mission and culture as well as to acknowledge the important role that every member of the school community plays in creating and maintaining a supportive interpersonal environment. It is suggested that the principal use these opportunities as occasions for affirmation, challenge and shared wisdom.

- The principal is recognised as an important role model. In terms of the positive climate of the school, a principal has much to offer in the way that she/he relates to others. Many teachers, students and parents will take their lead from the way that a principal speaks, listens, responds, affirms and challenges.

LEADERSHIP RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM RESEARCH THEMES

Shared Values Underpinning Gender Understandings and Practice

A unifying theme that emerged throughout this study was that of values underpinning practice. The recommendations that followed from this are specifically relevant to leaders of Catholic schools. A critical finding of the research was the prominence given to the values that underpinned the lived school culture. Policy directions from the two gender policy documents developed for Catholic school communities clearly had been heeded by teachers and principals. Students, teachers and principals readily articulated the values that had meaning for them and that informed their understanding of gender equity.

This is a critical relationship given that it is the direct and indirect messages that students receive at school about gender that contribute to the formation of their own gender understandings (Large, 1993). Thus there are implications of this finding that have particular relevance to leaders of Catholic school communities whose values base is formed and shaped by Gospel values and by Church teachings around equity and justice. In order that this important relationship between stated values and gender equity practice be strengthened, the following specific recommendations are suggested:

- Given the clear association between the values base of the school culture, the importance of modelling by the principal and the experience of gender in the participating schools, the issue of selection and formation of principals with both a commitment to and understanding of these values would seem to be a priority for those in Catholic education responsible for the appointment of school principals. The issue of the religious character of leaders has received much attention in Catholic education systems and the findings from this research point to the critical importance of the

principal being a person whose words and actions are underpinned by a commitment to the specific Gospel values associated with justice and equity

- That the principal utilises the language and stated ideals of the school Mission Statement as an appropriate reference point for initiating and leading discussion, determination of priorities, policy formation, framework for action and evaluation processes in the area of gender equity. In so doing, the principal will seek ways to encourage, acknowledge and affirm teachers for the role that they play in creating a school community committed to gender justice. In translating the ideals of the school into actual practice, teachers help “shape, build and craft children’s gender identities” (Kenway, 1994, p. 2). An important reference point for the principal’s work with staff could be the knowledge and understanding that the values implicit in what a teacher says and does have enormous potential to create and shape positive gender relations.

Principal Vision for Gender Equity

The directions for leadership for gender equity emerging from principal and teacher questionnaire responses highlighted the importance of the principal himself/herself having a vision of gender equity and articulating this to the school community. Findings demonstrated the importance of the principal being an appropriate role model, living and demonstrating this vision in practice. Recommendations arising from this expectation signal implications for the appointment and formation of principals:

- That organisations and bodies responsible for principal appointments give consideration to specific criteria around leadership for gender equity, particularly that pertaining to a clearly articulated vision for gender equity in school.
- That opportunities for ongoing formation in gender equity be made available to leaders in schools in order that they are able to keep abreast of this agenda.

The Role of Policy

The findings of this research have highlighted ambiguity and at times uncertainty around the role of policy in influencing a school’s response to gender policy directions. The

reasons behind this and the implications of this finding have been discussed in previous sections.

The implications of this finding go beyond the school and signal the need for further research and consultation as highlighted in the work of Kenway (1990) and Suggett (1987b) who both drew attention to the lack of attention given to the reception of gender policies at school level. In addition, the results clearly reflect the findings of Butorac and Lymon (1998) who demonstrated that most schools in their study commenced gender equity practices without any reference at all to specific gender policy directions. It would appear that mandated policy of itself will not determine a school's gender equity directions. What is important, however, is to understand how policy directions are absorbed and embedded into the life of the school and the role of the principal in this process.

Directions for a research response certainly have been provided by Kenway (1990) who considered that understanding the process of implementation of gender reform in schools will be best understood when a theory of change is developed that has gender as a central concern. However, in terms of the intent of gender policy directions to influence school practice, there are two implications for leadership:

- That the school principal seeks opportunities to keep updated with current gender policy directions and current gender research. To facilitate management of this responsibility, it is suggested that principals look to opportunities for professional development and sharing of learnings, understandings and experiences with colleagues and researchers in the field.
- There is a clear need for principals to be kept informed of gender research and policy development. It is suggested that the issue of ongoing professional development for school leaders in the area of gender equity policy and practice be taken up by education systems in consultation with tertiary institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH TOOLS

Research Tools and Future Directions

Specific research tools were developed for this study. A number of recommendations are presented in terms of the potential use of these tools for further research.

Policy Analysis Template

The Policy Analysis Template was developed for this research as a means to synthesise and analyse a large number of school implications for practice contained in 11 gender policy documents. The policy analysis process which was the focus of Research Phase 1, detailed in Chapter 4, demonstrated that the Policy Analysis Template was a valuable framework to synthesise and analyse the 299 implications for school practice contained in these documents. The structure of the template facilitated the grouping of policy implications for practice for critical analysis and for further comparative purposes. This resulted in a clear overview of gender policy directions for Australian schools across the period of policy focus, 1975-1997.

The Policy Analysis Template was also utilised in the final two research phases. It was used extensively to develop the teacher and principal questionnaires. In addition, all research results were reported under the major headings of the template. This framework provided a valuable means to compare findings and to order them into themes for further discussion and development of recommendations.

The ordering of gender policy implications for school practice into a Policy Analysis Template with a framework appropriate to the life of a school is seen to provide a range of potential uses for future policy research and evaluation at school and system level as well as for training and development activities at in-service and tertiary levels. There are thus three specific recommendations in this area:

- That possibilities be explored for evaluation and ongoing development of the Policy Analysis Template for further research purposes. It is suggested that its potential use

be examined as a tool for policy development, for evaluation of the impact of policy directions on schools, and for ongoing policy research. This tool could well be utilised by tertiary institutions for teacher preparation in terms of introducing students to policy development and evaluation.

- It is recommended that the Policy Analysis Template be utilised as a tool within schools and education systems such as Catholic education to determine the efficacy of specific gender equity plans and processes and for the ongoing process of gender policy development in schools and systems. It would serve as a working tool for principals to utilise in leading staff in an ongoing process of school review and development in the area of gender equity.
- The Policy Analysis Template has the potential for school use in any policy area. It is recommended that its use as a tool for evaluation and planning be examined. It could prove to be a convenient and workable tool for principals to use in working with staff in addressing ongoing issues of policy and practice.

Teacher Questionnaire and Principal Questionnaire

Two survey tools, the principal questionnaire and the teacher questionnaire, were developed to examine the response of principals and teachers to gender policy directions. Each questionnaire item was developed directly from one specific gender policy implication for practice. Each gender policy implication for practice examined in either questionnaire was contained in three or more of the policy documents or in the policy documents written specifically for Catholic schools. Thus a direct link between a gender policy implication for practice and the actual questionnaire item was established. The following recommendation suggests ongoing usage for these tools.

