

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

**THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MANAGING
ORGANISATIONAL REDESIGN WITHIN A
PUBLIC SECTOR AGENCY**

A Folio submitted by

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Abstract

This folio explores the theory and practice of managing organisational redesign within a public sector agency— the ‘Out of School Services’ provided by an education jurisdiction, Fraser Coast district, within Education Queensland, Australia. The objective of the project and research was to develop and implement an approach to organisational redesign that derived from Limerick et al.’s (1998) *Fourth Blueprint* theory (particularly their concept of metastrategy), and to measure the impact of the redesign process on selected organisational operations within the education jurisdiction. In the context of this study, Limerick et al.’s metastrategic management cycle (1998) is defined as an approach to strategic management that is constituted of four elements— (a) founding vision (b) identity (c) configuration design and (d) systems of action (Limerick et al. 1998, p 152).

The concept of metastrategy is revealed by the research as having clear potential for application in public sector settings. That is, the study captured its successful application to the task of leading a process of organisational redesign within an education system and uncovered complex subtleties of that application. The study also revealed that organisational redesign to bring about sustained cultural change in a public sector setting is difficult, complex and subject to threat by political decisions.

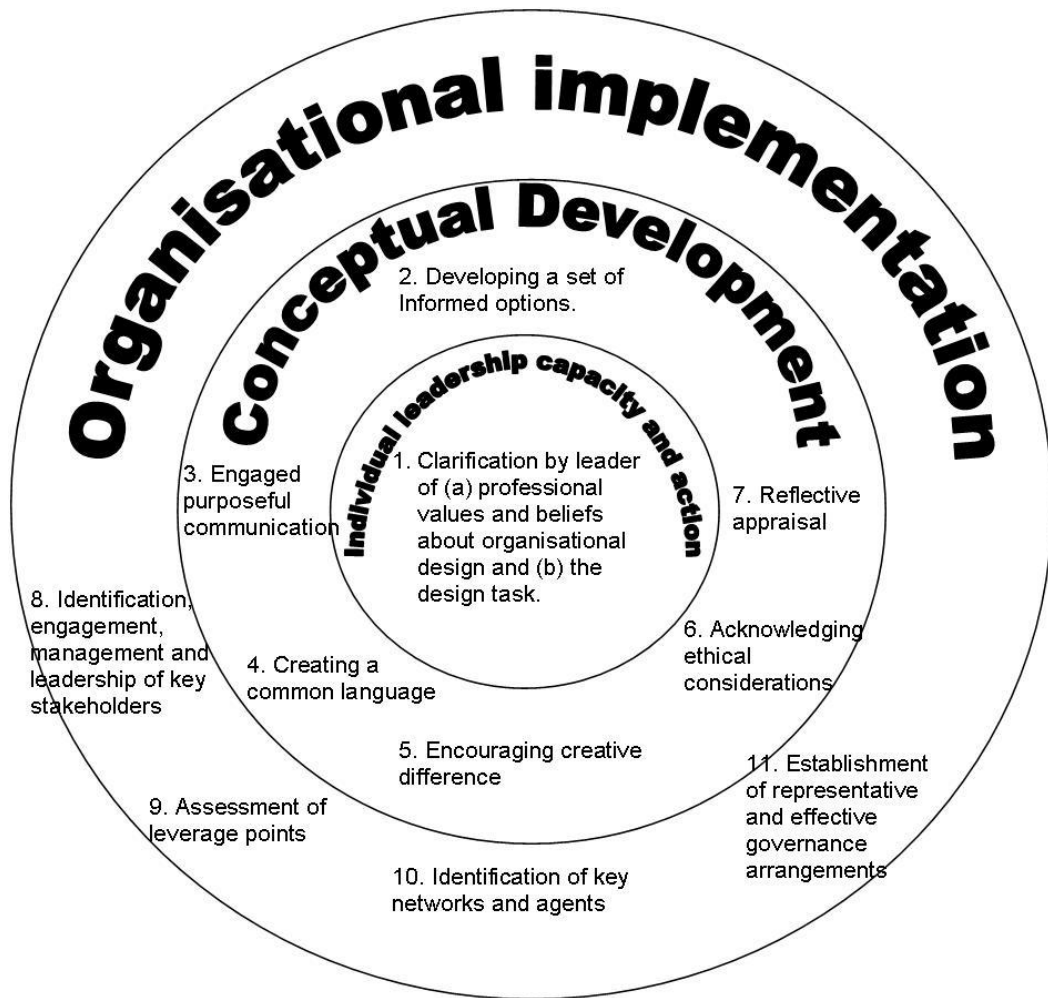
In leading and managing the process of organisational design in an educational setting, eleven key leadership skills across three distinct domains - individual leadership capacity and action; conceptual development and organisational implementation - were found to be significant: The leadership skill areas are: (1) developing clarity regarding professional values, the nature of the design task and how a leader might undertake the task; (2) developing a set of options informed by a synthesis of local priorities, the broader organisational direction and relevant, organisational theory; (3) undertaking engaged and purposeful communication aimed at creating greater knowledge of the design or adding value to the intended design and

the quality of its implementation; (4) creating a common language as a platform for engaging stakeholders; (5) leading in a manner that encourages creative difference and distinctiveness; (6) displaying a capacity for reflective appraisal; (7) acknowledging pertinent ethical considerations; (8) Identifying, engaging, managing and leading key stakeholders; (9) assessing important leverage points; (10) identifying relevant networks and (11) setting and implementing governance arrangements. These eleven skill areas complement and extend Limerick's metastrategic management cycle with its four basic elements of:

- founding vision;
- identity
- configuration design; and
- systems of action

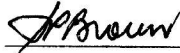
Each of the above four elements generally align with two of the three domains developed to capture the nature of critical leadership skills required to lead organisational redesign in an educational setting—inner circle or domain-individual leadership capacity and action and middle circle or domain. The leadership skills captured in the outer domain entitled 'organisational implementation' extends on the metastrategic cycle by giving focus to the processes that need to be considered when applying the metastrategic management cycle.

Diagram 1: Critical leadership skills across three domains for organisational redesign in an educational setting.

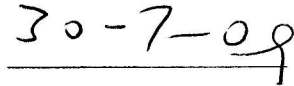


CERTIFICATION OF DISSERTATION

I certify that the ideas, results, analyses and conclusions reported in this folio are entirely my own effort, except where otherwise acknowledged. I also certify that the work is original and has not been previously submitted for any other award, except where otherwise acknowledged.

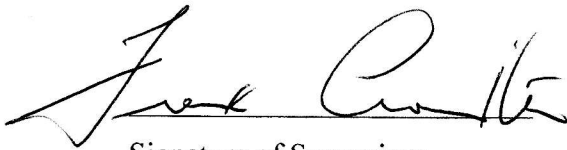


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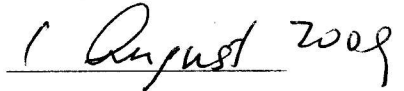


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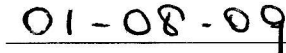
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Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the love, support, guidance and wisdom provided by my late father, James Vincent Brown and my mother, Shirley Elizabeth Brown.

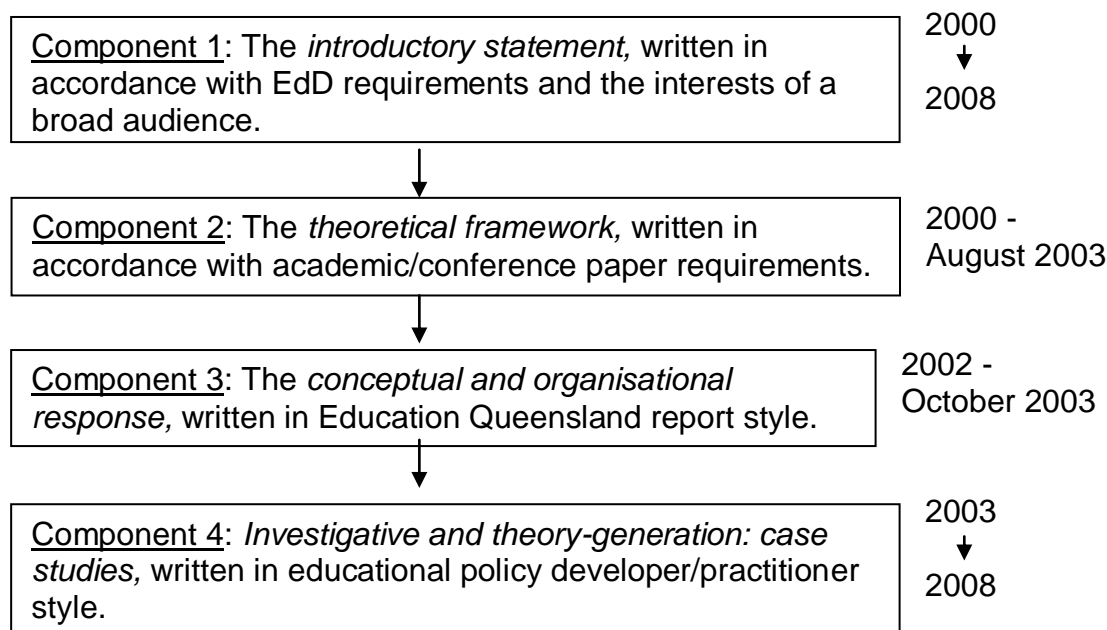
To my academic supervisor, Dr Frank Crowther, special thanks for his constant challenges and insights.

Thanks also to Ms Helen Langborne for her hours of high quality secretarial and personal support.

I acknowledge Margaret Jacobs, my editor, for her outstanding professionalism and support.

I am also indebted to staff and colleagues from Education Queensland for their feedback and advice throughout the course of my research.

Summary of Folio Components—Timeframe and abstract



Folio component 1, the *Introductory statement*, provides a brief explanation of the approach taken in the design process and associated research. This component of the folio has been constantly under development and review from 2000 until 2008.

Folio component 2, *the theoretical framework*—The Vital Link: A metastrategic framework to guide organisational redesign in a public sector agency (Education Queensland’s Fraser-Cooloolo District) was completed in August 2003. The researcher commenced initial reading and research around key aspects that informed this framework in 2000. The second half of the paper was informed by and developed in parallel with the redesign proposal outlined in component 3 of this folio.

Folio component 3, *the conceptual and organisational response*: Submission for the approval and redesign of Fraser-Cooloolo District Out of School Services was completed in August 2003. Discussions at a district level regarding the delivery of Out of school Services commenced in 2002. Outlined in appendix 1 of this component is a summary of some of the key stages of the application of metastrategy to this task of service delivery redesign.

Folio component 4, *Investigative research and theory-generation: Case studies of the ‘LINK’ strategy* were developed and refined from 2003-2008. Work on the three case studies contained in this component was undertaken between the years of 2003 to 2005. The additional time taken on this component was due in part to personal illness and undertaking further conceptual thinking around aspects of the research questions that inform this folio.

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Folio component 1–Introductory statement

1. The purposes of the research

The professional doctorate (EdD) research project that is described in this folio explores the theory and practice of managing organisational redesign within the context of a public sector agency.

The theoretical aspect of the research is grounded in a framework for post-industrial organisational design that was developed by David Limerick et al. (1998) and named the *Fourth Blueprint*. In particular, Limerick’s concept of ‘metastrategy’—as the core management function required of post-industrial organisational executives—provides the focus for the study.

The practical aspect of the research involved the redesign of ‘Out of School Services’ provided by an education jurisdiction, Fraser-Cooloola District, within Education Queensland. For the purposes of consistency, Out of School Services are defined in the study as *those organisational elements that provide authorised systemic support for school operations but are not located in schools and do not fall under the authority of the school principal*. Such services may typically include administrative functions, consultative services and systems of accountability. They are usually located in regional or localised sites but may also be available through technological forms of delivery. Three particular aspects of Out of School Services provided the focus of this research:

- annual school review processes
- support and assistance to schools to undertake curriculum reviews
- capacity building of teachers in the area of information communication and technology.

These three aspects of the Out of School Services for the Fraser-Cooloola District’s operations were provided by personnel linked with the District office.

In all cases, the personnel conducted their professional duties under the general supervision of the researcher/author of this folio.

One of the crucial assumptions that informed the Out of School Services redesign process, and associated doctoral research, was that traditional approaches to organisational design and redesign in public sector settings have focused too heavily on structural and process realignment. Seel (2000) and Johnson (1992) for example, have pointed out that such conventional approaches to organisational change have typically failed to address the cultural aspects of change and hence have not generated sustainable impacts. It is for this reason that Limerick et.al's (1998) 'metastrategic' approach to organisational design, with its basis in post-industrial management theory and its clear links to organisational culture and identity, was selected.

The design project and associated research addressed two objectives:

- (a) development and implementation of an approach to organisational redesign that derived from Limerick et.al's *Fourth Blueprint* theory, particularly the concept of Metastrategy;
- (b) measurement of the impact of the redesign process on selected organisational operations within the Fraser-Cooloola District.

To guide the study, three research questions were derived from these two broad objectives:

Research question one: What is the potential of Limerick's concept of metastrategy to facilitate a process of organisational redesign within a public sector environment?

Research question two: How effective was the process of organisational redesign and implementation that was undertaken in the Fraser-Cooloola Education District?

Research question three: What are the critical leadership skills for leading organisational redesign in an educational setting?

2. Why a folio?

The University of Southern Queensland's Professional Doctorate (EdD) is designed to enable educational professionals to engage in advanced academic research that focuses on a significant issue (or issues) within their work environments. The University's EdD offers students two alternative approaches to the research component of their doctoral program: a traditional research project, utilising standard doctoral criteria for research design and methodology; and a folio, in which a number of discrete research-based products are integrated under an umbrella problem statement. The course guidelines note that 'it is crucial that a common umbrella, which is based upon the research, links any folio that draws upon a range of representation forms' (University of Southern Queensland [USQ] Faculty of Education 2004). The second alternative, the folio, was chosen as the approach most suited to the needs and goals of this student-researcher.

The primary appeal of the folio format to the researcher was its potential for utilising a variety of genres relating to the conduct of the research: namely, an organisational redesign process conducted over a period of several years. Specifically, this folio can be seen as constituting a collection of key artefacts that represent three crucial stages of the organisational redesign process: theoretical conceptualisation; site-based organisational design and implementation; and field study/theory-building. The folio format allowed these artefacts to be developed and presented with different audiences in mind—a consideration that would not have been easily achievable in mainstream doctoral research and thesis preparation.

This folio consists of four components:

Folio component 1: Introductory statement

Folio component 2: The theoretical framework—*The Vital Link: A metastrategic framework to guide organisational redesign in a public sector agency (Education Queensland's Fraser-Cooloola District)*

Folio component 3: The conceptual and organisational response: - *Submission for the approval and redesign of Fraser-Cooloola District Office Out of School Services*

Folio component 4: Investigative research and theory-generation: *Case studies of the 'LINK' strategy.*

Folio component 1, the Introductory statement, provides a brief explanation of the approach taken in the design process and associated research. It is written in a genre that is suitable for a wide audience of educational practitioners and scholars interested in the topic of organisational design.

Folio component 2 is a scholarly paper entitled *The Vital LINK: A metastrategic framework to guide organisational redesign in a public sector agency (Education Queensland's Fraser-Cooloola District)*. This paper outlines the theoretical framework that was generated to guide a process of organisational redesign within an education district in Queensland. It observes publication protocols that were provided by the organisers of a national conference of educational administrators, where the paper was presented. It could be regarded as predominantly academic in genre.

Folio component 2 integrates two conceptual strands. First, the metastrategic approach to management and organisational design postulated by Limerick et al. (1998) was used as the platform from which to develop and test a theory-based framework for the redesign of educational services in a school

district. As part of this process, Limerick et al.'s model was critically examined in relation to other research principally drawn from the fields of organisational design and development, strategic planning and change management. This analysis revealed a high degree of congruence between the design elements identified by Limerick et al. (1998) and those identified in other authoritative sources such as Collins (2001), James (2003) and Beer (2001).

The second conceptual strand contained in Folio component 2 comprises a description of the key features of the Fraser-Cooloola Education District, particularly in the delivery of services. The descriptions contained in this strand are located within a contextual analysis relating to relevant policy developments in Queensland. Folio component 2 explores the key assumptions, value judgments and design principles about organisations and organisational redesign that were used to inform the research dimension of the study.

Folio component 3 contains the formal submission to Education Queensland for the redesign of Out of School Services for Fraser-Cooloola District. This document was developed using the metastrategic design framework to:

- describe key phases in the redesign process
- outline details relating to each element of the framework
- present team work plans and documents required for systemic approval purposes.

The conceptual model that derived from Limerick et al.—contextualised within Education Queensland's policy framework, and applied to Out of School Services in Fraser-Cooloola District—was denoted the **LINK** strategy: **L**eadership, **I**nformation, **N**etworking and **K**nowledge. A significant aspect of its preparation was the generation of a new '*District Identity Statement*', also entitled **LINK**, and encompassing the four components of the design strategy. The submission was approved by senior officers of Education Queensland, thereby clearing the way for the field research component of the study.

Folio component 3 was prepared in accordance with protocols provided by Education Queensland for formal submissions. Thus, it may be regarded as written in a genre that is predominantly policy-driven, legalistic and managerial in nature.

Folio component 4 provides evaluative descriptions of the implementation of the **LINK** approach to Out of School Services delivery in three case studies.

The three case studies were chosen by drawing on two of the four areas identified for service delivery by Fraser-Cooloola District office: (a) curriculum, teaching and learning; and (b) school and district performance. Specific case studies selected for investigation were the District approach to triennial school reviews; systemic curriculum reviews; and the delivery of teacher practica by the District Learning and Development Centre-Technology.