- The survey tools, teacher questionnaire and principal questionnaire, developed for this research, have a range of potential uses in seeking principal and teacher response to specific gender policy directions at a research level and at a system level. It is suggested that these tools be evaluated and further developed for future research in gauging the response of schools to gender policy directions. Furthermore, it is

suggested that the potential use of these questionnaires as evaluative tools to be used by principals working with school staff be examined.

Recommendations for Further Gender Policy Research

This study had its primary focus on leadership for gender equity in schools. Research tools were developed and utilised in order to examine the response of schools to gender policy directions. The research context was 35 Catholic K-6 schools and data was collected and analysed from students and staff from across these schools. The emphasis for data collection and analysis was on the full picture as presented and on establishing links between findings across the three research phases.

A limitation of this research approach was that it did not attempt to examine causation. It is recommended that research data from this study be utilised to develop further understandings in the area of leadership for gender equity in schools. Specifically, the following recommendations look to developing understandings of relationships and causality that may explain why some principals and some teachers have responded in particular ways to gender policy directions. It would also be beneficial to examine the relationship between teacher and principal responses at specific schools and student experience of gender at these schools.

- That qualitative and quantitative research be undertaken to ascertain the reasons why there has been progress in schools in response to specific gender policy directions but not to others. This research would seek to ascertain the context within which schools have undertaken gender reform, in particular, how gender reform priorities are identified and prioritised, how responses are determined and how the response process is evaluated. Particular attention needs to be paid to the connections between these processes and formal school response to gender policy directions.
- That further research be undertaken to examine the relationship between student experience of gender at specific schools as determined by the student questionnaire and the response of those schools to gender policy directions as determined by the principal and teacher questionnaire.

- This research focused on the response of K-6 schools to gender policy directions; however, the implications for school leadership for gender equity are relevant to all schools. It has been demonstrated that there has been a lack of research attention to the primary years in gender research and that gender equity concerns were not seen to be the domain of the primary school (Clark, 1990). Given that educational experience at the primary level can influence post compulsory directions of girls (Large, 1993), it is important that further research be situated in the primary school context, particularly in terms of examining the response of K-6 schools to gender policy directions and to investigating the factors that influence particular responses by school communities and by individual principals and teachers.
- That comprehensive mapping of current curriculum documents be undertaken for gender related material. This could well be an important step in addressing the focus of Teaching and Learning implications in some curriculum content areas that appear to have been assigned a lower priority in the participating schools.
- Opportunities be taken to examine the specific research implications that arose from questionnaire responses of students, teachers and principals. A number of issues were raised in discussion of results and signalled as areas for further investigation. These particular research areas were:
 - To examine the reasons why students considered that they have not been taught the five specific aspects about gender and sexuality that were addressed in the student questionnaire.
 - To map the degree to which the specific educational agenda relating to teaching about gender and sexuality is formally addressed in the NSW Personal Development Health and Physical Education Curriculum and to evaluate the effectiveness of this.
 - To explore the background to students' responses regarding gender-aware teaching strategies, specifically connections between gender-aware teaching strategies and student engagement in their learning and the factors behind their reporting that specific strategies occurred in a few rather than in many subjects. This is particularly of interest

given that the students were in Year 6 and thus these experiences would be occurring in the same classroom with the same teacher.

- To investigate the factors contributing to the extent of student concerns related to gender construction, in particular those factors contributing to the high response of boys (10.9%) who reported that they never felt happy at school.
- To examine the possible relationship that exists between the high percentage of girls and the smaller percentage of boys reporting concerns about body image and their responses to other priority areas.
- To investigate the reasons why student participation in non-academic activities at school remains clearly gender based.
- To address the assumptions underlying the calls for an increase in male teachers and the connection between the lack of male teachers and the particular concerns that are conveyed about boys.
- To examine the reasons behind lack of action by teachers and principals in response to sex-based harassment policy directions.
- To investigate the foundations to understandings of social justice that have been articulated by teachers and principals and to seek understanding about the factors and experiences that shaped and formed the values that underpinned these expressions.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

LEADERSHIP RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM GENDER POLICY

School Development

It is recommended that:

- Principals determine an effective, efficient means of disseminating information on gender issues to staff.
- Principals keep abreast of professional development opportunities for staff in the area of gender issues and encourage them to participate.
- Principals initiate school responses to concerns about boys through an approach based on the social construction of gender, through whole school approaches to reform in

particular areas and through sharing learnings and positive experiences with other schools.

- Principals lead a school process to develop accessible, workable gender equity plans.
- Principals of K-6 schools explore the possibility of working in partnership with principals of secondary schools to initiate a process of monitoring student progress following their entry into high school.
- Principals work with staff to formulate appropriate evaluation tools to facilitate student involvement in planning and evaluating gender equity directions.
- Principals seek to involve parents in gender equity planning, education and evaluation.

School Organisation and Administration

It is recommended that:

- Principals initiate an evaluation of the use of computers by girls and boys within and beyond the classroom.
- Principals initiate an evaluation of the provision and use of recreational facilities, resources and space by boys and girls.
- Principals seek to ensure that toilets are private and safe for all students.
- Principals work with appropriate bodies to address the shortage of males entering teaching.
- Principals ensure that staff roles and responsibilities are distributed equitably.
- Principals conduct an audit of school awards to ensure they are inclusive of gender and that they reflect an equitable valuing of all areas of school life.

Teaching and Learning

It is recommended that:

- Principals explore means for affirmation and celebration of positive approaches to gender-aware teaching strategies and seek the means for ongoing formation of staff in this area.
- Principals support staff professional development in responding to unacceptable student classroom behaviour and seek partnership with other schools in order to develop whole school approaches that are appropriate and lead to positive outcomes.
- Principals encourage teachers to evaluate specific areas of curriculum content including gender and sexuality and the role of women in history and society.

Pastoral Care

It is recommended that:

- Principals be informed of the existence of sex-based harassment as an issue in schools and plan for the community to share the responsibility to address it. Responses to sex-based harassment should include education of staff, students and parents and the development of a school sex-based harassment policy and grievance procedures.
- Principals ensure that concerns about same sex and opposite sex bullying be addressed by all staff as a curriculum and a pastoral care issue.
- Principals examine the breadth of extra curricular activities available to students to ensure equal opportunities for all.
- Principals investigate opportunities for sharing information and undertaking professional development in the area of student concern about body image. Whole school responses need to be at both a curriculum and pastoral care level and should involve parents.
- Principals encourage and support all in the school community to contribute to a supportive interpersonal environment and to acknowledge that parents, staff and students will take their lead from the way a principal speaks and acts.

LEADERSHIP RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM RESEARCH THEMES

Shared Values Underpinning Gender Understandings and Practice

For those schools whose mission is based on Gospel values it is recommended that:

- The selection and formation of principals with both a commitment to and understanding of Gospel values is a priority given the clear association between the values base of the school culture, the importance of modelling of the principal and student experience of gender at school.
- The principal utilises the language and stated ideals of the school mission statement as an appropriate reference point in initiating and leading discussion, planning and evaluation of school gender equity priorities.

Principal Vision for Gender Equity

It is recommended that:

- Organisations and bodies responsible for principal selection give consideration to specific criteria around leadership for gender equity.
- Opportunities for ongoing formation and development of principals in the area of gender equity be available to school leaders.

The Role of Policy

It is recommended that:

- Opportunities be taken by principals to keep abreast of gender policy developments and to seek the means to plan for implementation in schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH TOOLS

Policy Analysis Template

It is recommended that:

- Possibilities be explored for evaluation and ongoing development of the Policy Analysis Template for further research purposes.
- The Policy Analysis Template be utilised as a tool to determine the efficacy of specific gender equity policies, plans and processes.
- The Policy Analysis Template be used as a tool for policy evaluation and planning.

Teacher and Principal Questionnaire

It is recommended that:

- The teacher questionnaire and the principal questionnaire developed for this research be evaluated and further developed for future research in determining the response of schools to gender policy directions.

Further Gender Policy Research

It is recommended that:

- Qualitative and quantitative research be undertaken to determine the reasons why schools respond to particular gender policy directions and neglect others.

- Research be undertaken to examine the relationship between student experience of gender at school and school response to gender policy directions.
- Research on school response to gender policy directions be situated in the K-6 context.
- Mapping of curriculum documents for gender related material be undertaken to examine the reasons why students have not responded to particular content areas.
- Opportunities be taken to examine the specific research implications that arose from questionnaire responses of students, teachers and principals across a range of gender policy implications for practice.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to investigate the response of schools to gender policy directions and to determine implications for school leadership for gender equity. Findings highlighted policy directions that have certainly been addressed by schools and other areas where little or no progress appeared to have been made. These findings resulted in very clear understandings about and implications for school leaders in terms of leading their schools in response to gender policy directions.

This chapter has addressed in detail the findings of the three research phases which were ordered utilising the framework of the Policy Analysis Template. These findings were then used as the basis for the development of specific research recommendations. The implications of the research findings for leadership for gender equity in schools were very clear and multi-faceted and were directly connected to the gender policy analysis with which the study commenced. These were also reported utilising the framework of the Policy Analysis Template. In addition, one important theme, that of shared values underpinning gender understandings and practice, arose throughout the three research phases. This too has been discussed and the implications have also been developed into research recommendations. Finally, there has been an overview of the research tools developed for this study as well as a highlighting of the potential for their use in ongoing work in the area of policy, practice and leadership.

An important dimension of the study was examination of the relationship between gender policy directions and actual school practice in order to determine implications for

leadership for gender equity in schools. In focusing on the role of the school principal in leading a school in addressing the gender agenda, there has been established through the data collected a very clear sense of the responsibilities inherent in this role. It was beyond the scope of this particular work to address the support that the principal would need in fulfilling the breadth of responsibilities as outlined but it has been clearly implied.

Of critical importance also, was exploration of the relationship between gender policy directions and gender practice in schools. Recommendations have been developed as a result of examining leadership implications that developed from each of the three research phases and these are seen to be relevant and appropriate for all principals. These recommendations for leadership for gender equity in schools have addressed a wide variety of implications for school practice that have been contained in important gender policy documents since 1975 in Australia. There have been developed some clear directions for principals to follow in leading school communities so that students' experience of gender at school is a positive one and leads to positive outcomes both at school and beyond.

Underlying these recommendations has been the person of the principal. Many teachers and principals themselves wrote not so much of what the principal should do, but about the integration of vision and of personal qualities that a principal was able to achieve. The respondents articulated a vision for leadership for gender equity formed through commitment to specific ideals. At the heart of these ideals were promotion of respect for the dignity of each person in the school and development of community response to issues of gender justice.

School leadership for gender equity was seen to require a principal who believes in the potential of each boy and girl and who articulates and models gender equity ideals. The principal was seen to require the confidence as well as the knowledge and understandings to articulate a vision for gender equity through policies and procedures and so could motivate, support and where appropriate, challenge staff to address specific gender issues, not only through teaching strategies but in the content of their lessons.

The context of this study was Catholic schools. Specific teachings about Catholic education have been cited to demonstrate the critical role that Catholic education is seen to play in the mission of the Church. The responsibilities that Catholic schools, and clearly their leaders, assume in terms of gender equity is encapsulated in the comment:

Education is at the cutting edge of great social upheavals and change. In this maelstrom Catholic education has the potential and the opportunity to move in one of two directions: to develop the critical consciousness of its young people and to educate them for transformative action in the name of social justice; or to facilitate their integration into the norms of an unjust society. (Raduntz, 1995, p. ix)

Of critical importance to this study therefore, has been the development of specific implications for leadership for gender equity for principals in Catholic schools. A most telling finding that emerged as a unifying theme throughout the study was that in leading the community for gender equity, the principal was seen to be responsible for keeping the values of the School Mission Statement at the heart of all the school's endeavours and as such, helping to create a climate and culture of respect, care and commitment to equity.

In leading a Catholic school community to strive for gender justice therefore, a principal is called upon to consider and to act upon Church teachings that underpin the school's response to issues of justice. The responsibility for transforming the rhetoric of Church teaching into a school reality that genuinely reflects what is proclaimed is one shared by all in the school community led by a principal whose own faith forms and shapes words and actions.

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Appendix A

Gender Policy Documents Utilised in Research Phase 1

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Appendix B

Policy Analysis Template

<i>School Development</i>	<i>School Organisation and Administration</i>	<i>Teaching and Learning</i>	<i>Pastoral Care</i>
<i>School Planning and Partnership Development</i>	<i>Daily Routines and Staff Responsibilities</i>	<i>Curriculum Content and Structure</i>	<i>Student Welfare</i>
i. Community Education and Partnership	School Awards, Ceremonies	Careers, Post School Education and Advice	Harassment
ii. Leadership Responsibilities	School Leadership Structures	General Principles	Pastoral Care Program
iii. School Planning	School Organisation: Parents	Programs, Assessment, Reporting	Specific Welfare Issues
iv.	School Organisation: Students	Teaching Resources	Student Discipline
v.	Staff Responsibilities	Sex Education, Human Relationships	Student Relationships
vi.	Whole School Organisation	Sex Roles	Student Self Esteem
vii.		Subject Selection, Timetable Structure	School Environment
viii.		Unpaid Work, Family Responsibilities	Uniform
ix.		Women's Role	
<i>Staff Professional Development</i>	<i>School Plant, Facilities Resources</i>	<i>Pedagogy</i>	<i>Student Involvement</i>
i.	Allocation Policy	Specific Subject Implications	Extra/Co Curricular Involvement
ii.	Plant	The Learning Environment	Sport
iii.	Sporting/Recreational Facilities	The Teacher's Role	Student Responsibilities
iv.	Student Access to Teaching Resources		

Appendix C

Validation Process for Policy Analysis Template

Anne Mills
Caroline Chisholm College
90-98 The Lakes Drive
Glenmore Park 2745

Gender and School: Research Study

Re: Gender Policy Analysis Framework. Request for Feedback

Dear _____,

As part of my Doctoral Research, *Gender and School*, I have conducted an analysis of 11 gender policy documents issued in Australia between 1975 and 1996. My particular focus has been the implications for practice contained in these 11 documents.