A range of evaluation tools was employed in recognition of the wide variety of services being assessed. While there were differences in individual case study methodology, each case study analysis addressed the following key questions:

- (a) What evidence is there of the generic **LINK** strategy in each case study situation?
- (b) What is the relative importance of each of the four **LINK** elements in the implementation process of each case study?
- (c) Do users in each case study perceive the **LINK** strategy to be applicable and appropriate to the service delivery task?
- (d) What are the implications of the case study findings for the concept of metastrategy as an approach to the management of organisational design?

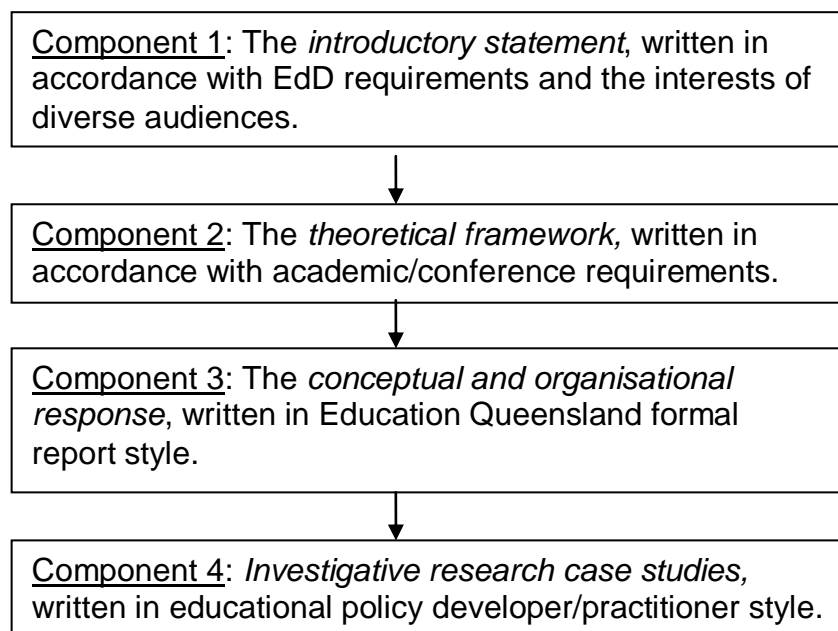
Folio component 4 was written with the target audience of Executive Directors—Schools in mind, since it was incumbents in that position who were charged with responsibility for Out of School Services in Queensland and who had indicated a particular interest in the outcomes of the study. Folio component 4 concludes with the presentation of a new conceptual approach to leading organisational redesign at the system level in education contexts.

Overview of research methodology:

There are several distinctive features of the approach adopted to research that informed the development of this folio.

Firstly, a significant amount of the work undertaken in the study is *conceptual* in nature—the development of explanatory organisational frameworks that are based in theory and case study application but need to be tested further by other researchers before being regarded as fully valid or authoritative. Secondly, the use of the expertise and experiences of the researcher’s professional work as Executive Director Schools was seen as a rich and important source of data and information, although fraught with some methodological dangers. Thirdly, a multi case study approach was utilised in component 4 of the study. That is, a number of cases of implementation of the theoretical model that guided the study were examined through on-site exploration of multiple forms of data. Finally, the particular folio approach that was adopted by the researcher was seen to suit the EdD folio concept because of its use of a number of discrete research-based activities integrated under an umbrella problem statement.

Table 1: Summary of folio components and genres



Finally, folio components 2, 3 and 4 contain brief *postscripts* that are important to the study. The project from which this folio derived was commenced in 2000 and therefore at the time of writing (2008) would be expected to require updating. However because the folio components (particularly components 2 and 3) were prepared for, and approved by, formal agencies with the understanding that they would not be altered, the concept of “postscript” was introduced into the study during its latter stages to provide the researcher-author with the opportunity to draw attention to recent events and developments that appeared to be relevant to the conduct or outcomes of the study.

The structure of the folio outlined above is also believed to meet the suggested minimum and compulsory components for the presentation of a folio, as outlined in the University of Southern Queensland’s EdD policy guidelines. These indicate that a folio must consist of a ‘minimum of three and a maximum of four components,’ contain a formal research report in the form of a case study or other forms of approved research and an ‘analytical thematic statement’ (USQ 2004, p.24).

3. The context for the study

A blueprint for the future of state education in Queensland was outlined in 1999 in a document titled *Queensland State Education 2010 (QSE 2010)*. This strategic charter asserted that the Department's central office and district offices existed to assist schools to achieve key objectives by supporting innovation, responsiveness and flexibility. *QSE 2010* articulated new relationships between schools, key school-based personnel and Out of School Services providers.

At the time of the publication of *QSE 2010*, the researcher held the position of Executive Director of Schools for Education Queensland's Fraser-Cooloola District. In order to successfully develop the proposed new relationships, an examination and subsequent redesign of the nature and delivery of such services was commenced by Education Queensland at both the central agency and district level.

The Out of School Services (OSS) Project was thus established in late 2000, to identify strategies to address structural and cultural features blocking progress towards achieving the objectives of *QSE 2010*. The expected outcomes of this project were:

- better alignment of District resources and services with the objectives of *QSE 2010*
- enhancement of District structures in terms of schools' capacity to innovate and improve efficiency
- greater effectiveness in the delivery of a District's core business functions (Education Queensland 1999).

The OSS Project provided the context but not the definitive blueprint from which Out of School Services providers could shape their approach to services provision. All Executive Directors for Schools were charged with responsibility for district-level leadership of redesign processes that would deliver the above-mentioned outcomes. For the five-year duration of the redesign and research process period (2000 to 2005) the researcher

performed the role of Executive Director-Schools for Fraser-Coolooloa District and managed the Fraser-Coolooloa OSS redesign process.

In 2005, the delivery of Out of School Services was changed because of a central office decision to restructure Education Queensland. This decision involved the establishment of nine regions, each with a Regional Director to oversee Out of School Service delivery. Existing Education Districts such as Fraser-Coolooloa were redefined and renamed. As part of this organisational realignment, each Executive Director was made accountable to a Regional Director; and all Out of School Services functions, such as facilities and human resources, were to be managed on a regional basis. The primary role of the Executive Director position was subsequently seen to encompass the two functions of oversight of principal performance and school improvement.

Major jurisdictional, personnel and role changes have thus occurred since the task of redesigning the Fraser-Coolooloa District's Out of School Services was undertaken under the authority of the author in the period 2000–2005. The question might therefore be asked, *Does the research that underpins this EdD Folio have sufficient legitimacy to justify execution and publication?* This important issue is considered in Folio component four.

4. The ethics and politics of the study

One of the key features of this study was the dual role of researcher and participant. Limerick et al. (1998, p. 250) suggest that such a relationship is reflective of the changes related to the development of management theory that are required in the research paradigm—the participant becomes a 'collaborative researcher'. The intersection and relationship between these two roles were of paramount consideration to the researcher in balancing the role of Executive Director Schools and researcher. This approach proved a constant and at some times in the study, a difficult interplay to resolve. A related issue in any research endeavour is that of validity. The matter of ensuring research validity was a constant consideration and important criteria when framing and assessing such things as research questions and case

studies. For example, in responding to some questions were study participants constrained in their responses because the researcher held the position of Executive Director Schools?

A major challenge faced by the researcher in undertaking this study was building and testing an approach to organisational redesign that was unknown and not representative of the predominant approaches to the task being adopted by other Executive Directors. Moreover, building an understanding of such a distinctive approach by the Executive Director / researcher with key central agency decision makers was another concern.

5. Major conclusions emerging from the study

The organisational redesign task and associated research commenced in 2000 and concluded in 2005. This lengthy passage of time allowed a response to an organisational task to be shaped, implemented and measured. Such a time period can be regarded as a strengthening factor underpinning the developmental and research activities outlined in this folio.

In relation to the task of organisational redesign that was researched, several post-project reflections can be made with a degree of authority by the researcher. These include:

a) The development of a clearly articulated approach to the redesign task, informed by a strong research base, was found to be immensely important to whatever success the project achieved. Most particularly, in establishing the metastrategic framework before engaging with the organisational redesign task, a common language for stakeholders was established.

b) The study also has significance from a research perspective because of the perceived state of the broader research base in organisational redesign. Walsh, Meyer and Schoonhoven (2006, p. 658) note that a significant number of approaches to organisational

redesign lack an authoritative research base or demonstrate a 'paucity of theory'; and that the broader field of organisational theory is 'adrift—making little headway towards understanding organisations'. Dunbar and Starbuck (2006, p.171) agree and note that 'most accepted academic theories of organisational structure and design rely on research conducted in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s by Woodrow, Perrow, Lawrence and Gailbraith'. The present research therefore may make a valuable contribution to the broader field of organisational design—one that is largely seen as inactive and out of touch with 21st century organisations.

c) The process of redesign that was the subject of the study is revealed as having facilitated the enhancement of practices relating to Out of School Services delivery. Indeed, networks and district-based clusters constituted an important feature of the redefined Fraser-Cooloola District. Key stakeholders, particularly principals, noted that they valued the strength and support of their clusters—something that had not previously been the case. It is concluded that design and redesign of educational service delivery can be undertaken as a planned, rational process to enhance organisational relationships.

d) Organisational redesign to bring about sustained cultural change in a public sector setting is revealed as difficult and complex. Most particularly, while the redesign change process was seen to be successful in some important respects, it could not be regarded as inherently sustainable. By their very nature, bureaucratic education systems can place any notion of lasting change under threat, through top-down decisions to restructure parts of the system. In fact, a process of systemic restructuring undertaken by Education Queensland in 2005 had the effect of seriously mitigating the impact of the redesign process in Fraser-Cooloola District.

e) The theoretical framework that was used to redesign the Fraser-Cooloola Out of School Services was based largely on Limerick et al.'s

post-industrial concept of metastrategy (1998). The research indicates that the concept of metastrategy has clear potential for application in public sector settings such as Education systems.

f) Eleven key leadership skill areas were significant in leading the process of organisational design in an educational setting: (1) as a leader, clarifying one's professional values and beliefs about organisation design and the nature of the design task and how the task may be undertaken; (2) developing a set of options informed by a synthesis of local priorities, the broader organisational direction and relevant, up to date organisational theory; (3) undertaking engaged purposeful communication aimed at creating greater knowledge of the design or adding value to the intended design and the quality of its implementation; (4) creating a common language as a platform for engaging stakeholders; (5) leading in a manner that encourages creative difference and distinctiveness—to ensure ownership and contextual responsiveness; (6) acknowledging ethical considerations; (7) undertaking regular reflective appraisal of both the design process and product; and (8–11) identifying key agents, leverage points, networks and governance arrangements.

Diagram 1 (below) is configured in layers, or domains, designed to indicate the relative importance of, and relationships between, each of the above-mentioned critical leadership skill areas. The three “domains” of the diagram are represented in its inner, middle and outer circles. Each circle represents a key subgroup of skills that a leader was found in the research to need to consider when undertaking the task of organisational redesign in an educational setting. The research outcomes suggest that the skills signified by the inner subgroup or domain should be focused on before other leadership actions and activities related to the redesign task are undertaken.

The first subgroup or domain of leadership skills is entitled '**Individual leadership capacity and action**' and is noted as the inner circle of the diagram; the middle circle, '**Conceptual development**' , represents the key skills that a leader needs to undertake to build a picture of the redesign task and a response; and the outer circle and final domain subgroup, '**Organisational implementation**' represents the individuals, groups, processes and requirements that need to be engaged with—to co-create and share the development of the redesign, to gain feedback and approval for the proposed outcomes of the redesign process and to gain support during its implementation. Each of these domains is explained in greater detail below. These eleven skill areas complement and extend Limerick et al.'s metastrategic management cycle with its four basic elements of:

- Founding vision
- Identity
- Configuration design and
- Systems of action (Limerick et al. 1998, p.152).

The eleven skill areas might also be regarded as consistent in intent with the concept of educational metastrategy as developed by Crowther et al. (2002). Crowther's conceptualisation encompasses the following five functions:

- Visioning
- Identity generation
- Alignment of organisational elements
- Distribution of power and leadership
- External alliances and networking. (Crowther et al. 2002, p. 50).

The proposed framework of eleven skill areas adds important research-based detail to Crowther's five broad functions.

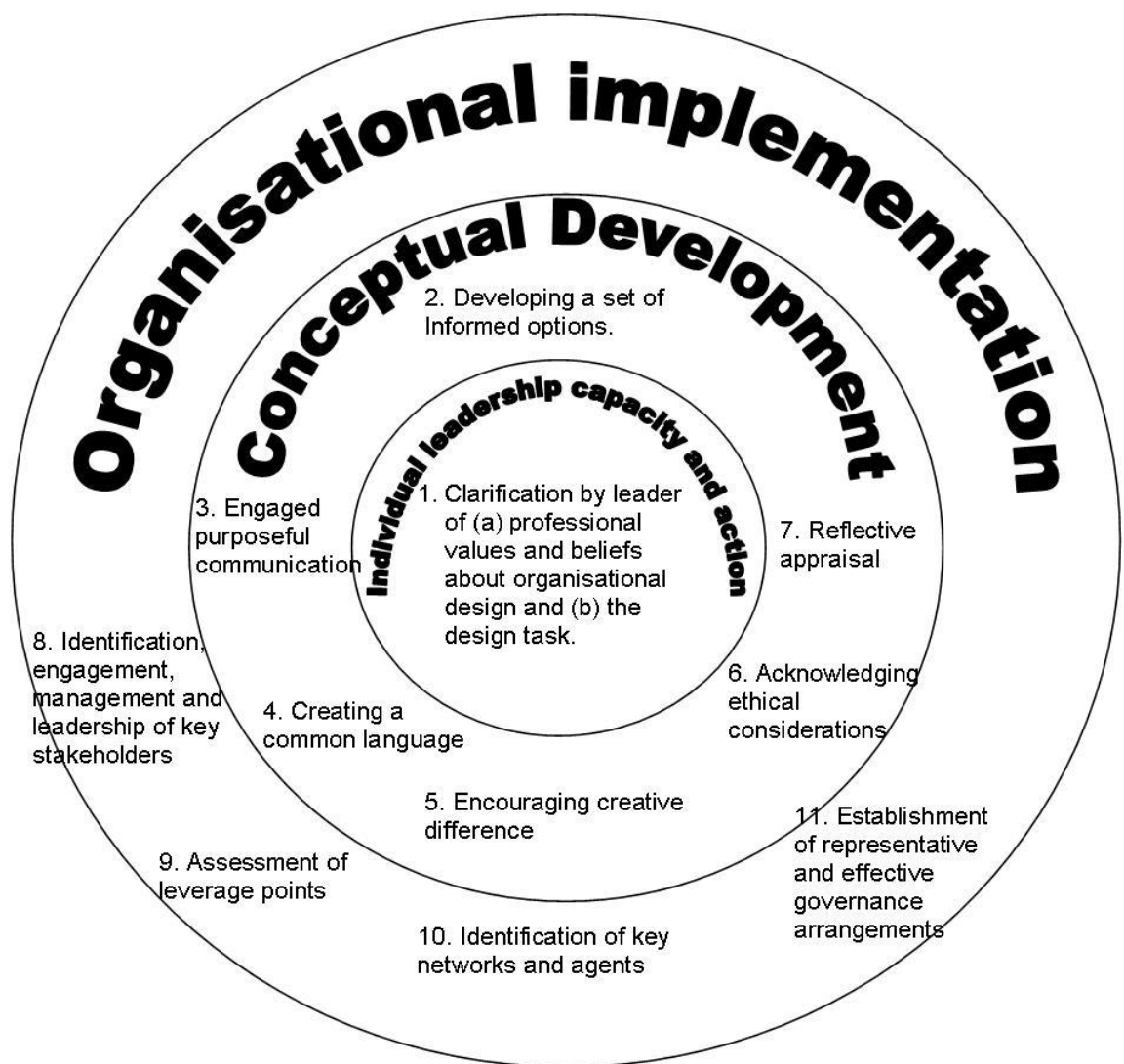


Diagram 1: Critical leadership skills across three domains for organisational redesign in an educational setting.

The inner circle, subgroup or domain involves leadership skills associated with clarification of both values and design. This stage is seen as the first and necessary stage before any other phase is undertaken. It is asserted that without clarity of thought by a leader—who understands their own professional beliefs/values and has an appreciation of the formal parameters of the position—no realistic sense can be made of the organisational redesign task.

The middle circle subgroup or domain summarises six critical skills that the research suggests a leader needs to utilise in approaching the organisational redesign process. That is, a leader needs the ability to work in a constant and consistent manner, integrating and utilising the six strategies: creating the common language of strategic conversations; communicating clarity of message; developing a set of informed options; acknowledging ethical considerations; encouraging creative difference and on a regular basis, undertaking reflective appraisal.

The outer circle sub-group or domain contains four skill areas. It recognises the need for a leader to identify, engage, manage and lead key stakeholders; make assessments in relation to the key leverage points to support the proposed change (power brokers and opinion makers); set up appropriate and representative governance arrangements; identify networks such as school clusters and key agents such as industrial organisations that have an interest in the change process. These individuals and groups provide the necessary guiding coalition to support the organisational redesign process and enable it to have a better chance of implementation.

These set of critical skills and the supporting diagram need to be applied in other circumstances. This aspect of the folio is conceptual in nature and derived from the researcher's reflections about the project, professional experience and application of the theory of metastrategy. The conceptual connections between Limerick et al. (1998) and Crowther et al.'s (2002) constructions of metastrategy and the outcomes of the present study are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: The relationship of the outcomes of the study to the concept of metastrategy.