As the overall number of implications for practice contained in these documents is substantial, I have developed a framework to systematically order these. I now seek feedback on the overall structure and the particular headings and subheadings I have used for this framework.

I have attached an explanatory sheet with specific questions and space for comments. I would be grateful for your thoughts.

One point of clarification: each implication for practice from the policy documents needs to be able to be placed under one of the headings and subheadings and secondly there is no point in developing a new heading/subheading under which no implication for practice can sit. I have attached for your information an example of an implication for practice under its relevant heading/subheading.

I am appreciative of your willingness to contribute to this work and for your valuable ideas. Could you please return your responses to me in the attached stamped addressed envelope by March 26.

Please contact me if you need further clarification.

With thanks,

Anne Wenham

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

School Development summarises the planning, organisational and evaluative phases of setting school goals, determining the means by which to achieve them and making judgements about how effective this process has been. It involves at different stages all members of the community in particular roles and it includes staff professional development as well as a community development component

- Is this definition clear in its meaning?
- Would you suggest improvements?

School Planning and Partnership Development

- Community Education and Partnership
- Leadership Responsibilities
- School Planning

- Do these subheadings reflect the heading clearly and comprehensively?
- Would you suggest improvements or changes?
- Would you add any further subheadings under this heading that may be relevant to gender issues?

Staff Professional Development**SCHOOL ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION**

A school as an organisation must be well managed and maintained. There are daily routines and responsibilities that are essential to the operation of the school and decisions about these can indicate what the school sees as important as well as set its particular tone and influence or reflect its culture.

In particular, this addresses all responsibilities for the day to day running of the school including specific leadership and community roles and structures, maintenance and resource issues and organisational considerations

Daily Routines and Staff Responsibilities

- School Awards, Ceremonies
- School Leadership structures
- School Organisation: Parents
- School Organisation: Students
- Staff Responsibilities
- Whole School Organisation

- Is this definition clear in its meaning?
- Would you suggest improvements?

- Do these subheadings reflect the heading clearly and comprehensively?
- Would you suggest improvements or changes?
- Would you add further subheadings under this heading that may be relevant to gender issues?

School Plant, Facilities, Resources

- Allocation Policy
- Plant
- Sporting/Recreational Facilities
- Student Access to Teaching Resources

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The teaching and learning dimension embraces all the planned teaching programs as well as the dynamic of teacher/student interactions, both planned and unplanned. It includes the knowledge and understandings that are valued by the school and the means by which these are taught to the students. Included here are the structures that a school develops to facilitate the teaching/learning process

- Is this definition clear in its meaning?
- Would you suggest improvements?

Curriculum Content and Structure

- i. Careers, Post School Education and Advice
- ii. General Principles
- iii. Programs, Assessment and Reporting
- iv. Teaching Resources
- v. Sex Education, Human Relationships
- vi. Sex Roles/Distinctions
- vii. Subject Selection, Timetable Structure
- viii. Unpaid Work, Family Responsibilities
- ix. Women's Role (continued on next page)

- Do these subheadings reflect the heading clearly and comprehensively?
- Would you suggest improvements or changes?
- Would you add further subheadings under this heading that may be relevant to gender issues?

Pedagogy

- i. Specific Subject Implications
- ii. The Learning Environment
- iii. The Teacher's Role

PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral Care embraces all responsibilities and activities in a school that specifically pertain to the welfare of the students. In particular, Pastoral Care is the means by which a school responds to the social and emotional needs of the students as well as teaching them the knowledge and skills essential for developing quality relationships

- Is this definition clear in its meaning?
- Would you suggest improvements?

Student Welfare

- i. Harassment
- ii. Pastoral Care Program
- iii. Specific Welfare Issues
- iv. Student Discipline
- v. Student Relationships
- vi. Student Self Esteem
- vii. The School Environment
- viii. Uniform

- Do these subheadings reflect the heading clearly and comprehensively?
- Would you suggest improvements or changes?
- Would you add any further items under this heading that may be relevant to gender issues?

PASTORAL CARE

Student Involvement

- i. Extra/Co Curricular Involvement
- ii. Sport
- iii. Student Responsibilities

This framework contains four major headings and a number of subheadings

- Can you think of any issues relevant to gender that cannot be covered in this framework?
- Is there a need for additional headings? If so, what?
- Have you any further comments?

Thank you

Appendix D.

Sample Gender Policy Analysis

Name of Policy *Towards Gender Equity in Catholic Education* (National Catholic Education Commission)

Date of Policy January 1997

Document Structure and Status

- Discussion paper for Catholic education communities to examine issues of gender equity and to undertake action in response

Principles

- Men and women are created equal in the eyes of God (p. 1)
- Catholic education seeks to promote the development of the whole person in an environment based on Gospel values
- Gender is a social construct (p. 2)

Desired Outcomes

- Examination of gender policy and practice in Catholic educational communities (p. 1)
- Equality of educational access and outcomes for boys and girls (p. 2)
- Catholic education communities to take a critical stance on issues of gender inequality (p. 1)
- ‘Effective implementation of inclusive and equitable practices in schools and other educational environments’ (p. 1)
- Catholic education promotes the development of the whole person (p. 2)
- Catholic education communities to be challenged to identify barriers to gender equity (p. 4)
- Catholic education communities to identify structures to enhance gender equity (p. 4)
- Gender equity policies and practices to be “directed towards an increased awareness of and a change of basic attitudes to the equity issue” (p. 2)

Implications for Practice

BEYOND SCHOOL

- All members of the wider Catholic community to become aware of issues of gender inequality and to promote gender equity ‘through their policies and action plans’

WITHIN SCHOOL

School Development

School Planning and Partnership Development

- i. Community Education and Partnership
 - All members of the community to be committed to creating a culture of “respect, mutuality and collaboration” (p. 4)
 - Families to be supported in understanding the impact of socially determined gender roles for their children (p. 2)
- ii. Leadership Responsibilities
 - School leaders to publicly affirm gender equity principles (p. 4)
- iii. School Planning
 - School communities to examine issues of gender inequality and plan/implement equity principles and practices (p. 4)

Staff Professional Development

- Staff professional development on issues of gender equity (p. 4)
- Staff professional development on gender construction (p. 2)

School Organisation and Administration

Daily Routines and Staff Responsibilities

- i. School Awards, Ceremonies
 - Awards, assemblies, ceremonies to give appropriate gender messages (p. 3)
- ii. School Leadership Structures
 - Examination of allocation of men and women to promotion positions (p. 3)
- iii. School Organisation: Parents
- iv. School Organisation: Students
- v. Staff Responsibilities
 - Examination of allocation of other school responsibilities to women and men (p. 3)
- vi. Whole School Organisation

School Plant, Facilities, Resources

- i. Allocation Policy
 - Allocation of resources, services, facilities to provide “a socially just educational outcome for all students” (p. 3)

- ii. Plant
- iii. Sporting/Recreational Facilities
- iv. Student Access to Teaching Resources

Teaching and Learning

Curriculum Content and Structure

- i. Careers, Post School Education and Advice
 - Educational programs to enhance girls' access to careers (p. 3)
- ii. General Principles
 - Schools to examine what knowledge is valued and how it is taught (p. 3)
 - Curriculum to enable students to learn about the significance of gender in their lives (p. 3)
 - Schools to have an awareness of the role that language plays in gender construction (p. 2)
- iii. Programs, Assessment, Reporting
- iv. Teaching Resources
- v. Sex Education, Human Relationships
 - Programs to teach boys how to respond to the needs of others, express their own needs and to value mutuality in relationships (p. 3)
- vi. Sex Roles
 - Girls to be able to examine the impact of the socially constructed feminine roles assigned to them (p. 2)
 - Boys to be able to examine the impact of the socially constructed masculine roles assigned to them (p. 2)
- vii. Subject Selection, Timetable Structure
 - Curriculum offerings to provide appropriate gender messages (p. 3)
- viii. Unpaid Work, Family Responsibilities
 - Curriculum to prepare all students for family and household responsibilities (p. 3)
- ix. Women's Role

Pedagogy

- i. Specific Subject Implications
- ii. The Learning Environment
 - Classroom environment to be "supportive, caring and challenging (where) males and females are equally valued and their needs are met" (p. 3)
- iii. The Teacher's Role
 - Teachers to develop appropriate pedagogical practices to meet the needs of all students (p. 3)

Pastoral Care

Student Welfare

- i. Harassment
 - Policies and just grievance procedures to be developed to respond to sexual harassment and sex-based harassment of students and staff (p. 3)
 - Issues of harassment to be addressed as an educational issue rather than just one of behaviour management (p. 3)
- ii. Pastoral Care Program
 - Pastoral care to give appropriate gender messages (p. 3)
- iii. Specific Welfare Issues
- iv. Student Discipline
- v. Student Relationships
- vi. Student Self Esteem
- vii. School Environment
- viii. Uniform

Student Involvement

- i. Extra/Co. Curricular Involvement
 - Cultural activities to give appropriate gender messages (p. 3)
- ii. Sport
 - Sporting activities to give appropriate gender messages (p. 3)
- iii. Student Responsibilities

Appendix E

Sample Placement of Policy Implications for Practice

Teaching and Learning *Curriculum Content and Structure*

<i>vi. Sex Roles/Distinctions.</i>	1975	1983	1984	1987	1987b	1989	1993	1994	1996	1997	1997b
Areas of knowledge not to be classed male/female .Girls' knowledge to be valued	X							X			
Girls and boys to be presented in interesting/exciting/broad roles, activities, occupations, situations to reflect diverse interests, experiences, aptitudes		X			X		X		X	X	
Student attitudes to Stereotyped sex roles to be challenged	X	X									
Balanced reference to males/ females in examples, exercises, tests, content, assignments, careers references		X			X	X	X	X	X		
Content/assignments to raise questions about sex roles, sex stereotyped situations, social structures and processes	X	X	X	X			X	X			
Curriculum to teach understandings about being male/female, the construction of gender, to engage in critical exploration of gender issues				X			X	X		X	X
Curriculum content to provide opportunities to learn about the lives of biblical men and women					X						

Appendix F
Approval Letters

Anne Mills

Bezzina, Michael

From: Zubrinich Julie
Sent: Tuesday, 21 September 1999 5:25 PM
To: 'Bezzina, Michael'
Subject: Gender Survey Material

Dear Michael

On behalf of John Ainley, I am replying to your letter of 9 Sept re the National Sample Study on Gender and School Education conducted by ACER in 1996. Dr Ainley is overseas until January 2000; however we are processing your request for permission to use survey materials from this study.

ACER is pleased to give permission for Ms Mills from the Australian Catholic University to use the Student Questionnaire for Co-educational Primary Schools for the purpose outlined and with acknowledgement of source. A formal letter of approval from ACER will follow this note.

However, we are waiting for a reply from the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs. As DEETYA was the contracting agency for this study in 1995 and 1996, I have sent a copy of your request to Wendy Whitham, Director of Research and National Reporting at the Schools Division in DETYA. We will notify you as soon as we receive endorsement from DETYA.

In the meantime, I will proceed with collating the materials you have requested. There are just a few details to check with you before we do this:

Listed below are some materials which are available in various forms: please advise whether you would like us to send any of these to you:

1. The Student Questionnaire Coeducational Primary Schools version (and other versions) are available in hard copy. We do not have these in electronic form exactly as published; however we can provide a DRAFT electronic version of the Questionnaire in Word 6-95 or Word 97 format if required.
2. Also available is a copy of the Information for Parents and attached Consent Form which was used prior to issuing the questionnaire to students.
3. We can provide a copy of the report, Collins, C., Batten, M., Ainley, J. & Getty, C. (1996) Gender and School Education. Canberra: AGPS.

Regards

Julie Zubrinich
Administrative Officer
Policy Research Division
ACER
Ph: 03 9277 5512
email: zubrinich@acer.edu.au

(Zec - innick)



Your ref :
Our ref : NO96/21108

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,
TRAINING AND YOUTH AFFAIRS

16-18 Mort Street,
GPO Box 9880
Canberra ACT 2601
Tel: (02) 6240 8111

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

COPY

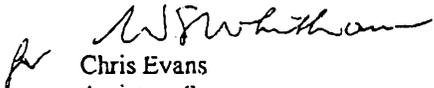
Dr P McKenzie
Acting Associate Director (Policy Research)
Australian Council for Educational Research
19 Prospect Hill Road
(Private Bag 55)
Camberwell VIC 3124

Dear Dr McKenzie

I refer to your facsimile dated 16 September 1999 regarding a request from Dr Michael Bezzina, Director of Religious Education and Educational Services, Catholic Education Office, Parramatta to use survey material from the 1995 Sample Study, *Gender and School Education*.

I agree to the release of survey material from the study, in particular the Student Questionnaire, Co-educational Primary Schools, to Ms Anne Mills' for her research.

Yours sincerely


Chris Evans
Assistant Secretary
Budget and Coordination Branch
21 September 1999



MB:kc

25th November, 1999.

Mrs. Anne Mills,
Principal,
Caroline Chisholm College,
90-98 The Lakes Drive,
GLENMORE PARK. N.S.W. 2745

Dear Anne,

Our Executive Director of Schools, Dr. Anne Benjamin, is happy for you to approach primary schools in the diocese in order to carry out research on *gender issues and schooling*. We always stress the following points in relation to research requests:

- It is the School Principal who gives final permission for research to be carried out in his/her school.
- Confidentiality needs to be observed in reporting.
- There should usually be some feedback to schools and a copy of the final report forwarded to the Catholic Education Office.
- This letter of approval should accompany any approach to schools.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Michael Bezzina,
Director,
Religious Education and Educational Services.

Appendix G
Student Questionnaire



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

GENDER and SCHOOL

Doctor of Education Research Project

Researcher: Anne Mills

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS RE STUDENT SURVEY TO BE CONDUCTED IN CLASS

Dear Teacher,

Year Six students in your class are to participate in a survey on **Gender and Schooling**. I have been given permission by *The Australian Council for Educational Research* to use a student survey tool developed for a much larger research project conducted in 1995.