Limerick et al. (1998)	Crowther et al. (2002)	The present study
Founding vision	Visioning	Clarification of values Clarification of task
Identity	Identity generation	Development of options Purposeful communication Common language Creative difference Ethical considerations Reflective appraisal
Configuration design stakeholders points	Alignment of elements	Management of Assessment of leverage
Systems of action	Networking Distributed leadership	Networks and agents Governance arrangements

6. Personal reflection

The commencement of this folio symbolised many things to me. Professionally, I was in the third year of my appointment to a system leadership position——District Director of Education for Roma District with Education Queensland. I confronted the challenge of establishing one of the new 36 education districts, making the transition from the position of secondary school principal to the District Director role and taking a leadership role that was a new operating environment for Education Queensland. In enrolling in a doctorate, I was keen to explore and develop my expertise and understanding of leadership, organisations and change in

the hope of helping of making me a better system leader. Moreover, I wanted to engage in a doctorate program because I wanted my knowledge base and thinking to be challenged. In my various leadership roles I had always hoped to model the idea that a leader must be a continuous learner. With regard to the focus for my doctoral studies, I had no specific idea of a topic but I clearly wanted to focus on an issue that would enable me to impact on others, to make a difference and a contribution to my work as a system leader in the education system that I was then a part—Education Queensland.

On a personal level, commencing my doctorate I hoped would give me a focus that would distract me from dealing with two issues that were impacting on my life—the breakdown of my marriage and the sense of isolation I felt living in a rural community. The evolution of the folio reflects my development as a professional leader in responding to these significant life challenges.

7. Summary

This folio comprises significant artefacts pertaining to key stages of an organisational redesign process that was undertaken at an Education District level within a state educational system. These documents illuminate the researcher-author's journey through the development of a theoretical framework, its application in the organisational context, measured responses to the challenges of redesign and the generation of a case study of an innovative postmodern approach to organisational redesign. The folio presumes to provide an important addition to the area of organisational design research—one which as a field of academic endeavour has been substantially inactive and based on outdated notions about organisations.

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Component 2 – The theoretical framework

Research question 1: What is the potential of Limerick's concept of metastrategy to facilitate a process of organisational redesign within a public sector environment?

Postscript

Introduction

Some four years and a half years have elapsed since the development and presentation of the conference paper that is the basis of Component Two. The researcher commenced initial reading and research around key aspects that informed the theoretical framework in 2000. It is therefore useful, and probably necessary, to reflect upon recently completed research that may have relevance (a) to shaping the theoretical framework that guided the study and (b) to the assumptions about organisational design and change made and confirmed during the course of the study. Furthermore, it should be noted that the second part of this paper and framework was informed by and developed in parallel with the redesign proposal outlined in component 3 of this folio.

In reviewing the literature of the past half decade, two developments are particularly apparent:

1. research into the theory of organisational redesign, enhancing the theoretical base that guided the study
2. the emergence and, generally speaking, the affirmation of the construct of 'alignment' as integral to the successful implementation of organisational redesign processes.

Generally speaking, it can be concluded from recent theoretical developments that the field of organisational design is characterised by a distinct lack of a current research base. Key authors indicate that the field

continues to suffer from a paucity of quality, relevant research (Walsh, Meyer and Schoonhoven 2006; Dunbar and Starbuck 2006), although major research insights have emerged in the past few years.

Organisational design/redesign

A review of the literature indicates that the prevailing approach to organisational design and research continues to be based upon notions of organisations operating in environments characterised by such features as predictability, and ‘command and control’ approaches in reporting relationships (James 2003). Yoo, Boland and Lyytinen (2006) note that this approach to organisational design is “inept” and fails to respond to the current operating environments of the knowledge economy—particularly the need to manage the intangible currency of knowledge capacity. Furthermore, the challenge of organisational design is in using knowledge resources ‘to provide high valued services and deliver “solutions,” rather than “products”, to solve a customer’s problem’. (Yoo, Boland and Lyytinen 2006 p. 215).

The limitations of the research into organisational design becomes particularly apparent when one considers that a significant challenge for service-related organisations is to isolate and determine what value and/or difference their work has made to clients and stakeholders. This is a particularly important consideration when examining these impacts in the context of a knowledge economy. Moreover, there is the need for acknowledgement of the ever-increasing importance of networks, alliance, learning and timely access to the latest, quality information (Lei and Slocum 2002). These aspects were explored to varying degrees when charting the framework for organisational design outlined in this paper, but there is little in the recent research literature that extends or enhances the Limerick et al. metastrategic framework.

One exception is Greenwood et al. (2006), who claim that post-industrial organisations are characterised by very different forms from those of their predecessor (bureaucratic) counterparts. These authors assert that post-

industrial knowledge-generating organisations already exist in idealised forms—as evident in some PSOs (Professional Service Organisations). Such organisations involve work that has two distinctive characteristics: (a) their outputs are intangible, encoded with complex knowledge and customised to their circumstances of each client; and (b) professionals are employed as the primary carriers, interpreters and appliers of knowledge (p.6). Obviously, Greenwood et al.'s notion of professional service organisations has direct applicability to educational organisations. Similarly, Leana and Pil (2006) in discussing the direct applicability of this research to schools, introduce into the question of organisational design what might be called a 'social capital argument'—that social capital has structural, relational and cognitive facets that all impact on student outcomes. It follows that all three facets must be built into design strategies. This argument is a reminder that increasing social capital should be one of the essential endeavours of 21st century schools and their external support systems (such as educational districts).

Two recurring issues in any organisational design process are those of quality and the likely success of the design process. Goold and Campbell (2002) propose nine tests to guide the design process. This taxonomy lists such tests as: (a) The Parenting Test—Does your design help the corporate parent add value to the organisation? (b) The Feasibility Test—Have you taken account of all the constraints that impede the implementation of your design? and (c) The Accountability Test—Does your design support effective controls? A framework such as this would have been useful in the early stages of this folio to inform the design process and subsequent implementation. However, these elements were to some degree implicit in the thinking that was inspired by the Limerick framework and also in the design framework that was subsequently used to guide the study. Regardless, the Goold and Campbell (2002) taxonomy is used in Component four of this folio to reflect on the key research questions that informed the conduct of the research.

Thus, the review of recent authoritative literature did confirm that Limerick et al.'s (1998) 'metastrategic' approach to management was strongly informed

by a valid appraisal and synthesis of the realities of the environments in which post- industrial organisations are expected to operate. Moreover, the review provided affirmation that the adoption of the metastrategic framework to the particular organisational task that underpinned the study (Out of School Services) was an appropriate one.

Alignment

The concept of ‘alignment’ underpins the organisational design journey that was undertaken in the context of this doctoral research. Alignment is, indeed, the core concept in the implementation of the design strategy of *LINK*. However, limited discrete discussion of this key issue was undertaken as a part of the development of the theoretical framework that informed this project. Schneider, Hayes, Lim, Godfery, Huang, Nishii and Ziegert (2003) note that the focus on alignment is a key concern for any organisation, but even more critical in the field of service industry and delivery. Leppitt (2006, p. 124) notes that without strategic alignment, any change activity may be detrimental to an organisation’s sustainability. On the other hand Collins (2001), writing a half decade earlier, had indicated that concern about alignment appeared to be overstated and subsumed as a normal part of the change management cycle:

Clearly, the good to great companies did get incredible commitment and alignment—they artfully managed change—but they never really spent much time thinking about it. It was utterly transparent to them. We learned that under the right conditions, the problems of commitment, alignment, motivation, and change just melt away. They largely take care of themselves (p. 176).

According to Limerick et al. (1998) the concepts of alignment and design in post-industrial organisations go hand in hand. These authors maintain that all post-industrial organisations should determine their own individual designs and identities—and can do so through the ‘Fourth Blueprint’ management processes of metastrategy, transformative leadership, collaborative

individualism, micro strategy and internal and external networking. As described in the academic paper that constitutes this component of the folio, Limerick et al.'s (1998) 'metastrategic management cycle', brought the key elements such as identity and systems of action together into a coherent whole—one that enables an organisation to choose its identity and to create new knowledge/meaning. Goold and Campbell's (2002) taxonomy (noted above) complement the fundamental notion of Limerick et al. (2002, pp. 152) that alignment is about the 'management of meaning' and the continuous renewal of 'organisational identity'. For example, Goold and Campbell's 'accountability test' would enhance the possibility of organisational alignment through its emphasis on establishment of effective controls relating to alignment.

Dunbar and Starbuck (2006) noted that traditional (bureaucratic) constructions of organisational design were focused mainly on internal alignment (or 'fit'), but 'emergent' constructions must go beyond alignment to provide managers with 'predictive' capability: the information, data and feedback that enable them to make informed judgements and decisions about the strategic directions of their organisations. Dunbar and Starbuck also refer to the difficulty this presents in the absence of a clearly explicated organisational value base. The design framework of the present study adapted Limerick et al.'s (1998) metastrategic management cycle to include notions of 'metrics'—performance indicators and benchmarks—ongoing learning to develop an organisational design that, in principle, had a 'predictive' capability. In terms of a clear organisational values platform, implementing a distinctive model of operation within a large bureaucracy involved facing the constant challenges posed by the incongruence between broader organisational values and those adopted by individuals at the sub-unit or educational district level.

The Booz Allen (2003) research by Neilson, Pasternack and Mendes examined the building blocks of organisations and the application of this knowledge to the successful execution of intended strategy. Such execution is embedded in management processes, for example, and in relationships

and measurement of performance—with the ultimate goal of sustainability. A related study by Hannan, Polos and Carroll (2003, p. 399) examined the nature of change management in terms of ‘unit interconnections (structural opacity) and the normative restrictiveness imposed on architectural features by organisational culture (cultural asperity)’. This recent research is useful in consideration of how design, and subsequent implementation phases, actually work in public sector environments.

Callahan, Rixon and Schenk (2005) provide an interesting perspective on assuring change management through the use of narratives. Their research provides a useful set of strategies and tools to project and document the organisational change journey. Their approach appears to warrant further consideration as a defensible methodology to capture the implementation dimensions of the design process and might have been used profitably in the current study.

Given the focus of the academic paper on leading organisational change in an educational setting, perhaps more analysis could also have been undertaken regarding the work of external supports for schools. Fullan, Bertani and Quinn (2004) have provided very useful insights about undertaking education district-wide reform, noting functions and processes that a district needs to focus on in an endeavour to support schools to maximum advantage. Their paper outlines ten components that, if implemented with rigour by district leaders, will encourage enhanced school capacity and improve student outcomes. These elements of relevance include a collective moral purpose, building the capacity of teachers and principals, aligning structure and roles, a clear commitment to, and focus on, teaching and learning, a demanding culture and ongoing professional learning. Consideration of Fullan et al.’s proposition certainly would have provided affirmation of the focus of the current study on elements of successful implementation of the design process and on the resultant **LINK** strategy, with particular emphasis on the building of capacity and network development. But, as noted earlier, the present research also asserts that there remains a degree of uncertainty about the impact of external supports

on schools and on schools' core concern for establishment of and improvement in, quality teaching/learning for all students.

Conclusions

Recent literature in the area of organisational design tends to confirm the importance of the present study in this field of academic endeavour. Research in this area has until recently been limited and applied approaches appear to have for the most part been dominated by outdated notions of organisational life and environmental/contextual circumstance (Dunbar and Starbuck 2006). But it appears that this limitation is now being redressed. The review identified some very useful research from the past half decade for consideration and potential application to the organisational design task that is the focus of this paper.

In summary, the growth of the service industry sector has led to the development of a new form of organisation—one that uses knowledge and information to create value, distinctiveness and difference. This insight is particularly important in considering organisational design in an education context such as that in which the study occurred—given that a core issue in such contexts is that of how value can be added and demonstrated by providers of Out of School Services such as district offices. The literature affirms the importance of the role of these external supports to schools in building workforce capacity, developing networks and the creation of a commitment to the shared moral purpose of education. Secondly, the emergence of a contestable set of criteria is useful in critically appraising the quality of any proposed organisational design. The Goold and Campbell (2002) taxonomy captured these dimensions in a more specific and focussed way than had been available in the traditional literature.

The concept of 'alignment' has been generally revealed in recent literature as a fundamental issue in shaping, and subsequently implementing, any form of organisational design. A number of significant suggestions are provided in the research literature about the organisational conditions that foster

alignment - for example, setting quality performance benchmarks and establishing a clearly articulated set of organisational values.

This subsequent review of relevant literature provides additional substantiation for the key concepts, ideas and assumptions that underpinned the academic paper that follows. For example, the notion of alignment is a key design principle that informed the metastrategic framework that was developed to guide this study. Upon reflection, an assessment of the design solution against criteria such as the Goold and Campbell (2002) might very profitably have been undertaken and included in the paper.

In essence, the adaptation of Limerick et al.'s (1998) metastrategic framework to guide the organisational redesign task is justified by the most recent research literature relating to this topic. While greater emphasis would have been placed on exploration of the concepts of knowledge creation and organisational alignment if the research were being designed now, the research problem and research questions that guided the study would not have been changed significantly. Research Question 1, which is the topic of this component of the folio, would almost certainly remain as is:

What is the potential of Limerick's concept of metastrategy to facilitate a process of organisational redesign within a public sector environment?

Personal reflection

At this stage of the development of this folio, I was endeavouring to balance the roles of a new Executive Director Schools and a new researcher. In my role as Executive Director Schools, I had an accountability to, and pressure from, my supervisor in Central Office to develop a proposal for the delivery of Out of School Services within a timeframe. Before I commenced work on the proposal and associated research, I informed my supervisor and my district office management team of these dual roles. In leading and shaping the development of this proposal as Executive Director Schools many of my personal assumptions about organisational redesign and leadership were apparent. For example, as a leader, I strongly believe in engaging and

working with people to develop and shape any response to proposed change of significance and the need to have a clarity of personal vision. Personally, I was excited by the potential application of Limerick et al.'s (1998) concept of metastrategy to the redesign task but I was still unsure what specific aspects would provide a focus for my research. I particularly enjoyed refining the metastrategy approach and applying it to a particular organisational issue. I presented this component of the folio at a national conference and received encouraging feedback.

On a personal level, I was fighting to cope with a number of significant stressors in my life. These included the death of my father—a man whom I idolised for his wisdom, sense of family, love and support; the end of a marriage and the loss of my best friend. I seriously thought about giving my studies away at this point because of the above circumstances.

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The Vital Link

A metastrategic framework to guide organisational redesign in a public sector agency—Education Queensland’s Fraser-Cooloola district

A paper presented at the ACEL *Thinking for Tomorrow* Conference Sydney, September–October 2003

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Abstract

Recent research suggests that the most difficult challenges facing leaders in service agencies present themselves as dilemmas, paradoxes or tensions. Leaders in such circumstances require frameworks to manage in environments of uncertainty, ambiguity, challenge and change. (Duignan 2002). This paper focuses on the framework developed to respond to one such leadership challenge: organisational and service delivery redesign within a Queensland public sector agency—Education Queensland’s Fraser-Cooloola District.

The notion of metastrategy was utilised to broadly map and scaffold the initial stage of an ongoing, intentional learning journey. Such a journey is a story of a socio-political process that valued the underlying motives, feelings and rationales of a diverse group of primary stakeholders and engaged them in a continuing authentic dialogue to make shared meaning of contextual ambiguities.

Above all, the experience enhanced the connectivity that bridged this diversity and strengthened the nature and extent of social ties necessary to link clients and new forms of institutions across changing power differentials.

The result is not so much a clear, transferable solution as it is a framework that has demonstrably increased trust, enhanced stakeholders' capabilities through interdependent action, and delivered local outcomes that strengthen the common good of public education.

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Introduction

Approaching and accepting the challenge of organisational redesign in today's postmodern environment characterised by such features as discontinuity, complexity, paradox, diminishing resources and multiplicity of possibilities is potentially a daunting task. Such circumstances clearly invite a reshaping and rethinking of paradigms and mindsets of design to meet such circumstances. Education Queensland's *Out of School Services Project* provided the trigger for Executive Directors (Schools) at a district level to undertake processes for the redesign of service delivery with relevant stakeholders.

The focus of this paper is the application of a metastrategic design framework to scaffold and chart the redesign process undertaken in Education Queensland's Fraser-Cooloola District.

Background

Whole of government

The mantra of the current Queensland Government is that of '*Queensland: the Smart State*'. The government has articulated five major areas of priority through which to achieve its vision:

- more jobs for Queensland—skills and innovation
- safer and more supportive communities
- community engagement and better quality of life
- valuing the environment
- building Queensland's regions.

These priority areas provide an indication of the breadth of future government activity, such as:

- greater partnerships between private and public sectors
- a greater focus on the development of targeted and integrated services to meet the needs of clients

- increased participation of communities in government decision-making.

Education and training is at the centre of the Queensland Government's Smart State vision: 'Queensland: the Smart State has a whole of government approach to innovation and new age industries that involve education and training, with a focus on research.....' (Office of Public Sector Merit and Equity 2003, p.ii).

Clearly, there are implications for the broader Smart State agenda when considering and redesigning the delivery of services for a public sector agency with an education brief.

Firstly, government and public sector agencies being 'enablers of solutions' rather than 'sole providers of solutions' (OPSME 2003), government and public sector agencies will do—in Osborne and Gaebler's terms—'more steering and less rowing'. (Institute of Governance, Canada 1996).

Secondly, there is a strong need for consultation and engagement of communities and stakeholders in service delivery and decision making by government:

In the Smart State, Government will work in partnership with the community, engaging the community more effectively in making decisions about the future, delivering improved and integrated education, health, housing, family and other services that improve the quality of life. (OPSME 2003, p.3).