This survey is conducted in class and takes about 30 minutes.

The following parent information was given about the survey in 1995 and is still correct:

Your child will be asked about the sorts of experiences girls and/or boys have in their normal classes; about the ways they treat each other; about student harassment of each other; about what they are taught at school about gender and about how they should relate to each other now and in later life as male and female persons; about their priorities for the future; and about how they spend their time after school hours (to see if there are large differences by sex across the sample). In most questions students will not be asked to identify themselves as individuals but will rather be asked for their opinion on what happens in general to girls and/or to boys at their school. They will, however, be asked whether they personally worry about being bullied or worry about other aspects of student relations at school. There are no long answers to write out, just boxes to check.

Some items in the questionnaire are concerned with *Sex-Based Harassment*, a priority area identified for action in the *National Action Plan for the Education of Girls*. It is explained in the *Action Plan* as:

Sex-based harassment: ‘the imposition of behaviour based on sex stereotyping. It is often unrecognised, trivialised or accepted as teasing. It includes sexual harassment but is not always explicitly sexual’.

You will note from the *Instruction Sheet for Student Questionnaires* that this is explained to the students.

I am grateful for your assistance in administering this questionnaire to your students.

The results of this research will be published in my thesis and I will present a brief report to all schools involved at the conclusion of each phase of the research. Some aspects of this research may be published in journals. At no stage will individual students or your school be identified in any way.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Mills

3 *This section asks about sex-based (sexual) harassment in your school - how boys and girls treat each other*

On each line, colour in TWO ovals, one for boys and one for girls

School is a place where:	THIS HAPPENS TO GIRLS			THIS HAPPENS TO BOYS		
	Often	Sometimes	Never	Often	Sometimes	Never
> kids get their path blocked by boys (eg. in corridors) or boys corner them in ways that worry or embarrass them	<input type="radio"/>					
> kids get their path blocked by girls (eg. in corridors) or girls corner them in ways that worry or embarrass them	<input type="radio"/>					
> kids have nasty things said to them by others of their own sex to keep them out of a group	<input type="radio"/>					
> kids get bullied or hurt by others of their own sex	<input type="radio"/>					
> kids get called nasty names to make them uncomfortable about themselves as a boy or as a girl (such as "ugly" etc for girls; "wimp" etc for boys)	<input type="radio"/>					
> kids have nasty sex-based messages written about them on walls or passed around in notes	<input type="radio"/>					
> kids get touched or pinched in embarrassing ways by other kids	<input type="radio"/>					
> kids get their clothes flicked up or pulled down by other kids	<input type="radio"/>					

4 *This section asks what you have been taught in your school about sex-based issues*

Colour in one oval on each line

School is a place where:	True	Not True
> I have been taught what sex-based (sexual) harassment is before today	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
> we talk in class about what it is like to be a boy or girl	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
> I have been taught that there are lots of different ways to be an OK boy or girl, not just one "right way" of being a boy or being a girl	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
> I have been taught ways to handle hassles from others about how they want a girl or a boy to look and behave	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
> I have been taught ways to put my point of view without getting threatening or violent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
> I have been taught about sexual behaviour and development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Yes	No
> If you answered "not true" to the last question, is this because your parents (or guardian) teach you about sexual behaviour and development at home?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



5**This section asks about your school as a place where you spend your time****Colour in one oval on each line****School is a place where:**

	True	Not True	Don't Know
> the same standard of behaviour is expected of girls and boys	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
> punishment is the same for girls and boys if they do the same thing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
> kids get hassled for talking to or caring about kids of the opposite sex	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
> kids are nice to all kinds of other kids not just to those who are like them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
> teachers notice quiet kids and check that they are OK	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
> there are school staff who listen and know how to help when kids need to talk about their problems and feelings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
> there is an area where only girls are allowed at lunch-time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
> girls' uniform, or standard clothing, includes slacks or track pants, shorts or culottes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
> there are clear rules and steps for dealing with sex-based (sexual) harassment, and kids and teachers know what they are	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
> if kids complain about sex-based (sexual) harassment, nothing happens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
> I can go to the toilet block and feel safe from harassment by others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
> the toilet cubicles used by year 6 are private (doors lock properly, doors are big enough, you can't be spied on in other ways)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

6**This section asks about the way you feel, as a boy or girl, at this school****Colour in one oval on each line****School is a place where:**

	Often	Sometimes	Never
> I worry about kids being nasty to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
> I worry about being bullied	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
> I feel safe at this school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
> I worry about sexual harassment from boys	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
> I worry about sexual harassment from girls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
> I feel happy when I'm at school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
> I worry about how I look (too skinny, too fat, too short, too tall, not good looking, clothes not right, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
> I worry about not being good at the things which make you popular at this school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
> I feel depressed when I'm at school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
> I feel able to be the person I want to be at this school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Appendix H
Teacher Questionnaire

GENDER AND SCHOOL

Teacher Questionnaire

Dear Teacher,

Last Term Year 6 students at your school participated in a survey on **Gender and School** which measured their perceptions and experiences of gender at school. Your school has now been invited to participate in the next research phase. Six teachers in your school are invited to complete the attached Teacher Questionnaire. This should take about 30 minutes.

Your contribution to this process is important and highly valued. Your responses will lead to a developing understanding of the factors that contribute to students' understandings and experiences of gender and will contribute to our learnings about how schools work towards achieving gender equity.

It is anticipated that results of this study will lead to increased understandings about school policies and practices that schools can implement in order to ensure an equitable education for all their students.

As for Phase 1 of this research, at no stage in the published results will you or your school be identified in any way.

Thank you in anticipation of your involvement in this research. I will keep you informed of its progress.

With thanks,

Yours sincerely,

Anne Mills

TEACHER SURVEY

Please place a X in the relevant box, one for the boys and one for the girls

IN THIS SCHOOL:	TRUE FOR BOYS				TRUE FOR GIRLS			
	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Students are awarded/ recognised for sporting achievements								
Students are awarded/ recognised for academic achievements								
Students are awarded/ recognised for creative achievements (eg. Dance, artwork, singing)								
Students read at school liturgies								
Students play music at school liturgies								
Students dance at school liturgies								
Students use the school's sporting equipment at Recess/Lunch								
Students play active games at Recess/Lunch								
Students actively participate in PE programs that emphasis health, skills and fitness								
Students have access to all playground space at Recess/Lunch								

Please place a X in the relevant box for each item

Since being at your current school have you participated in professional development activities/ meetings/discussions in the following areas :	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
The specific educational needs of girls				
The specific educational needs of boys				
Non sexist education strategies/teaching practices for gender equity				
Examining your assumptions about boys and girls – their mental capacities, their behaviour, their interests and the effect that these assumptions can have on teaching.				