Thirdly, traditional notions and models of service delivery need to be re-examined to ensure responsiveness to the changing role of government. Moreover, this agenda clearly challenges all Government agencies to work together to provide seamless and innovative services. Such a strategy has implications for the capacity and capability of the Queensland public sector workforce. The workforce needs to attend to the development of leadership,

display and promulgate a commitment to ongoing learning and generate a culture of innovation and achievement (OPSME 2003).

The philosophical underpinnings of Queensland's Smart State agenda are reflective of broader trends in government in the western world. Congruent themes include issues of community engagement, various forms of collaboration, redefined models/partnerships of service delivery, a development of a new public sector culture, associated structural arrangements, the notion of the 'Facilitative State' and building workforce capacity.

The Federal Ministry of the Interior, Government of Germany, Berlin, for example, embarked in 1999 on the program *Modern State—Modern Administration*. The aims of the program were to shift the role of the state from provider to enabler; to be more responsive to citizens as partners; and to build a more competitive, modern, efficient administration: 'more personal responsibility and less state—the federation as a partner'.

The United Kingdom's *Modernising Government* (1999) program identified that the values of the public servant of the future will encompass a commitment to innovation, cross-cutting thinking, collaboration, and customer service as well as upholding the core values of the public.

In Canada, a 1996 review of the public sector by the Institute on Governance, Canada entitled *Trampling the Turf: Enhancing Collaboration in the Public Service of Canada*—focusing on the lack of collaboration in the public sector—identified key workforce capacity issues of leadership, skill sets and investment in developing and modelling preferred employee behaviours such as teamwork.

Education Queensland: QSE 2010 and Out of School Services Project

Education Queensland (1999), *Queensland State Education 2010 (QSE 2010)* provides the blueprint for the future direction of state education in response to the Queensland government's Smart State priorities. QSE 2010

recognises that schools must be flexible enough to accommodate the individual learning needs of different students, and that the curriculum must be sufficiently forward-looking to anticipate their future pathways.

The QSE 2010 strategy acknowledges that central office and district office staff are there to assist schools to do this—by supporting innovation, responsiveness and flexibility. QSE 2010 identified four key action areas: helping schools; unlocking the skills of the workforce; curriculum for the future; and a focus on quality.

It was against this backdrop and in response to the broad strategic challenges of QSE 2010 that in the year 2000 Education Queensland established the Out of School Services Project. The aim of the project was to provide enabling strategies to address structural and cultural blockages in order to assist the achievement of QSE 2010 priorities. The expected outcomes of the project were: a better alignment of resources and services with educational outcomes to assist schools to build the objectives of QSE 2010; an enhancement of organisational and workforce capability; an enhancement of district structures with the capacity to innovate and improve efficiency; and effectiveness in the delivery of core business functions (Education Queensland 2001).

The initial phase of the Out of School Services Project in 2000 involved an extensive scan of district office personnel, major stakeholders and central office directors to test the alignment of then current district office services with QSE 2010. One of the significant findings was that most service delivery time was spent on providing mandated centrally driven services and on providing services of a repeat service delivery nature. In fact, the scan indicated clearly that regions and school support centres had placed very little systemic and strategic focus on service delivery. Apart from initial intensive training of District Directors, the scan identified no Education Queensland re-conceptualisation of service delivery to schools.

As noted earlier, QSE 2010 articulates a new set of relationships between schools and out of school service providers. These relationships clearly require a new definition of the nature of services and their differential delivery across Queensland.

The Out of School Services Project is now in the design phase, with out of school services providers responding to the challenge of redesigning service provision to schools and other related elements of Education Queensland.

Design: A metastrategic framework

Why design?

Executive Directors Schools have been charged at a district level with the leadership of the redesign process within very broad system parameters. There was clear acceptance by the Executive Director Schools, Fraser-Cooloola District of the importance of the notion of 'leader as designer' with associated authority and accountability (Senge 1990). In collaboration with an external consultant the Executive Director Schools generated and applied a metastrategic design framework to respond to the challenge of redesign.

This conscious choice of a design paradigm is based on the rationale and assumptions that:

- design is robust enough to operate in 'wicked' environments where there are discontinuities, ill-defined problems and multiple possible solutions;
- stakeholders can be engaged in a collaborative, appreciative inquiry learning journey that builds on their expertise (Hammond and Royal 1998; Cooperrider 1995) and
- design processes and pathways can scaffold learning and create knowledge; clarify alternative, innovative futures; and select and describe a preferred model of operation that can generate replicable

practices. (Limerick et al. 1998; Liedtka 2000; Buchanan 1992; Goel and Pirolli 1992; Por 2001).

Why a framework?

Design methodology includes the expectation that designated leaders will formulate clear expectations and requirements of the design focus or problem (Banathy 1996). Moreover, in the context of Fraser-Cooloola District, the importance of this explication process was particularly pertinent and necessary— given the fact that a significant number of staff had experienced a large number of structural and leadership changes in recent times. Such a design framework was deemed to be necessary to support staff and to provide them with a sense of clarity of direction in an environment of significant, and in some senses, tumultuous change. The broader postmodern philosophical debate on difference, social identity and reconciling equality reflects this consideration: ‘The risk of losing any guarantee to permanence, order and planned purpose to life is too great a secular leap into the void for most modern individuals to accept’ (Zadeh and Kacprzyk 1992, p.12).

Clearly, leaders do not start design work with a blank slate and nor do stakeholders. Each brings a set of a *priori* intervening, cognitive processes, relational beliefs and evidence to the task in question. Furthermore, some of these need to be questioned and unlearned as new behaviours develop. The generation of these new behaviours needs to be acknowledged, supported and rewarded.

The Executive Director’s immediate role in framing and shaping the design process was (a) to explicate personal values and viewpoints related to design and associated processes; (b) to make meaning and a sense of connectivity out of the broader contextual agendas at departmental, state and world levels; and (c) to make and generate shared meaning with key change agents such as district office staff members and principals.

Personal values and viewpoints

The personal position of the Executive Director Schools, Fraser-Cooloola District suggested (a) a predilection for 'walking the talk' and modelling personal behaviours; (b) a genuine commitment to engaging all district office team members and stakeholders in a learning journey; (c) adopting a leadership position that balanced the need for responsiveness with that for clarity of thinking around the type of organisation that needed to be developed; (d) commitment to a high performance culture and a preparedness to address the 'hard' issues; (e) a clear intention to carry such personal values and beliefs forward; and (f) a commitment to ongoing reflection and refinement.

Making meaning and a sense of connectivity

Given the turbid and complex contextual environment in which the redesign task was to be undertaken, the Executive Director sponsored the development of a framework as an essential mechanism to develop shared meaning of the task with key change agents and to provide an overall picture of the design task at hand.

Clarke and Clegg (1998) summarise the dilemma facing leaders in their conscious choice of frameworks as a tool to scaffold the making of shared meaning as 'The ebbs, flow and residual impact of business fads highlight the ambiguous choices available' (p.3). The Education Queensland context is no different, in that 'espoused theories' of change permeating official forums and artefacts of organisational business are broad ranging and somewhat eclectic (Argyris and Schon 1974). Networked, organisational, double loop learning, the development of learning communities and communities of practice based on rational leadership attributes, and cultural change agendas around the development of relationships are all part of the debate. Such rhetoric—if not the practice—was clearly grounded in terms/concepts consistent with postmodern organisational theory and commentary such as 'The Fourth Wave' (Maynard and Mehrtens 1996) and 'Managing the New Organisation' (Limerick et al. 1998).

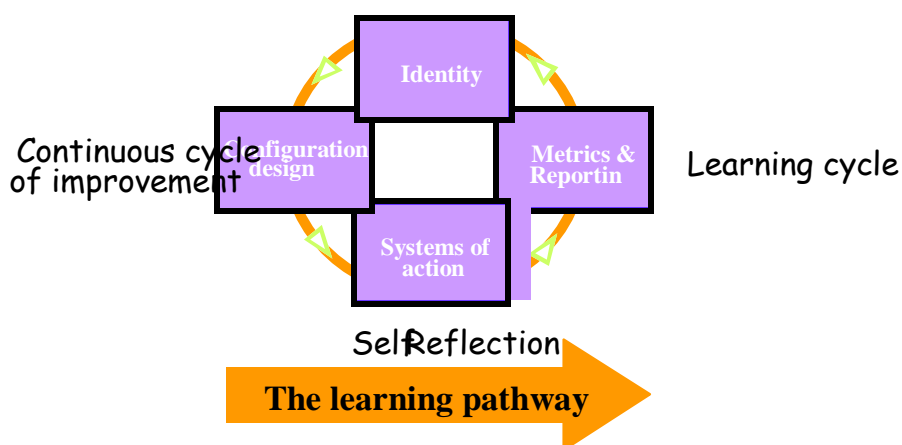
The Executive Director Schools took the leadership position that to navigate through such ambiguity and to inject leadership reliability and credibility into the design process, the framework chosen needed to have certain qualities. The framework needed to be robust enough to provide a sense of common purpose within new rubrics of public service provision, and flexible enough to generate creative input from stakeholders—while maintaining the integrity of personal value positions. The complex juxtapositioning of these qualities required an opportunity to engage with a virtual design space where strategic thinking and a re-examining of the literature base identified key issues and challenges in the development of a framework.

The Metastrategic design framework: an overview

Given the need and justification for a framework to guide and successfully manage the redesign task, the notion of ‘metastrategy’ drawn from the work of Limerick et al. (1998) was seen as appropriate and applicable. The notion of ‘metastrategy’ challenges leaders to conceptualise the design task in a holistic manner whilst clearly acknowledging the wicked, turbulent and sometimes, disjointed postmodern context in which a task such as this was to be realised.

The metastrategic design framework generated to support the Fraser-Cooloola District office team in the redesign of service provision and their individual/team operations is based on the following model:

Metastrategic design framework



The framework endeavours to (a) identify the key elements for consideration in an organisational redesign exercise of this nature; (b) capture the assumptions and broad theoretical constructs on which the framework is based; (c) be responsive to the outcomes and shared intentions of this process; and (d) to attend to the objectives of the integration and interplay of both design and implementation.

A number of broad design principles and assumptions drawn about organisations and organisational redesign inform this framework.

1. Drawing upon systems theory, it is assumed that individual key elements of any organisation can be isolated and positioned. (Lichtenstein 2000). Moreover, each of the identified elements of any organisation or system is 'interdependent and mutually causal' and the nature of such causality can be both predictable and unpredictable. (Lichtenstein 2000; Limerick et al. 1998 and Stacey 2003).
2. All organisations are essentially paradoxical in nature – with the presence together at the same time of self-contradictory conditions. According to Pascale (1990) such paradoxes evoke dialogue, questioning, inquiry, creative tension and continual redefinition. Therefore, any approach to design must acknowledge, and subsequently, be capable of responding to, such duality.
3. Any organisation has a 'self-organising capacity': the stages a system or organisation passes through as it develops new, more complex forms of order (Stacey 1996).
4. Any design process should be strongly informed by a clear commitment to organisational learning and the collective generation of meaning enabled primarily by dialogue. (Senge 1990; Senge et al. 1999; Kim 1993; Heifetz and Laurie 1997; Argyris and Schon 1978).
5. Any approach to design needs to attend to the rational and non-rational aspects of an organisation (Wheatley 2002; Schein 1993).

The framework depicts the design principles linked to the essential elements deemed to be applicable to this redesign and reframing task. These elements are identity; configuration and design (strategic foci, culture and leadership); systems of action and metrics and reporting.

Several steps were undertaken in order to select these elements. Firstly, the metastrategic approach to design postulated by Limerick et al. (1998) was used as a platform from which to test, check and develop the framework—because such an approach aligned to a number of the broad principles and stated outcomes for the task: for example, its interdependent nature; the proposition that it had the capability to cope with rapidly changing and sometimes non-linear circumstances; and its appreciation of postmodern thought regarding organisations. Limerick et al. (1998) assert that the process of metastrategic design links the four basic elements of the metastrategic management cycle: founding vision; identity; configuration design and systems of action.

The second stage involved a comparison of the elements of this framework with other research, principally drawn from the fields of design, organisational development, strategic planning, and change management. This analysis indicated a high level of congruence of the design elements identified by Limerick et al. (1998) with those captured in these sources. For example, Peters and Waterman (1982) noted seven 'hard' and 'soft' elements made up of such things as values, administrative systems and organisational structure. Stage three involved isolating any elements and/or sub-elements that needed to be modified and/or added to the framework. The additional and modified elements/sub elements identified were metrics and reporting; identity–vision, values and purpose, and the inclusion of leadership as a discrete aspect of configuration and design.

In including the element of metrics and reporting, the framework is responsive to (a) the contextual Education Queensland rhetoric of performance measurement and the generation of a performance culture; (b) the declared design task outcomes; and (c) a substantive body of research

which indicates that any organisation needs to measure and report on performance (Armistead, Pritchard, and Machin 1999; Lichtenstein 2000; Hubbard, Pochnee and Taylor 1996; Neely 1998; Brown 1996 and Kaplan and Norton 2001).

The framework acknowledges the notion that the management of an organisation's identity or 'self concept' should be the primary issue in organisational design (Pearce 1982). Identity in the context of this metastrategic framework is seen as the collective manifestation of deliberations about organisational values, purpose and vision. In the literature problematic semantic differences abound in relation to the concepts of vision, mission statements and purpose.

Leadership is identified as a discrete sub-element because one of the assumptions underpinning this framework is that leadership makes a discernable difference to overall organisational performance and is indelibly linked to such things as the promulgation of a culture and identity (Senge 1990; Peters and Waterman 1982; Karpin Report 1995; Hofstede 1994 and De Long and Fahey 2000).

Key elements of the metastrategic framework: defined

New forms of public service provision required a re-conceptualisation of the purpose, roles and function of a district office in relation to whole of government agendas such as community engagement and the facilitative state and the Education Queensland view of the revised relationships between schools, districts and central office.

Considerable post modern philosophic debate has explored the need for some constancy and clarity of an organisation's identity as a way of coping with rapid, discontinuous change. (Limerick et al. 1998; Peters and Waterman 1982). McDermott, Snyder and Wegner (2002) for example note that new fourth wave or 'blueprint' organisations need to develop a clear identity, a sense of belonging and mutual commitment as vital ingredients for

the development of productive relationships, connectedness and organisational sustainability. An organisation's identity should be also seen as having amoebic properties: forever responsive to change and open to review, refinement and maturation.

In application, the element of **identity** was defined as the clear, shared and consistent message about the nature of the Fraser-Cooloola District Office operations and services. Specifically, the notion of identity encompassed an examination of role, purpose, values and vision.

Broadly, the element of **configuration design** can be defined as the translation of an organisation's identity into operational and pragmatic terms. As noted earlier, key enabling sub-elements were proposed as culture, values, leadership, strategic foci and structure. In an applied sense, this element was referent to the major areas of district office services and operation, the nature and form of culture and leadership and the mechanisms, key structures and approaches to the delivery of services.

The **systems of action** are the pragmatic structures and systems developed to actualise the organisation's business. These include such things as communication systems, control mechanisms and rituals/routines. Individuals and groups enact these interactions and through such interactions make them work. Over time, systems of action will evolve as a result of such interactions and the constant interplay between the other design elements of identity and configuration/design (Limerick et al. 1998).

In context, this element of the redesign process was defined as the processes, procedures and mechanisms by which service delivery would be undertaken by the Fraser-Cooloola District team. Specifically, these are the methods and structures employed both within, and external to, district office— to link district office service provision to schools, other districts, a corporate service unit, central office, other educational providers, networks, clusters, other government agencies, business and community organisations.

Metrics refers to the diverse range of measures that are used as indicators of organisational performance and to inform the ongoing refinement of other related aspects of the organisation. **Reporting** relates to the formal and informal methodologies and approaches to capturing, documenting and sharing the essential essence of the organisation.

In an applied sense, this element of the design process related to the setting of performance measures and benchmarks; the exploration and establishment of reporting mechanisms; ensuring opportunities existed to recognise, verify and celebrate quality service provision; corporate governance; team and individual accountabilities; feedback, feed forward and the use of data.

The process of redesign in the context of Fraser-Cooloola District is seen as an on going journey of learning—a **learning pathway**—a commitment to continuous improvement, learning/reflection and the generation of meaning by stakeholders. In applying this metastrategic framework to the redesign of district services and team operations, an assessment and appreciation of **contextual realities** is implied.

The metastrategic framework applied

The Fraser-Cooloola District Office identity

In the redesign process, defining the identity for Fraser-Cooloola District Office helped all stakeholders develop a shared meaning and understanding of the purpose, boundaries and parameters of the nature and form of service provision and the role of the district office team. Moreover, this step allowed a clear examination and distillation of a shared vision and mantra, an explication of a core set of team and organisational values and provocative debate about the place of a district office in the total value chain of service and relationship with schools and other significant parts of that chain.

The **identity statement** generated from this phase of the process is as follows:

Fraser-Cooloola District Office—a vital *LINK* and trusted partner in supporting schools to deliver a compelling future for all students

The Fraser-Cooloola identity statement centres on the belief and notion of the district office and team providing **Leadership, Information, Networking and Knowledge (*LINK*)**. A summary description of each of these elements is as follows:

L=Leadership:

The team at Fraser-Cooloola District Office will provide **LEADERSHIP** that is:

1. based on expertise and a clear commitment to performance improvement
2. facilitative, creative and empowering
3. accountable
4. clearly aligned with the strategic direction of Education Queensland.

I=Information:

The team at Fraser-Cooloola District Office will acquire and provide

INFORMATION that is:

1. timely, accurate and current
2. informed by systemic targets, data and the QSE 2010 agenda
3. informed by awareness and appreciation of the individual needs and contexts of school communities
4. informed by an awareness of best practice and a strong research base.

N=Network:

The team at Fraser-Cooloola District Office as part of a networked organisation will assist in the development and facilitation of **NETWORKS** by:

1. building open and trusting professional relationships
2. exploring opportunities and forging partnerships with other agencies districts, Corporate Service Unit and various levels of government
3. displaying a commitment to working in a flexible and responsive manner.

K=Knowledge:

The Fraser-Cooloola District Office team will develop capacity to build

KNOWLEDGE that is:

1. valued by clients
2. linked to key systemic directions and priorities and accountabilities
3. supportive of schools in their pursuit of excellence.

A critical concern was the alignment of the identity statement of the Fraser-Cooloola District team with the key whole of government and QSE 2010 themes of government as an 'enabler of solutions'; the need for stakeholder and community engagement and the need for innovative service delivery models responsive to client needs. With this broader contextual policy backdrop in mind, a key framework that informed the development of the identity statement for Fraser-Cooloola District Office was the Regional Development Council, Western Australia's '*A Required Development Policy for Western Australia* (1999) which explores the elements of capacity from a community perspective.

1. **Knowledge Building** - The capacity to enhance skills, utilise research and development and foster learning.
2. **Leadership** - The capacity to develop shared directions and influence what happens in regions.
3. **Network Building** - The capacity to form partnerships and alliances.
4. **Valuing Community** - The capacity of the community to work together to achieve their own.
5. **Supporting Information** - The capacity to collect access and utilise quality information.

(Extract from Regional Development Council, Western Australia's '*A Required Development Policy for Western Australia* 1999)

This framework provided a useful scaffolding to explore the question of 'How does a district office team build capacity?'

One of the declared system expectations was that district offices should contribute to the building of school capacity. An extensive examination of the literature indicates that there is very little consensus and indeed limited work has been undertaken on this concept. The term, building of school capacity, has been used in some literature interchangeably with the notion of 'community capacity building'.

The school effectiveness literature did provide some indication of thinking around the role of an agency such as a district office in contributing to school capacity. The seminal work of Newmann and Wehlage (1995), for example, notes successful school innovation has a clear focus on the core business of school student learning and is supported by such elements and features as authentic pedagogy, school organisational capacity and external support. External support is defined by Newmann and Wehlage (1995) as 'the form of critical financial, technical and political support that enhances capacity by strategically setting standards for high quality learning and providing for sustained, school-wide staff development and increased school autonomy through deregulation' (Crowther, Hann and McMaster 2000, p. 2). Clearly, this research signalled that a district office as a type of 'external support' to schools had some form of role to play in relation to such matters as advocacy and representation; policy and specialised advice; strategic leadership; school performance; and staff development.

Porter's (1980) original concept of 'the value chain' was another useful theoretical construct that infused the distillation of the identity statement. Specifically, the isolation of exactly which services were valued by the stakeholders was a significant step in this process.

Hubbard, Pocknee and Taylor 1996, p.11 note:

'Much of the activity of the organisation typically does not add any value but may be necessary simply to enable the complete product or services. It is clearly very important to establish just what is valued by the customer (and what is not).'

Assessing the position of a district office in any form of value chain—and in the reality of the various stakeholders—involved dealing with competing and paradoxical perceptions and agendas. Moreover, one of the real challenges was to attend to such a circumstance, as mentioned above, while shaping an organisational identity that was contextually responsive and in some senses unique.

Fraser-Cooloola District Office configuration and design

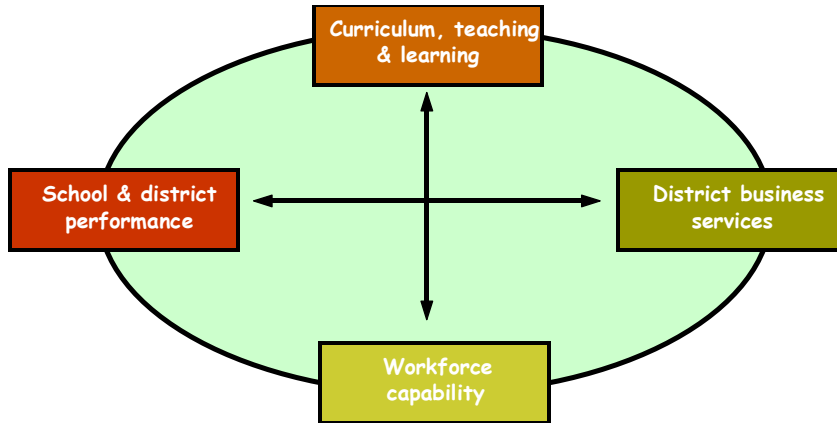
The Fraser-Cooloola team used the notion of ‘strategic foci’ to set boundaries around their work to ensure responsiveness to systemic strategic directions and school needs; to maximize the individual resources, talents and skills of team members; and to be congruent with the stated identity of the Fraser-Cooloola District Office - ***LINK***.

After an extensive process of consultation with key stakeholders such as district school principals, and recognition by the design team of the above factors, four strategic foci were identified for service provision: curriculum teaching and learning; workforce capability; district business services; and school/district performance were identified for service provision.

Four interdependent teams were established and used as the basis from which to explore the nature of each particular strategic focus and subsequently be the primary mechanism for service provision.

The Fraser-Cooloola District's configuration design

- Four interdependent core teams



1. Curriculum, teaching and learning core team:

- provide leadership with schools to implement Education Queensland priorities leading to 2010 objectives
- facilitate opportunities for school personnel to share and access best practice information on curriculum delivery
- build capacity in schools to network, support and maintain EQ priorities
- create new knowledge and support for schools to enable them to address emergent local issues.

2. School and district performance core team

- assist schools and district core teams develop a high performance culture incorporating the Education and Training Reforms for the Future (ETRF) and QSE 2010 targets
- provide leadership and focus in school renewal
- collect, interpret, analyse and evaluate school, district and systemic information to proactively assist cluster level planning and development

- sponsor networks and community partnerships to build open and trusting relationships that underpin strategic conversations focusing performance outcomes
- develop and build knowledge and skills to improve current and future capability of principals, schools and district teams.

3. Workforce capability core team

- engage district personnel in strategic conversations on workforce management and renewal strategies to improve learning outcomes outlined in ETRF and QSE 2010
- lead the development of skills in schools and clusters to integrate workforce renewal strategies within school planning
- monitor and provide information on trends in workforce patterns and requirements, gaps in workforce capability and management at the local level
- develop a network of cooperative relationships to ensure the continual exchange of strategic and operational information
- develop and communicate knowledge from data sources, workforce capability concepts and initiatives.

4. District business services core team

- provide support to lead the development of effective and efficient district business processes
- deliver timely, high level and confidential administrative information and services to district officers
- manage and provide support to schools and district personnel on networked information systems
- manage the flow of correspondence to maintain effective knowledge management systems.

Each core team member negotiated their workloads by defining their role, major responsibilities, major priorities for a six month period and identifying any personal capability gaps in skills between current and future role requirements.

In the design process, a significant amount of time was expended on explicating a preferred operating culture for the Fraser-Cooloola District team. One of the crucial aspects of this design process was the recognition that this task was about a journey of significant cultural change. A preferred culture was declared and deemed to be absolutely imperative for the effective application of the Fraser-Cooloola identity. One of the real challenges was to define and subsequently, model and generate that distinctive Fraser- Cooloola District culture. The declared culture of 'how business was done' in the Fraser-Cooloola context was built around the organisational concepts of beliefs and approach, of the design sponsor— such as collaborative individualism; teams; shared leadership; horizontalism rather than hierarchy; sustainable action; networks and alliances; learning and high performance within a public sector context (Hubbard and Pochnee1996; Karpin1995; Limerick 1998).

In this organisational cultural context, individuals, combination of team members and various teams will operate in a dynamic and flexible manner. These operational arrangements will be driven by such factors as the specific nature of the service delivery issues; the knowledge base and expertise of team members and the capacity of individuals. (Argyris 1991; Handy 2001; Hofstede 1994 and Delong and Fahey 2000).

The leadership 'learning strategy' of the Executive Director was necessary in modelling, encouraging and supporting team members to adapt, reflect and change their approach to delivery of services to align with **LINK** (Heifetz and Laurie 1997). Such a strategy and leadership were even more important as team and individuals encountered resistance, different systemic messages and stakeholders used to other approaches or service delivery footprints.

In addition to the formal and ascribed leadership of key individuals such as the Executive Director and team leaders, all members of the district office team were encouraged to adopt leadership roles in discharging their duties and where circumstances, issues and knowledge base dictated.

Attention to the development and enablement of individuals was based on the assumption that such leadership would contribute to the growth of organisational capability and 'intangible assets' such as morale and knowledge; and that such leadership was a shared property and emergent from the interplay of the various relationships/interactions of individuals (Kaplan and Norton 2001; Stacey 2003).

The manifestation of the preferred and stated culture in the collective and individual actions and behaviours of the Fraser-Cooloola District Office team will be one of the true measures of successful organisational change and more effective service delivery.

One of the real complexities of this phase of the design process was to identify, and then align, all aspects of the elements of configuration and design—culture, strategic foci and structure.

Fraser-Cooloola District Office systems of action

The Fraser-Cooloola systems of action are the mechanisms and means to operationalise the district's culture, support the delivery of team targets, coordinate team strategies, and enable service provision. Internal and external systems of action were conceptualised and enacted to respond to the above challenges.

The following assumptions and issues influenced the design of the systems of action:

1. the need for any systems of action to be robust enough to deal with the duality of conformance and performance issues. One of the criticisms of the public sector has been that it places too much focus on ensuring conformance with legal and procedural requirements, rules and policies rather than striving for exceptional performance (Barrett 2003). Systems of action in public sector organisations need to address in a balanced manner the tension of conformance and performance.

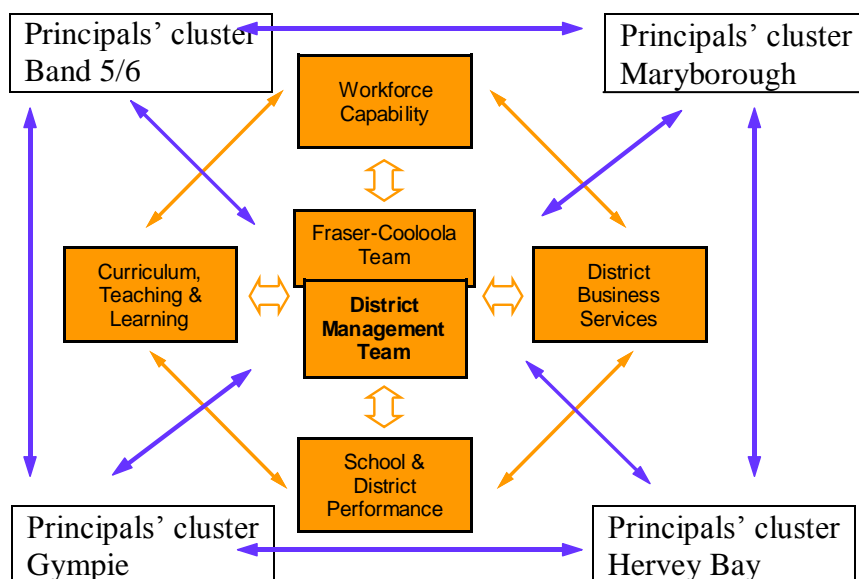
2. corporate governance requirements. Corporate governance has no single agreed definition. Generally, it is understood to encompass how an organisation is managed, its corporate and other structures, its policies and the ways in which it engages with its stakeholders (Barrett 2003). The position adopted in relation to corporate governance was not to simply see it as an isolated, singular and regulated activity. Corporate governance was seen as an habitual, integrated behaviour, not deferred to an externalised structure but attendant to corporate requirements (Australian National Audit Office 1999; Barrett 2003).
3. the need for vibrant and dynamic systems that sufficiently allow for initiative and creativity to be maximised, and are sufficiently flexible to respond to emergent and, at times, transient issues. Bureaucracies have been criticised for their inability to cope with complex, unpredictable environmental conditions because they are perceived to be too inflexible and slow to respond (Burns and Stalker 1961).
4. protocols and the basic rules of engagement for the clear articulation of core systems of action. One of the key problems facing any organisation is managing the tension of autonomy and control. Norman (2001) notes that too much autonomy and too little control can undermine coordination and prevent the delivery of a consistent service and product; whilst too much control can reduce motivation, responsiveness and innovation. Moreover, it is necessary to identify the formalised nodal points for stakeholders, to enable a basic and initial level of engagement.
5. the core systems of action form the backbone of the networked operating environment. Related to the above, some systems of action need to be tight and right and others fluid, loose and organic. It is both unnecessary and impossible to script every network and relationship. The informal nature or 'shadow side' of organisations will generate

communities of practice and relatedness as needs, circumstances and issues arise (Stacey 1996; Limerick et al.1998; Handy 2001).

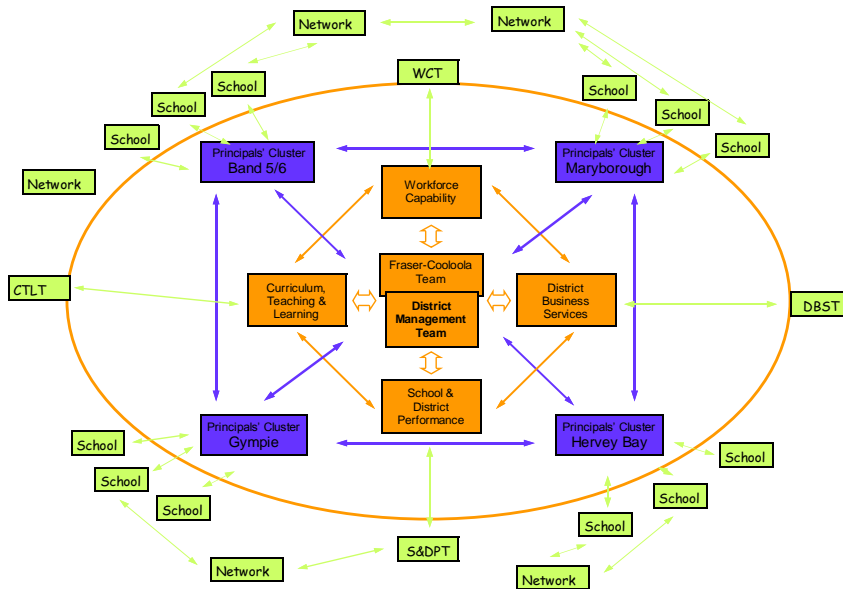
The internal core systems of action for the Fraser-Cooloola District Office Team are two formalised meeting structures: a whole team meeting/forum and a district management team meeting, with core team leaders and some other key personnel represented. Individual core team systems of action such as meetings and communication are not mandated and are left to the direction of core team leaders. The external core systems of action are the district principal clusters: Gympie, Maryborough, Hervey Bay and the Band 5/6 Principals network. Each of these cluster groups is at various levels of maturity in terms of operational effectiveness. The support and development of each of these clusters by the Executive Director and other identified change agents of each of these clusters will be crucial in enabling effective service provision in the district.

The identification and mapping of both internal and external core, dendritic systems of action clearly isolate for schools and service providers the initial means by which support will be provided, decisions can be influenced, and feedback provided on existing strategies, practices and services. The following diagrams capture this interplay:

Internal & external ‘dendritic’ systems of action



Fraser-Cooloola District Systems of Action



In addition an extensive and diverse range of relationships, networks and alliances support the delivery of services in the context of Fraser-Cooloola District. These are characterised by their diversity, particular focus and differential life spans.

Fraser-Cooloola District Office: metrics and reporting

Assessment of the level of performance of the Fraser-Cooloola District Office team will be a constant and ongoing activity.

Each of the core team's accountabilities include the expectation that performance information will be collected, interpreted, reported and utilised in relation to the team, focus, responsibilities, tactics and targets. In the design process, there was a clear acceptance of the need for a measurement and reporting regime which was responsive in the first instance to systemic requirements and demands. It was acknowledged that being part of Education Queensland, certain declared and accepted expectations of district offices existed with respect to reporting and data collection. However, there was also a desire to define and enact a metrics and reporting regime that was *inter alia* informed by world's best practice: including for example impact

assessment and triple bottom line reporting; the capacity to capture and value the narrative experiences; sufficient robustness to respond to unpredictable and predicted outcomes; and capacity to be an iterative rather than singular event.

Individual team members will engage in strategic conversations with their teams about their individual role requirements; major individual responsibilities; priority tasks or areas for action; and the individual development needs related to the training and professional capabilities necessary to attend to these priorities.

The whole team, 'Team Fraser-Cooloola', regularly reviews team progress, to establish targets/benchmarks; monitor use of data and feedback; share success stories and reassess the strategic direction.

Other considerations and assumptions influencing this aspect of the design process were that (a) organisational behaviour is inherently non-linear and results therefore may-be non-proportional to corresponding actions (Australian Quality Council 1999); (b) long term success is based on optimising resource flow and continuous learning (Lichtenstein 2000); (c) there is a need for metrics to contribute to the neverending challenge of coherence making (Fullan 2001; Brown 1996); and (d) judgement, common sense and experience should not be substituted for increased quantification (Gregory 2000).

Designer lessons and reflections

This framework provided all stakeholders, design team members and the design sponsor with the necessary design task scaffold to allow the journey of redefinition to commence. Importantly, the framework met stakeholders' need to have some basis from which to engage with this design complexity, whilst having the freedom to respond to their desire to create and make meaning. This process of meaning generation/making was enriched by placing the discussion and debate in its fullest context, for example, worldwide trends in government service delivery and organisational design.