Please place a X in the relevant box for each item

What priority do you consider your school gives to the following :	4 Highest priority	3	2	1 Lowest priority
Encouraging staff participation in Professional Development on gender equity issues				
Developing a school gender equity policy				
Developing a school gender equity action plan				
Evaluating school gender equity processes				
Developing a school sexual harassment policy				
Ensuring Gospel values are reflected in gender policies and practices				
Ensuring teaching resources are allocated equally to girls and boys				
Ensuring posters, display materials give equal representation to girls and boys, men and women				
Ensuring the same standards of behaviour are expected from boys and girls				
Ensuring girls and boys are equally valued				
Ensuring boys' and girls' needs are equally addressed				
Ensuring girls and boys have equal hands on experience in practical subjects				
Developing a culture of respect between boys and girls in classrooms				
Creating a learning environment that is equally caring of boys and girls				
Developing a range of extra curricular activities that responds equally to the interests of girls and boys				
Emphasising co-operation and self development in teaching and assessments rather than competition				
Distributing all staff duties among men and women				
Ensuring men and women have the same opportunities for leadership experience				
Ensuring equal participation of boys and girls in liturgies				
Teaching students about being female & male.				
Exploring gender issues				
Providing girls and boys with equal opportunities to participate in all curriculum areas				
Ensuring boys and girls are disciplined in similar ways				
Ensuring sexist remarks and behaviour are challenged by staff				
Teaching students how to challenge sexist remarks and behaviour				
Ensuring gender based teasing is challenged and rejected by staff				
Teaching students how to challenge and reject gender based teasing				
Teaching students about women's role in historical events and contributions to society				
Teaching students about women's role in the Church				
Providing parents with information about issues of gender equity				

Some further thoughts please ...

1. Could you give an example of an effective gender equity strategy that has been implemented at your school.

2. What do you consider to be the most critical gender issue currently facing your school community?

3. How is your school community addressing this issue?

4. What are the major factors that have contributed to your school's level of response to gender equity issues over the last few years?

5. What do you consider the role of the Principal to be in responding to issues of gender equity in the school?

6. Have you any further comments you would like to add on the issue of gender and education?

Thank you

Appendix I
Principal Questionnaire

GENDER AND SCHOOL

Principal Questionnaire

Dear Principal,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the next phase of **Gender and School** research. The attached Principal Questionnaire should take about 30 minutes to complete.

Please place in the envelope provided and return to me with the Teacher Questionnaires.

As for Phase 1 of this research, at no stage in the published results will you or your school be identified in any way.

Thank you for your response. I will contact you early in the new school year to provide feedback on the research.

With thanks,

Yours sincerely,

Anne Mills

Please place a X in the relevant box for each item

What priority do you consider your school gives to the following :	4 Highest priority	3	2	1 Lowest priority
Encouraging staff participation in Professional Development on gender equity issues				
Developing a school gender equity policy				
Developing a school gender equity action plan				
Evaluating school gender equity processes				
Developing a school sexual harassment policy				
Ensuring Gospel values are reflected in gender policies and practices				
Ensuring teaching resources are allocated equally to girls and boys				
Ensuring posters, display materials give equal representation to girls and boys, men and women				
Ensuring the same standards of behaviour are expected from boys and girls				
Ensuring girls and boys are equally valued				
Ensuring boys' and girls' needs are equally addressed				
Ensuring girls and boys have equal hands on experience in practical subjects				
Developing a culture of respect between boys and girls in classrooms				
Creating a learning environment that is equally caring of boys and girls				
Developing a range of extra curricular activities that responds equally to the interests of girls and boys				
Emphasising co-operation and self development in teaching and assessments rather than competition				
Distributing all staff duties among men and women				
Ensuring men and women have the same opportunities for leadership experience				
Ensuring equal participation of boys and girls in liturgies				
Teaching students about being female & male.				
Exploring gender issues				
Providing girls and boys with equal opportunities to participate in all curriculum areas				
Ensuring boys and girls are disciplined in similar ways				
Ensuring sexist remarks and behaviour are challenged by staff				
Teaching students how to challenge sexist remarks and behaviour				
Ensuring gender based teasing is challenged and rejected by staff				
Teaching students how to challenge and reject gender based teasing				
Teaching students about women's role in historical events and contributions to society				
Teaching students about women's role in the Church				
Providing parents with information about issues of gender equity				

Please place a X in the relevant box for each item

How often does the staff at your school do the following:	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
	Examine ways to improve the specific educational outcomes of girls			
Examine ways to improve the specific educational outcomes of boys				
Examine ways that learning can be more co-operative, less competitive				
Examine ways to develop girls' self esteem				
Examine ways to develop boys' self esteem				
Review access for boys to playground space				
Review access for girls in playground space				
Collaboratively identify values of the Gospel which have meaning for them in their lives				
Examine the ways in which values of the Gospel are reflected in the school's relationships, policies, practices				
Use teaching styles that allow for gender differences				
Review access for girls to teaching resources				
Review access for boys to teaching resources				
Participate in professional development on issues of gender equity				
How often are the following considered in planning/programming/teaching at your school:				
	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Ensuring a balanced reference to women's and men's achievements and contributions to society				
Reflecting a balance of boys' and girls' interests				
Reflecting a balance of boys' and girls' experiences				
Raising questions about sex roles and stereotypes				
Including information about life paths that challenges gender stereotypes				
Educating about family responsibilities for men and women				
Using the experiences of boys and girls in assessment				
Teaching boys and girls how to resolve conflict arising from gender differences				
Teaching boys and girls that violence is unacceptable				
Encouraging girls to participate in Maths/Science/ Technology				
Encouraging boys to participate in Humanities				
Developing teaching styles that allow for gender difference				
Examining the degree of emphasis given to particular values across the curriculum				
Providing opportunities to study Church teaching on men and women				

Some further thoughts please ...

1. Could you give an example of an effective gender equity strategy that has been implemented at your school.

2. What do you consider to be the most critical gender issue currently facing your school community?

3. How is your school community addressing this issue?

4. What are the major factors that have contributed to your school's level of response to gender equity issues over the last few years?

5. What do you consider the role of the Principal to be in responding to issues of gender equity in the school?

6. Have you any further comments you would like to add on the issue of gender and education?

Thank you

Appendix J

Sample Student Comment Analysis

School 5

Boys

- All boys except me do sport and I don't want to. (11)
- I like being a boy (6) but sometimes very rarely people tease me. (1)

Girls

- Some teachers expect higher standards of girls than boys. (9)
- Yes, I just want to let you know that I would never feel scared at my school (6) and I'm so grateful that I have such nice and understanding classmates. (4)
- It's all fine. Nothing bad really happens. (4)
- That we should all be treated fair. (7)

School 6

Boys

- I think all people male/female should be treated equally in all ways. (7)
- It is great. (4)

Girls

- It is fun because you don't always get harassed. (1) Most of the time everyone is friendly to you not mean (4) but some people do get harassed but most of the time not.(1). Thank you for letting us do it.
- Being a girl in my school is good because I get equal amounts of attention as the boys in sports (3) and education (9). My friends and I play with the boys (4) and they share all of the equipment (3). I feel happy and safe at school. (6)
- I think being a girl is fun (7) and I have no problems at all (6). Boys are okay to play with (4) and they don't bully me. (1)
- I play with boys sometimes. (4)

School 11

Boys

- We have no sexual harassment. (1)
- I think usually girls get more attention (9) and better treatment than boys (4). Thank you
- Our school has no much (sic) harassment by girls to boys or boys to girls. (1)
- You often get bullied when you're a boy. (1)
- I feel safe about being at school and I don't worry about sexual harassment. (6)
- There are different awards for sports for girls and boys. (3) The same awards are given for academic achievement for boys and girls (9).