Stakeholders could make links between this particular task and the broader influencing agendas, which then provided a more informed basis from which to engage in discourse.

The applied use of the framework clearly amplified some of the key characteristics associated with metastrategic design informed by such contextual influences. Firstly, the task of design was not an event but an ongoing, continuous process of reintegration of patterns and meaning making. Secondly, the processes were never linear but existed in a constant dynamic interplay between the broadly identified and defined key elements of the framework. Thirdly, the paradigm informing this framework ensured that it had the capability to deal with sometimes paradoxical and unpredictable events and issues. Fourthly, it was necessary to constantly check design principles and assumptions to ensure internal consistency across all elements of the metastrategic framework.

Conclusion

The complex and challenging task of organisational and service delivery redesign was successfully charted and enabled through the development and application of the metastrategic design framework. Begun in June 2002, the learning journey and iterative nature of the redesign process continues. Such a journey has been a narrative characterised by the engagement and acknowledgement of diverse range of stakeholders, and by their engagement in an authentic dialogue of making shared meaning of contextual ambiguities.

Above all, the experience enhanced the connectivity that bridged this diversity and strengthened the nature and extent of social ties necessary to link clients and new forms of institutions across changing power differentials.

The result is not so much a clear, transferable solution as it is a framework that has demonstrably increased trust, enhanced stakeholders' capabilities through independent action, and delivered local outcomes that strengthen the common good of public education.

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Component 3 – The Conceptual and Organisational Response

Research question 1: What is the potential of Limerick's concept of metastrategy to facilitate a process of organisational redesign within a public sector environment?

Postscript

Component three of this EdD folio outlines the submission to Education Queensland that was prepared by the researcher/author in response to Research Question One. The submission was developed around the core elements of Limerick et al's metastrategic framework, but with a focus on a specific policy innovation, namely a newly created Out of School Services function. The second half of component two was completed in parallel with the development of this submission.

In the four and a half years since this submission was developed, there have been a number of significant changes that have impacted on the systemic approach to the delivery of Out of School Services in Queensland generally and in the Fraser-Cooloola District specifically. These changes include (a) the researcher and Executive Director Schools taking up a senior executive position in another state educational jurisdiction; (b) the creation of a regional structure to manage and govern the delivery of Out of School Services; (c) the redefinition of all education districts in terms of geographical boundaries, numbers of schools and core functions ; (d) the role of Executive Director Schools becoming focussed exclusively on principal and school performance; and (e) the creation of the position of Regional Director to supervise Executive Directors Schools and to be accountable for all regional achievements/outcomes.

It is the considered view of the author that the above-mentioned changes have impacted to some degree on the approach to Out of

School Services that was taken in development of the submission document that follows. In four and a half years in a public sector organisation, it is to be expected that some degree of change would occur. Despite the changes that have taken place, however, it may be presumed that the essential elements of the Fraser-Cooloola District approach to Out of School services (based on Limerick et al.'s metastrategic framework) remain. This important assertion is based on analysis of current policy documentation relating to Out of School Services in Queensland. Such analysis reveals a redefinition of the core functions of Out of School Services, but no substantive change in such activities as School Planning and Accountability and ICT Support. Thus, the submission that follows is believed to have a high degree of integrity and educational purpose in its own right.

Personal reflection:

The submission was approved by the central agency with minimal comment. The final documentation was developed in partnership with key members of the Fraser Cooloola district office team. Throughout the development and writing of the submission I found a constant interchange in my roles as researcher and Executive Director. I also felt an enormous sense of pride in being able to refine the academic concept of metastrategy and apply it to a real organisational problem and setting.

At a personal level, due to the impact of the various stresses described in component 2 of this folio, I suspended work on my doctorate for about two years. I felt paralysed by those events and could not concentrate or bring myself to focus sufficiently on my studies to make meaningful scholarly progress.



Queensland Government

Education Queensland

Submission for the approval of the Redesign of Fraser-Cooloola District office services

August 2003

Purpose

Fraser-Cooloola District Office has developed this document to share with its partners the journey that has occurred since July 2002 to develop a preferred future way of working with schools to meet the goals of Queensland State Education 2010.

This document reveals the values, culture, targets, and strategic foci implicit in the future operations of Fraser-Cooloola District Office and the structures aligned with these.

Fraser-Cooloola District Office identified partners are:

- Schools
- Central Office
- Other districts
- Corporate services unit
- External educational providers, e.g. tertiary institutions, TAFE, private providers
- Business organisations

The development of this preferred future is recognised as only one stage in the journey to continually identify innovative approaches to delivering the core business services of Fraser-Cooloola District Office to its schools.

Executive Director Schools Foreword

Over the past 12 months, I have participated with a highly energised and engaged community of action in the Fraser-Cooloola District which has used a meta-strategic planning framework to undertake a journey to design future operations for Fraser-Cooloola District Office in line with *Queensland State Education 2010 (QSE 2010)*.

Previous models of operation have been developed from trying to match systemic requirements with locally preferred modes of operation. The meta-strategic planning framework to design district operations has led to the development of partnerships within district office and between district office, school and Corporate Services Unit (CSU) staff to act together to design a 'future' way of operating to continue the journey to improving student learning outcomes in the Fraser-Cooloola District.

Throughout this process, the Fraser-Cooloola community of action has looked at our activities, what we have done well in the past and areas where more work is needed. This has been looked at in the context of Out-of-School Services project and aligning future operations with improving learning outcomes as outlined in *QSE 2010* and Education and Training Reform (ETRF) agendas.

The aim of Fraser-Cooloola District Office is to work in the areas of curriculum teaching and learning; workforce capability; school and district performance; and internal business processes and knowledge management. Our strategic foci as a team are to provide **L**eadership, **I**nformation, **N**etwork and **K**nowledge, that is, to **LINK** the individual resources, talents and skills of our district teams to ensure our systems of action operationalise our culture, deliver our targets and coordinate our team strategies.

A key feature of the journey to date has been the relationships that have been developed internally and externally. These relationships have been developed through the early implementation of our preferred culture. This culture is characterised by horizontalism rather than hierarchy, collaborative

individualism, a commitment to learning, communication and reflection, shared leadership, networks/ alliances and high performance.

These relationships will be a key contributor to ensuring our systems of action are characterised by behaviours that maximise initiative and creative responses to emerging and, at times, transient issues. This will ensure that our actions will be designed to improve future results and that the metrics and reporting used to evaluate the district's work will take account of organisational accountabilities; the impact of services taking into account resource usage and social impact; and an established culture of looking in and out.

I would like to thank all those who have participated in the first part of this journey and invite those who have not had the opportunity to use the information in this document to join with us in our journey to support schools to deliver a compelling future for all students.

Executive Director Schools

Context and Background

Out-of-Schools Services Project in Fraser-Cooloola District

Queensland State Education 2010 (QSE 2010) provides the blueprint for the future of state education in Queensland in response to the priorities set by Queensland Government's Smart State agenda. *QSE 2010* recognises that the learning experiences provided by schools must be flexible in order to address the individual learning needs of all students and a framework is required to link curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation to prepare students for flexible and adaptable life pathways.

QSE 2010 acknowledges that central office and district office staff are there to assist schools to achieve the objectives by supporting innovation, responsiveness and flexibility. *QSE 2010* articulates new relationships between schools and out-of-school service providers. In order to effect these relationships, an examination and, in some cases a reconceptualisation of the nature and delivery of the services is clearly required. An expected outcome is the development of differential models of service provision to reflect the breadth and diversity of the State Education system across Queensland to support the delivery of the core business of schools and schools capability to respond to the needs of students and communities.

The Out-of-Schools Services (OSS) Project was established in 2000 to identify strategies to address structural and cultural features blocking progress towards achieving the objectives of *QSE 2010*. Key strategies identified by this project to affect the objectives were:

- Creation of Corporate Services Units to provide core business services
- The co-location and/or amalgamation of a number of districts
- The redefinition of the executive director's role

The new focus of the Executive Director's role is to be on building school capacity to meet the objectives of *QSE 2010* and manage district resources. To reflect this the word 'school' has been added to create the title 'Executive Director Schools' Key strategies to effect this role are for EDSs to recognise

and facilitate learning networks and to take on accountability for resource management. Each principal is to have a reporting relationship with the EDS.

The Fraser-Cooloola Design Journey

Stage 1: Cross-District Direction Setting for Out-of-School Services

In March 2001, Fraser-Cooloola District and Isis-Burnett District formed an Out-of School Services Combined Reference Group to provide local input into the state-wide service delivery structure. The reference group comprised representatives from both district offices together with principals and associate administrators from schools in both districts.

Following the deliberation and consultation processes of the reference group and five special interest working parties, a proposal for enhanced delivery of out-of-school services across the two districts was submitted to the Out-of-School Services Project Team. The proposal recommended the physical co-location of the two district offices by July 2002 to strengthen and formalise the existing levels of cross-district cooperation into a model of affiliation.

Part 2: The Learning Journey towards Co-location

In July 2001, a second part of the local Out-of-School Services process commenced. This phase has two foci:

- the physical co-location of the two district offices by July 2002
- enhanced service delivery to schools.

The process of consultation through 'learning groups' involved senior management of both district offices, district office staff representatives, principals' council representatives from both districts, staff from schools and representatives from the Queensland Teachers Union and the Queensland Public Sector Union. Strategies in the key areas of district office operations from this process were:

- Education Services—a combined approach to support learning pedagogies
- Planning and Accountability—cross-district team approaches to Planning and Accountability services to enhancing individual district responses to school needs

- Finance—cooperative approaches to service delivery
- Human Resources—collaborative human resource services across districts
- Corporate Services—a model of combined corporate services delivery to enhance client service.

Stage 3: The Co-location

Fraser-Cooloola District Office and Isis-Burnett District Office successfully co-located in June 2002. From 1 July 2003, the co-located office included the Fraser-Cooloola District Office, Isis-Burnett District Office and the Maryborough Office of the Central Corporate Services Unit.

Stage 4: The Design Process

On 1 July 2003, Fraser-Cooloola District Office commenced its own journey to develop its preferred future while continuing to identify ways of working with other districts, in particular Isis-Burnett District, and the Corporate Services Unit.

Fraser-Cooloola District Office viewed the design process as the opportunity to accept the challenge of *QSE: 2010* to become part of the learning society—the Smart State—by being adaptable and able to manage all the key resources, including human, social, physical and material. Therefore the design process has focussed on a process to develop a district office that would:

- Focus on up-to-date organisational principles
- Respond to the challenge of contributing to the building of school capacity
- Create effective systems of action to ensure the delivery of quality services
- Be Informed by world as well as QSE: 2010 benchmarks

The Design Process used a **meta-strategic planning framework** involving four elements: identity, configuration design, systems of action and metrics and reporting. A small design team worked closely with the Fraser-Cooloola

District Office Team and school representatives to effect the framework. The **Design Team** was the Executive Director Schools, Senior Finance Officer, Principal Personnel Officer, A/Principal Education Officer (Performance Measurement), and Bill Brown (External Facilitator). The Queensland Public Sector Union was represented by Sally Bick.

Meta-strategic Planning Design Framework

The design framework used for meta-strategic planning for the Fraser-Cooloola District Office team was based on four elements:

1. **IDENTITY** encompassing:

- What is 'our' role?
- What are our Values
- What is our vision?

The Fraser-Cooloola identity sets the purpose and boundaries of our work

2. **CONFIGURATION DESIGN** encompassing:

- Culture
- Strategic Foci
- District Office Structure
 - capabilities required to deliver the strategic foci outcomes in ways that are congruent with the culture
 - team responsibilities/accountabilities
 - individual work profiles

The Fraser-Cooloola Configuration Design organises our thinking, co-ordinates our efforts, maps our workload and benchmarks our behaviour.

3. **SYSTEMS OF ACTION** encompassing:

The methods employed within district office and externally to link district office with schools, CSU, central office, other districts, other educational providers, relevant business and community organisations.

The Fraser-Cooloola Systems of Action outlines the processes, procedures and mechanisms by which our work is done.

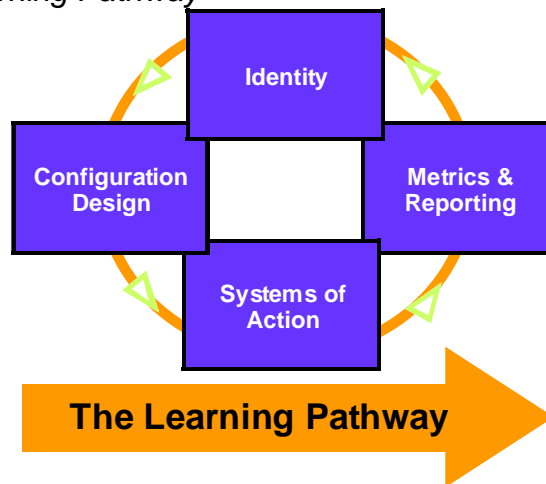
4. **METRICS AND REPORTING** encompassing:

- What are our performance targets?
- How will data be used to inform actions?
- Reporting Mechanisms
- Corporate Governance
- Conformance and performance
- Team and individual accountabilities
- Impact Assessment
- Verification and celebration

The Fraser-Cooloola Metrics and Reporting set our performance targets and how we use data to inform our next actions.

The following flowchart details the relationship between these elements.

Figure 1: The Learning Pathway



KEY STAGES IN THE REDESIGN PROCESS

The following section outlines the key stages in the Redesign Process.

1. Establishment of the Fraser-Cooloola Identity

Identity

Description

The Identity stage enabled the development of the following elements of the Fraser-Cooloola District Office's identity statement:

- Role
- Values
- Vision

Process **August 2002 – October 2002** (a detailed summary has been attached as Appendix 1)

- Appreciation of historical context, identification of current practices and the development of a shared understanding of a preferred future for the Fraser-Cooloola District Office
- Development of strategies, tactics and activities to link current practices with the preferred future
- Consultation with school administrators i.e. all district principals and a majority of deputy principals to identify their preferred future in relation to district office service delivery.
- Alignment of the identified preferred futures of District Office Staff and school administrators
- Design of business model for district operations i.e. vision, values and LINK statement

Outcomes

The Fraser-Cooloola's vision positions the team within the total value chain of Education Queensland's strategic intent.

The Fraser-Cooloola's vision:

Fraser Cooloola District Office - a vital LINK and trusted partner in supporting schools to deliver a compelling future for all students

The Fraser-Cooloola values provide the focus for cohesive team operations. These include:

- Commitment to high performance
- Open trusting relationships – caring for each other
- *Collaborative individualism and interdependence*
- Accept personal accountabilities and shared responsibilities

The Fraser-Cooloola's 'LINK' statement, which contains the elements of **L**eadership, **I**nformation, **N**etworks and **K**nowledge, embeds the vision and values of the district (see Appendix 2). A brief description of these elements follows:

L=LEADERSHIP:

The team at Fraser Cooloola District Office will provide **LEADERSHIP** that is:

1. Based on expertise and a clear commitment to performance improvement.
2. Facilitative, creative and empowering.
3. Accountable.
4. Clearly aligned with the strategic direction of Education Queensland.

I=INFORMATION:

The team at Fraser-Cooloola District Office will acquire and provide **INFORMATION** that is:

1. Timely, accurate and current.
2. Informed by systemic targets, data and the 2010 agenda.
3. Informed by an awareness and appreciation of the individual needs and contexts of school communities.
4. Informed by an awareness of best practice and a strong research base.

N=NETWORK

The team at Fraser-Cooloola District Office as part of the networked organisation will assist in the developing and facilitating **Networks** by:

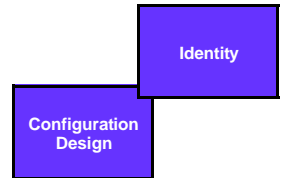
1. Building open and trusting professional relationships.
2. Exploring opportunities and forging partnerships with other agencies, districts, Corporate Services Unit(s) and levels of government.
3. Displaying a commitment to working in a flexible and responsive manner.

K=KNOWLEDGE:

The Fraser-Cooloola District Office team will develop capacity to build **KNOWLEDGE** that is:

1. Valued by clients.
2. Linked to key systemic directions and accountabilities.
3. Supportive of schools in their pursuit of excellence.

2. Establishment of the Fraser-Cooloola Configuration and Design



Description:

The Configuration and Design stage enabled the development of the following:

- Culture
- Strategic Foci
- District Office Structure
 - capabilities required to deliver the strategic foci outcomes in ways that are congruent with the culture
 - team responsibilities/accountabilities
 - individual work profiles

Process: **November 2002 – February 2003** (a detailed summary has been attached as Appendix 1)

- Alignment of positional practices to LINK statement
- Initial development of the Service Level Agreement between the Fraser-Cooloola District Office and the Corporate Services Unit (CSU).
- Consultation, collaboration and consensus of the culture, strategic foci and structures of Fraser-Cooloola District office by District Office Team members
- Formation of District Office Teams
- Development of individual officers' personal performance plans with respect to: roles, major responsibilities, developmental needs, priorities for the next six months

Outcomes:

Culture

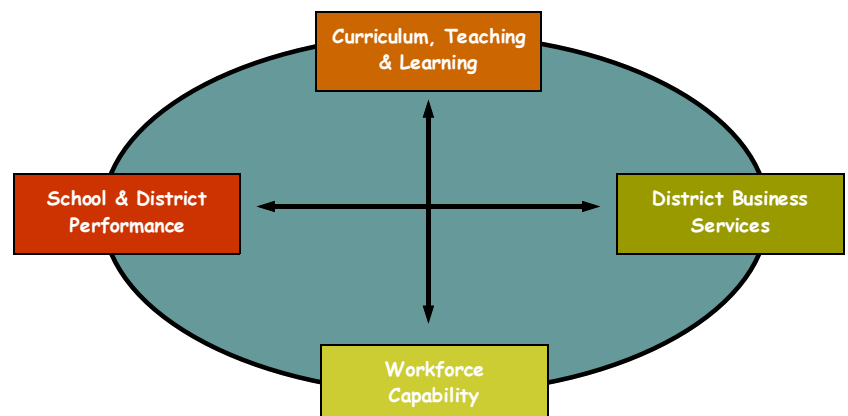
The elements inherent in our culture are:

- Horizontalism rather than hierarchy.
- Collaborative Individualism
- Commitment to learning, communication & reflection
- Shared leadership
- Networks/Alliances
- High Performance
- Sustainable action

Strategic Foci

The Fraser-Cooloola strategic foci set the boundaries around our work to ensure we apply our individual resources, talents and skills effectively and efficiently. Our structures are aligned to our strategic focus and are congruent with the current and future capabilities required to deliver our targets. Our strategic foci are operationalised through four interdependent core teams.