Girls

- Girls are judged on beauty and not on brains. (7)
- I don't think there's anything different between a girls and a boy. (7). I feel safe at this school and I have never been in the position of sexual harassment (6)
- I think it's unfair how boys are treated stronger than girls. Like a teacher says, "I need six strong boys to help me." Why can't it be "I need six strong boys or girls to help me". I find that happens quite often. (9)

Note: Comments numbered according to the appropriate Indicator Group

Appendix K

Sample Teacher Comments

School 2

Teacher 1

1. Cannot recall a whole school strategy for gender equity. (1) Within my own classroom I try to ensure equal allocation girl/boy for selected jobs; readings etc. Particularly conscious in group work with resources trying to ensure equal distribution and use between girls and boys (3)
2. Put downs by boys to girls during sports activities. Assumptions made by boys that girls will always be less able to achieve in sport or develop sports skills. (4) Sexist comments made during discussions (3)
3. Within own classroom practice – experiences of the above are challenged and discussed. (3) Would assume executive support if required. Unaware of whole school strategies that specifically relate to such issues.(1)
4. Commitment to KLA developments and other areas restricts time to focus particularly on this area. Gospel values underpinning school philosophy – behaviour management/pastoral care policies allow scope for dealing with gender equity issues within this broad context (1)
5. Gauge overall level of significance of issues; developing within staff awareness and strategies to deal with issues; ensuring current policies take into consideration gender equity and related behaviour (1)
6. Through different KLAs children's awareness of gender issues can be raised and practices challenged when observed. Concepts can be clarified and strategies/knowledge to help minimise it. (3) Staff development in learning styles as related to gender – current research results etc. Suggested strategies for teachers to help prevent gender bias. (1) Ensuring fair and equal use of resources in mixed groups of students (2). Boys seem to be more 'hands on' confident than girls when using concrete materials (3)

Teacher 2

1. Implementation at a classroom level – Gardiner's theory (3)
2. Breaking traditions – expectations re male/female (2)
3. Equal recognition for boys and girls in sporting achievement (2). Professional development (1)
4. I am new to school this year
5. Professional development planned for 2001 re learning styles (1)

Teacher 3

1. Gender equity has not been an explicit focus. It is, however, intrinsic in all we say and do. No specific strategies have been implemented (1)
2. Number of males on staff as role models. (2)Attitudes based on cultural influences that are modelled to the students at home (1)
3. Unsure
4. Number of males on staff, (2) dominance of male students, especially Year 6 students.(3) Male staff applying for positions on staff that have been part time already and being overlooked for permanent positions when they are very competent – twice in two years this has happened (2)
5. Employing a male AP for 2001 (2)

Teacher 4

1. None have been implemented in my time at this school (1)
2. Cultural attitudes towards women (1)
3. It's not (1)
4. No major issues, especially with regards to sexist remarks and teasing have arisen (4)

Teacher 5

1. All children follow the same disciplinary measures – there is no differentiation for gender (4)
2. Ratio of men to women on staff – doesn't really promote a gender equal environment for children to witness (2)
3. Employing a male AP for 2001 – males were definitely needed on the leadership team (2)

4. I'm not sure any factors have contributed to the school's response. I think it has just been the 'right time' to do this (1)
5. To ensure that the school is implementing a gender equity policy/or to lead the staff in the development and implementation of a gender equity policy (1)

Teacher 6

1. Generally all children are treated equally. We have particularly tried with pastoral care and pupil management to ensure that all children receive the same rewards and/or punishment (4)
2. The most critical would be teacher bias towards one gender. This isn't the case with all staff but some do treat boys and girls differently (3)
3. By putting clear policies and procedures in place which deal with all students not a particular gender (4)
4. The need for more consistent approaches in dealing with all students.(4) Acknowledgement that children do learn differently – boys and girls included (3)
5. Overseeing and ensuring policies and procedures are followed. To follow up with staff any unfair gender issues that may occur. Bring parents to an educated community concerning all educational issues including gender equity (1)

Note: Comments numbered according to appropriate Policy Analysis Template Heading

Appendix L

Sample Principal Comments

School Number 1

1. I don't think that we are very gender conscious. (1) We have culled our library collection using gender issues as one of the criteria. (3) We have also used the same criteria when purchasing new books/resources. (3)
2. Effective male role modelling. We are a small primary school and over the last 5 years we have had only one male on staff. (2)
3. We haven't actively pursued the issue as yet – it would seem to be a sexist move as well. (1)
4. We have probably only responded on a reaction mode. (1)
5. Need a vision – need time to explore the issue, time with staff for P.D. (1)
6. I recognise that there needs to be a common understanding of gender issues – I am a little unsure of how much emphasis should go into primary (separating boy/girl issues) I also accept that we are the 'grounding time'. I guess I'm fairly confused. (1)

School 13

1. Use of technology in primary classrooms. (2) Students have a particular task to complete within an appropriate timeframe. This ensures that there is equity and access to computers in the room. (3) If this was not in place, in some classrooms the boys would dominate the technology. (2)
2. Addressing the gender bias of teachers (some) who continually choose girls to do special jobs in the school. Some teachers who evaluate children's development by "quiet, neat, compliant" (often girls) as opposed to "noisy, untidy, difficult" (mostly boys) (1)
3. Public presentations generally includes a direction that "equal number of boys and girls be used" where there be choice. In issues of competition, it is the winner, not issues of gender. (2)
4. 'Nagging' from the Principal/ Assistant Principal. (1) Concern about who we choose to take part in activities makes a strong statement to the students, (2)
5. Keeping the issue of gender on the agenda, (1)
6. In a coeducational school, it is the issue ensuring that the best possible or appropriate person take a role – not just equal number of boys and girls. (2) Ensuring that the classroom meets the learning style of all children – be it boy or girl. (3)

School 29

1. Liturgical dance is expected to be done by the children, not the girls and some boys. (2) We have boy, girl, mixed teams for cricket, netball, touch footy. (2)
2. Breaking down the barrier of the boys being the 'stronger' ones. (1)
3. Inclusiveness – children are expected to participate regardless of sex. (2)
4. Our (teachers') awareness of the need to be consistent with both boys and girls. (3, 4)
5. Model inclusiveness. (1)

School 33

1. If possible, the school captains are to be even m/f. (2)
2. To improve the children's ability to believe more in their ability and pursue their interests ...increase their self esteem etc. (4)
3. I can answer only for the past 10 months. In most areas of the KLAs (3) and discipline (4) we are conscious of the Gender issue and endeavour to treat each person justly and equally. (4)
4. Community awareness. (1)
Children themselves questioning. (3)

- Staff consciousness. (1)
5. Facilitate staff discussion and awareness – children personal development. Communication with parents re the issue. (1)
 6. No. Very happy to be part of it and hoping to learn more. (1)

Note: Comments numbered according to appropriate Policy Analysis Template Heading