Figure 2: Fraser-Cooloola Core Teams



A summary of the district office profile, outlining teams, team memberships, team focus areas and workforce implications is detailed below. A comprehensive copy of each Core Team's Plan is provided in Appendix 3.

Core Team Title	Core Team Positions (Title; Level)	Team Focus	Workforce Implications
Curriculum, Teaching And Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MES (A08) • SGO • SLPIC • EA – Senior Schooling • EA – Curriculum 	<p>To develop a team which is focussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide leadership to schools within FC district in the implementation of EQ priorities, policies and initiatives in Curriculum, Teaching and Learning leading to 2010 objectives. • To facilitate opportunities for school personnel to share and access best practice. • To build capacity in schools so as to develop, implement and maintain initiatives associated with the EQ priorities. • To provide support for schools to enable them to address local issues such as Behaviour Management / Alternative Programs. 	<p>The proposed structure will have a cost-neutral impact on current staffing levels with the Fraser-Cooloola District Office.</p> <p>Current position descriptions essentially remain the same, apart from minor modifications to relevant work profiles where appropriate.</p> <p>Some position titles require change to purely reflect a new focus in a new operating environment.</p>
District Business Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESO (A03) • AO - 0.6 FTE (A02) • AO – 0.4 FTE (A02) 	<p><i>Provide executive support to assist in enhancing effective and efficient district business processes.</i></p> <p><u>Responsibilities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver timely, high level and confidential executive services to district officers. • Manage the flow of correspondence to maintain effective communication processes. • Manage and provide support to school and district personnel on information systems (eg. TRIM, SCOLR, SDA) 	

School & District Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDS (S02) • PEO/PM (A07) • SFO (A06) • RDO - 0.5 FTE (A04) 	<p>Assist schools and Fraser-Cooloola district to develop a high performance culture in accordance with ETRF and Destination 2010 agendas.</p> <p>The School/District Performance Team will have a significant impact on both, other district office teams and schools in capacity building through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading school review and renewal in alignment with the strategic direction of Education Queensland to assist schools in establishing their strategic direct and ensuring high performance of schools. • Collecting, interpreting, analysing and evaluating school, district and systemic data to provide timely Information to assist schools, district teams and the district to address and prevent local area issues and assist in local area planning. • Establishing Networks to build open and trusting relationships, ensure the exchange of strategic and operational information, and exchange knowledge of best practice. • Developing and communicating Knowledge to improve on current and future capability of schools, district teams and district. 	
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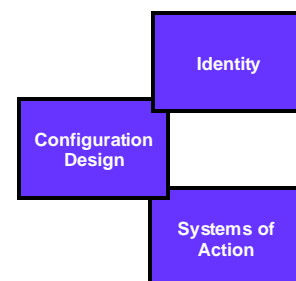
Workforce Capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPO (A07) 	<p>Engage Fraser-Cooloola District in strategic conversations on workforce management and renewal strategies to produce demonstrable outcomes in the use of the capability—the knowledge, skills and abilities—of the local school workforce to improve learning outcomes as outlined in QSE 2010 and ETRF.</p> <p>Workforce Capability service can make a significant contribution to organisational capability through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading the development of skills in schools and across school clusters to integrate workforce renewal strategies with schools plans. • Monitor and provide Information on trends in workforce patterns and requirements; gaps in workforce capability and management at the local level; and strategies to address issues at the local level to achieve client needs. • Developing a Network of cooperative relationships to ensure the continual exchange of strategic and operational information related to workforce management and renewal strategies. • Develop and communicate Knowledge from data sources, workforce capability concepts and initiatives to build on current and future workforce capability at the local level. 	
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Each **Individual Core Team Member** has negotiated their workloads by defining:

- Role
- Major Responsibilities consistent with work profile requirements
- Priority tasks for the next six months
- Capability gaps between current skills and those required to deliver new responsibilities

A comprehensive copy of each Individual Team Member’s Position Description and Work Profile is provided in Appendix 4.

3. Establishment of the Fraser-Cooloola Systems Of Action



Description:

The Systems of Action stage enabled the development of the methods employed by district office to:

- Link District Office staff internally
- Link District Office externally to schools, CSU, central office, other districts, other educational providers, relevant business and community organisations.

Process: February 2003 – May 2003 (a detailed summary has been attached as Appendix 1)

- Current practices (including meetings and networks) were identified and realigned to the Fraser-Cooloola LINK statement, with enhanced systems of action introduced
- Presentation of proposed district office redesign at Administrators Days
- Consultation and collaboration of systems of action with individual clusters

Outcomes:

In the development of the Fraser-Cooloola Systems of Action it was recognised that there was a need for:

- compliance and conformance with corporate governance requirements – conceptualised as ‘dendritic’
- vibrant and dynamic systems of actions that maximise initiative and creative response to emergent and, at times, transient issues.

These Systems of Action were designed to operationalise our culture, deliver our targets and coordinate our team strategies. They are an interdependent set of networked relationships.

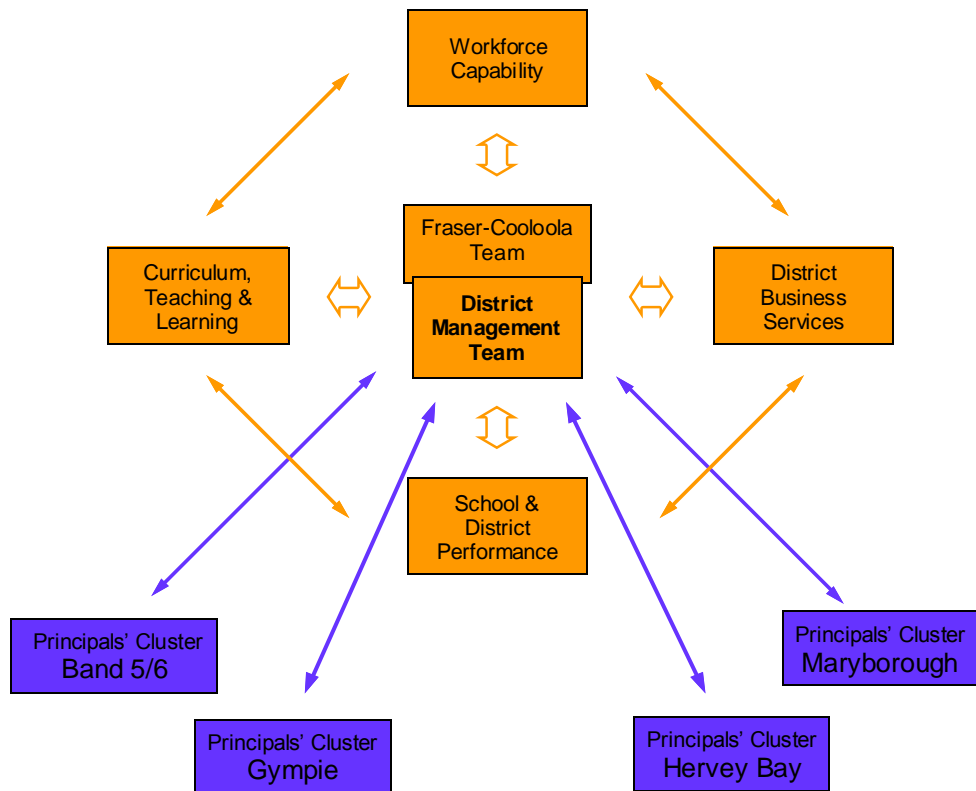
Internal and External ‘Dendritic’ Systems of Action

The internal core systems of action for the Fraser-Cooloola District Office Team are two formalised meeting structures – a whole team meeting/forum and a district management team meeting with core team leaders and some other key personnel represented. Individual core team systems of action such as meetings and communication are not mandated and are left to the direction of core team leaders.

The external core systems of action are the district principal clusters – Gympie, Maryborough, Hervey Bay and Band 5/6 Principals Networks. Each of these cluster groups is at various levels of maturity in terms of operational effectiveness. The support and development by the Executive Director Schools and other identified change agents of each of these clusters will be crucial in enabling effective service provision in the district.

The relationship between the internal (orange) and external (blue) dendritic systems of action is outlined in the following diagram.

Figure 3: Dendritic Systems Of Action



A summary of the membership and purpose of each of the teams is provided in Appendix 4.

Vibrant and Dynamic Systems of Action

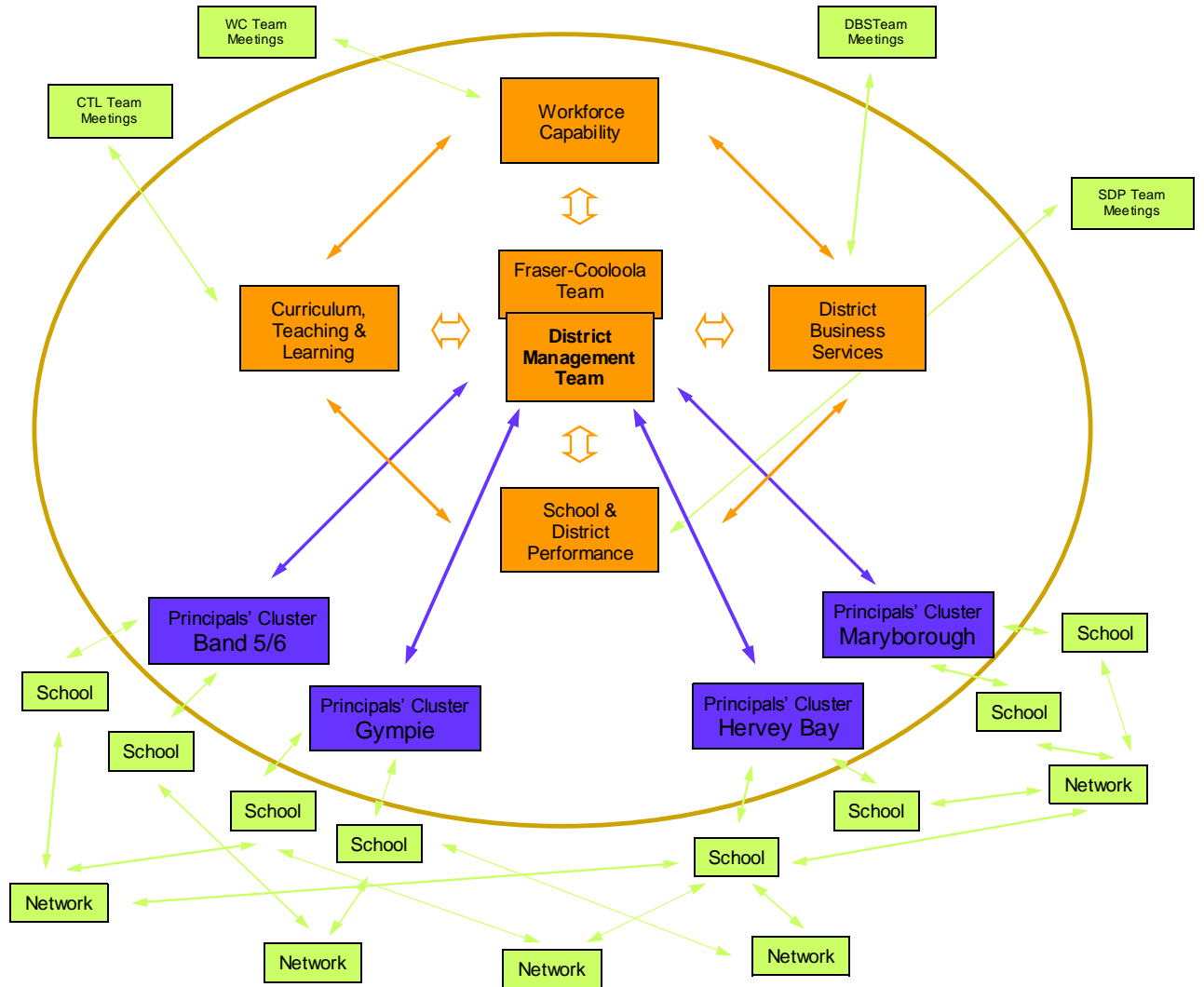
The manner by which Core Teams, school community and individual networks of influence conduct their business is entirely at the discretion of team/clusters. There is no intention to formalise these systems of action into formalised structural pathways. It is anticipated that new linkages will emerge, as established groups mature and irrelevant meetings/groupings etc will discontinue as appropriate.

The Fraser-Cooloola’s vibrant and dynamic systems of action can be mapped to the network backbone and provide transparent processes to:

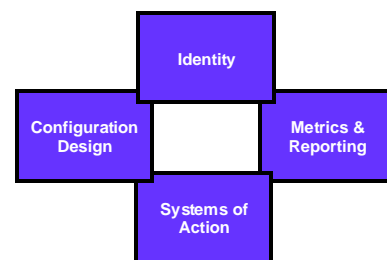
- Access support
- Influence decisions
- Provide feedback on existing strategy and practice

The following diagram defines the relationships between the dendritic systems of action (encompassed in an oval) and the vibrant and dynamic systems of action.

Figure 4: Fraser-Cooloola District Systems Of Action: Dendritic (Within The Oval) And Vibrant & Dynamic (Green)



4. Establishment of the Fraser-Cooloola's Metrics And Reporting



Description:

The Metrics & Reporting stage enabled the development of:

- Performance measures and benchmarks
- Exploring and establishing reporting mechanisms
- Ensuring opportunities existed to recognise, verify and celebrate quality service provision
- Recognising and attending appropriately to the need for effective corporate governance
- Exploring and integrating world's best practice
- Team and individual accountabilities
- Conformance versus performance
- Impact assessment
- Notions of feedback and feedforward
- Use of data to inform and reflect on actions. :

Process: February 2003 – May 2003

- Individual core team meetings to establish team performance measures and benchmarks
- Internal design team researched alternative and new methods for monitoring and reporting performance of district services
- Presentation of metrics and reporting framework to Fraser-Cooloola Team for ratification

Outcomes:

Metrics

An assessment of the level of performance of the Fraser-Cooloola District Office team will be an ongoing activity.

Each of the core teams accountabilities include the expectation that performance information will be collected, interpreted, reported and utilised in relation to the team focus, responsibilities, tactics and targets.

Individual team members will engage in strategic conversations with their team leaders about their individual role requirements; major individual responsibilities; priority tasks or areas for action and individual development needs related to training and professional capabilities necessary to attend to these priorities.

The whole team, 'Fraser-Cooloola Team', review on a regular basis team progress in relation to established targets/benchmarks; use data and feedback to share success stories and re-assess priorities.

Corporate governance requirements will be met through the Executive Director Schools performance planning process:

- Team targets and individual accountabilities are aligned to district output requirements
- Qualitative performance information data gathered through Core Team reflection processes will supplement quantitative data gathered to meet corporate governance requirements

Impact Assessment

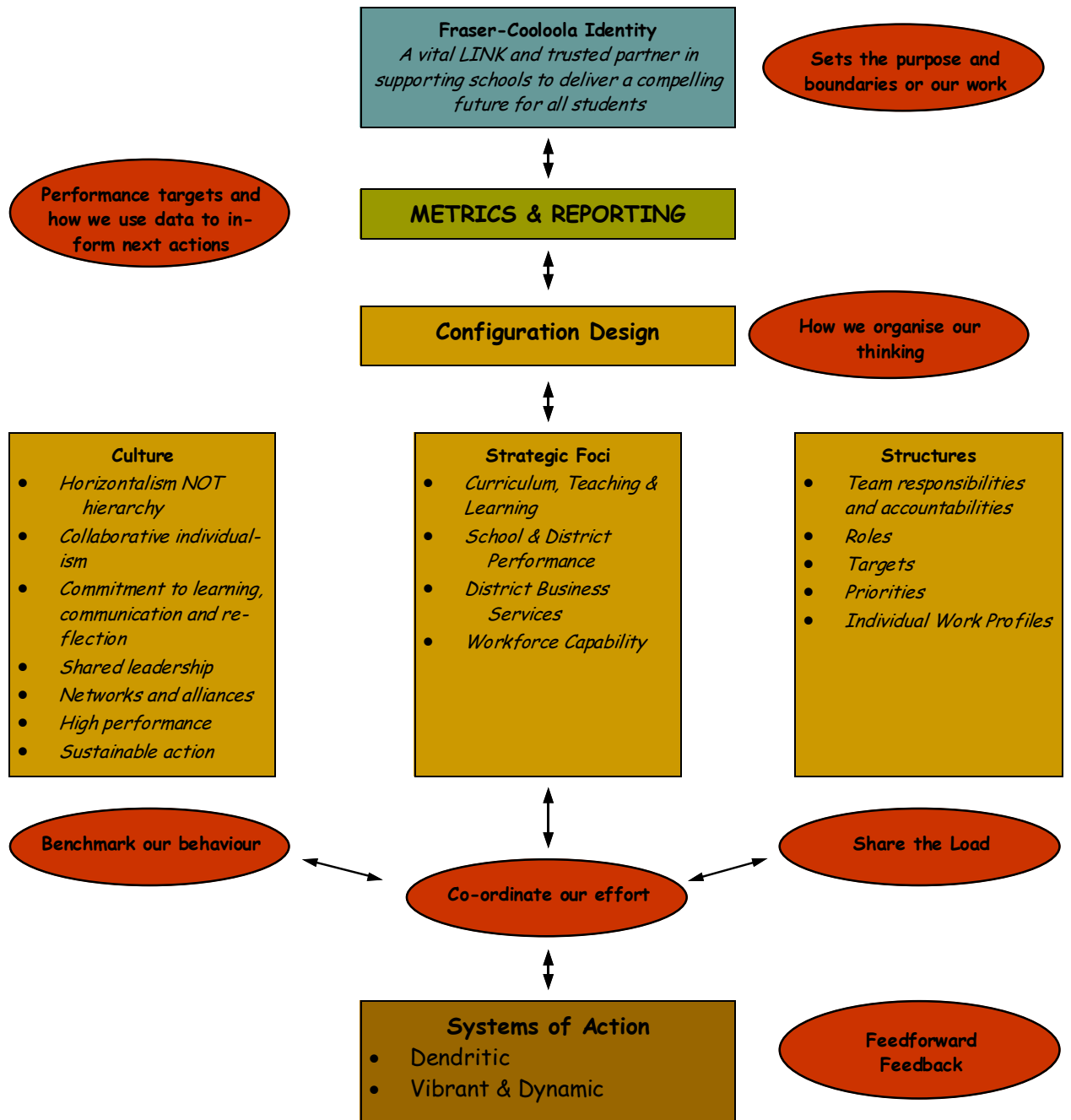
- Our commitment to high quality performance will be assessed through:
 - Core Teams accountabilities to include collecting, interpreting, reporting and utilising performance information related to
 - Team focus
 - Team responsibilities
 - Team tactics
 - Team targets
 - Core Team Leaders and individual core team members strategic conversations focusing on
 - Individual role requirements
 - Major individual responsibilities
 - Priority tasks
 - Individual developmental needs related to capabilities and training necessary to complete priority tasks
 - Fraser-Cooloola Team strategic conversations focussing on
 - Team progress against targets
 - Celebration of achievements
 - Networking team responses to emergent issues
 - Use of fourth generation evaluation philosophy, processes and tools to collaborative design mechanisms to engage service delivers, stakeholders and clients in social impact assessments of the LINK cultural intent (APPENDIX A REFERS)
 - Engage external audit team to verify evidence available to substantiate district team progress to wards targets

Reporting

Reporting will include independent audit comment to verify claims made are supported by appropriate evidence

- Reports will clearly identify potential challenges and risks that require innovative action in the next planning cycle
- Stakeholders will be engaged in strategic conversations to develop shared meaning and the creation of new Knowledge related to report findings.

A summary of the relationships between the components of the redesign process and Fraser-Cooloola outputs is displayed in the following flowchart.



Date	Activity
<p>27-29 August 2002</p> <p>Facilitators: Bill Brown & Steve Brown</p>	<p>To appreciate the context that the F-C district office was currently operating within:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical context from “Focus on Schools” to Destination 2010 • Unpacking Destination 2010 implications • feedback of individual/shared perceptions and data on current context • summary of current context as ‘assets’ or ‘challenges’ • synthesis of the current context under the balanced report card framework <p>Develop a shared understanding of a preferred future for the Fraser-Coolooloa District office:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared understanding of the driving forces on our operation • Development of a set of possibilities for F-C District • Identification of the ‘most likely’ opportunities and threats • Development of a compelling reason for being that describes F-C District/Office preferred future way of operating <p>Creation of the strategies, tactics and activities to link our current state to the preferred future</p> <p>Decisions regarding what I, We, They do to for/with our stakeholders/clients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of specific actionable steps • Identification of the most important implication of these plans
<p>5 September 2002</p> <p>Facilitators Steve Brown & Peter Baker</p>	<p>Outlined the district office redesign process to all school administrators i.e. all principals and a majority of deputy principals.</p> <p>School administrators identified their perceptions of the current context of the Fraser-Coolooloa district office, their preferred future of district office operations and strategies to achieve this preferred future.</p>
<p>7 October 2002</p> <p>Facilitators: Bill Brown & Steve Brown</p>	<p>Alignment of the Fraser-Coolooloa District Office and school administrators’ strategies and initiatives.</p> <p>Generation of the first iteration of the Fraser-Coolooloa District Office vision and LINK statement</p> <p>Design of the first iteration of the business model for district operations with consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision and values • Governance arrangements • Data collection and reporting • Engagement of stakeholders • Setting of priorities • Team and individual accountabilities
<p>29 October 2002</p>	<p>Completion of role statements by all district office staff outlining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current tasks undertaken. • Preferred methods of operations under the redesign model utilising the LINK strategy. • Redesignation of tasks to other officers and agencies where applicable
<p>19 November 2002</p>	<p>Consensus on the Fraser-Coolooloa District Office’s values and mission as reflected in the LINK statement</p>

<p>Facilitators: <i>Steve Brown</i></p>	<p>Alignment of positional practices to the LINK environment.</p> <p>The current context of the CSU was outlined and initial development of the components of the Service Level Agreement between the Fraser-Cooloola District Office and the CSU was completed.</p> <p>Completion of redesignation of tasks and responsibilities to relevant officers and agencies as per role statements previously completed (see 29 October 2002).</p>
<p>18 December 2002</p>	<p>Strategic conversation between EDS, SFO, PPO, MES regarding the draft establishment of the culture, strategic foci and structures of Fraser-Cooloola District Office</p>
<p>December 2002/January 2003</p>	<p>Strategic conversation/teleconference between Steve Brown and Bill Brown regarding the meta-strategy around establishing a district that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivers corporate requirements above the benchmarks required • Implements innovative ways of aligning operations and intent <p>Draft establishment of the culture, strategic foci and structures of Fraser-Cooloola District Office</p>
<p>6-7 February 2003</p> <p>Facilitators: <i>Bill Brown & Steve Brown</i></p>	<p>Consensus of the culture, strategic foci and structures of Fraser-Cooloola District Office.</p> <p>Formation of Fraser-Cooloola District Office teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • titles • members • leaders • contributing members • focus • approaches • targets • evidence of targets • priorities for first six months Semester 1 • inter-district opportunities <p>Development of individual officers' personal performance plans with respect to: roles, major responsibilities, developmental needs, priorities for the next 6 months</p>
<p>12 February 2003</p> <p>Facilitators: <i>Bill Brown</i></p>	<p>OSS Committee Meeting involving representatives from the following districts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fraser-Cooloola • Isis-Burnett • Bundaberg <p>Brief outline of the meta-strategic planning framework undertaken to date by Bill Brown</p> <p>Presentation of ideas and goals of cross-district interaction and alignment of similar tasks by Steve Brown.</p> <p>Mapped and identified the congruencies of the structural arrangements for Isis-Burnett and Fraser-Cooloola in the four areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce planning/workforce capability • Curriculum/curriculum teaching and learning • Knowledge management/internal business processes/organisational imperatives • Leadership/school and district performance

	<p>Representatives of each district engaged in discussions for each functional area to formerly identify points of strategic advantage by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and knowledge that could be shared regarding excellent practice • Each team identified opportunities where the potential exists to enhance service delivery to schools through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maintaining and modifying existing practices ○ Ceasing existing practices ○ Initiating innovative and creative solutions
12 March 2003	<p>Formation of an internal design team to design the Systems of Action and the Metrics to leverage each team capability to make an impact congruent with our identity, values and “LINK” culture</p> <p>Internal Design Team: Executive Director Schools, Senior Finance Officer, Principal Personnel Officer, A/Principal Education Officer (Performance Measurement), Bill Brown (External Facilitator)</p> <p>Current practices (including meetings and networks) were identified and realigned to the Fraser-Cooloola LINK statement, with enhanced systems of action and metrics and reporting introduced.</p>

L=LEADERSHIP:

The team at Fraser Cooloola District Office will provide LEADERSHIP that is:

1. Based on expertise and a clear commitment to performance improvement.
2. Facilitative, creative and empowering.
3. Accountable.
4. Clearly aligned with the strategic direction of Education Queensland.

Such LEADERSHIP will:

1. Ensure the achievement of shared goals and priorities at a system, district and or school level.
2. Facilitate the generation of collaborative action.
3. Create opportunities to develop:
 - innovative solutions.
 - new knowledge for the system.
4. Ensure Fraser-Cooloola District and its schools achieve the highest level of performance.
5. Provide a clear vision for the district.
6. Facilitate the development and delivery of quality programs to meet the needs of all students.
7. Generate passion and commitment to improvement in curriculum, teaching and learning.

I=INFORMATION:

The team at Fraser-Cooloola District Office will acquire and provide INFORMATION that is:

1. Timely, accurate and current.
2. Informed by systemic targets, data and the 2010 agenda.
3. Informed by an awareness and appreciation of the individual needs and contexts of school communities.
4. Informed by an awareness of best practice and a strong research base.

Such INFORMATION will:

1. Support quality decision-making
2. Provoke, challenge and motivate schools, the district and or the system to respond and act.
3. Contribute to the development of the district as a total learning community.
4. Inform strategic conversations.

N=NETWORK

The team at Fraser-Cooloola District Office as part of the networked organisation will assist in the developing and facilitating Networks by:

1. Building open and trusting professional relationships.
2. Exploring opportunities and forging partnerships with other agencies, districts, Corporate Services Unit(s) and levels of government.
3. Displaying a commitment to working in a flexible and responsive manner.

The generation of Networks and the adoption of a networked approach to district operations will:

1. Ensure that reciprocal arrangements are established for the sharing of expertise, materials and practice.
2. Create self-sustaining communities of practice.
3. Enable responses to be made to the challenges of QSE 2010 and the ETRF agenda.

K=KNOWLEDGE:

The Fraser-Cooloola District Office team will develop capacity to build KNOWLEDGE that is:

4. Valued by clients.
5. Linked to key systemic directions and accountabilities.
6. Supportive of schools in their pursuit of excellence

Such KNOWLEDGE will:

1. Build the capacity of the district to meet new challenges and opportunities.
2. Contribute to the critical exploration and examination of current practices.
3. Support the development of a climate of responsible risk taking.
4. Engage schools, the district and central office in dialogue that makes shared meaning around policy development and implementation.
5. Generate social value, innovative practice and pragmatic action.

School & District Performance Team

Team Composition:

- a. Team Leader: Executive Director Schools
- b. Core Team Membership: Executive Director Schools, Senior Finance Office, Performance Measurement Officer, Research & Development Officer
- c. Contributing Members: Other F-C District Teams, CSU, Senior Auditor, School Expertise, Other District Office expertise, Central Office, Other business/government agencies

Team Focus	Team Approaches	Team Targets	Evidence of Targets
<p>Assist schools and Fraser-Coolooloola district to develop a high performance culture incorporating ETRF and Destination 2010 agendas.</p> <p>The School & District Performance Team will enhance the capability of schools and district office teams through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing Leadership and focus in school renewal, aligned with the strategic direction of Education Queensland, to develop schools' strategic directions and ensuring quality student learning outcomes. • Collecting, interpreting, analysing and evaluating school, district and systemic data to provide timely Information to assist schools and district teams and proactively assist in cluster 	<p>In the achievement of its focus, the School/District Performance team will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Operate as a cross-functional team b. Use lead indicators and predictive knowledge to build school capacity c. Integrate diverse knowledge of schools d. Provide a differentiated service delivery using flexible response teams e. Use appreciative inquiry to value and celebrate school and district successes f. Be open and transparent in the analysis of data. g. Support, encourage and challenge team members and clients. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. All schools display clear evidence of engagement with school renewal and alignment with corporate, local/district directions. b. Internal capability of all district teams, schools and school communities is improving. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Review of SAROPs, budgets, three-year plans, other planning documents: ICT Learning Agreements, Literacy Plan, Curriculum Plan, case study of initiatives in response to 2010 and ETRF, feedback from team members, schools achievement towards strategies and targets, client opinions o Reduction in ministerial/ complaints that should be handled in schools, district teams are performing well, feedback from schools and principals, reduction in school enquiries that should not be handled by DO, timeliness of information disseminated to relevant organisation

<p>level planning and development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing Networks and community partnerships to build open and trusting relationships ensure the exchange of strategic and operational information, and sharing of best practice. Developing and building Knowledge and skills to improve on current and future capability of schools, district teams and district. 			
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Workforce Capability Team

Team Composition:

- a. Team Leader: Principal Personnel Officer
- b. Core Team Membership: Principal Personnel Officer
- c. Contributing Members: Other F-C District Teams, School Administration Staff, CSU, Other District Office expertise, Central Office, Educational providers, Other business/government agencies

Team Focus	Team Approaches	Team Targets	Evidence of Targets
<p>Engage Fraser-Cooloolo District in strategic conversations on workforce management and renewal strategies to produce demonstrable outcomes in the use of the capability—the knowledge, skills and abilities—of the local school workforce to improve learning outcomes as outlined in QSE 2010 and ETRF.</p> <p>Workforce Capability service can make a significant contribution to</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce plans developed are in linked to other school planning documents, identifying local workforce capability issues and strategies to address those issues in the planning cycle. Data reporting formats and regular reporting processes, are in place and used to create a district workforce profile and inform identification of workforce needs at 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce plans for identified schools/clusters in line with other school planning documents and other special projects have been completed. Data reporting informs workforce planning and resource governance. Formal resource governance, union liaison and tertiary institution liaison structures and processes

<p>organisational capability through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading the development of skills in schools and across school clusters to integrate workforce renewal strategies with schools plans. • Monitor and provide Information on trends in workforce patterns and requirements; gaps in workforce capability and management at the local level; and strategies to address issues at the local level to achieve client needs. • Developing a Network of cooperative relationships to ensure the continual exchange of strategic and operational information related to workforce management and renewal strategies. • Develop and communicate Knowledge from data sources, workforce capability concepts and initiatives to build on current and future workforce capability at the local level. 		<p>the local level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal resource governance, union liaison and tertiary institution liaison structures and processes are in place and operating. • Targeted schools/clusters have engaged in strategic conversations regarding workforce capability concepts and initiatives play a key role in strategic planning activities across the district. 	<p>focusing on workforce management are in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted schools and clusters have engaged regarding strategic conversations regarding concepts and initiatives
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Curriculum, Teaching & Learning Team

Team Composition

- a. Team Leader: Manager – Curriculum, Teaching & Learning
- b. Core Team Membership: Manager – Curriculum, Teaching & Learning, Senior Guidance Officer, Principal Education Officer – Student Services, Speech Language Pathologist in Charge, Education Advisers – Senior Pathways, Curriculum, LDC Co-ordinators – Literacy, ICT
- c. Contributing Members: Other district office teams, Project Officer - Ascertainment, ESO, Core expertise/partnerships drawn from key personnel in schools, relevant Central Office personnel, national and state organisations e.g. QSA

Focus	Team Approaches	Team Targets	Evidence of Targets
<p>To develop a team which is focussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide leadership to schools within FC district in the implementation of EQ priorities, policies and initiatives in Curriculum, Teaching and Learning leading to 2010 objectives. • To facilitate opportunities for school personnel to share and access best practice. • To build capacity in schools so as to develop, implement and maintain initiatives associated with the EQ priorities. • To provide support for schools to enable them to address local issues such as Behaviour Management / Alternative Programs. 	<p>To LINK with schools by creating partnerships by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading and managing to ensure the achievement of the common goals. • Informing school staff by providing workshops related to EQ initiatives e.g. ETRF, ICTs for Learning etc • Networking by building open, trusting relationship that allow for identification and sharing of best practice • Knowledge building looking at initiatives to assist in developing programs related to various schools situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the team as critical friends for each other. • To find opportunities to work as a team. • Promote the development of communities of practice to encourage the sharing of ideas across the district • Support and facilitate in the development and implementation in schools of initiatives such as SCP, WSLP, ETRF and ICT. 	<p>What is measured?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group development against measures (eg Mulford) • Team members working collaboratively on projects • Mapping of development and sharing of ideas of communities of practice. • Document and data analysis <p>What are the links to the next actions?:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work within schools with identified needs • Linking schools with specific needs to resources both within the district and beyond

District Business Services

Team Composition:

- a. Team Leader: Executive Services Officer
- b. Core Team: Executive Services Officer, Administrative Officer (.4), Administrative Officer (.6)
- c. Contributing Members: Central Office, CSU, Other District Office Teams, School Personnel

Focus	Team Approaches	Team Targets	Evidence of Targets
<p>Provide executive support to assist in enhancing effective and efficient district business processes.</p> <p><u>Responsibilities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deliver timely, high level and confidential executive services to district officers. ▪ Manage the flow of correspondence to maintain effective communication processes. ▪ Manage and provide support to school and district personnel on information systems (eg. TRIM, SCOLR, SDA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seek additional administrative support through the CSU Level Agreement. <p><u>How:</u> ½ day a week administrative support to be provided to assist district operations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ District officers to become skilled in use of TRIM. <p><u>How:</u> Officers to attend professional development in the use of TRIM. Power Users to provide assistance as required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ District officers to draft documents in electronic format to avoid ineffective use of resources. <p><u>How:</u> Provide advice to officers as required.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All correspondence completed within required timelines. ▪ The flow of correspondence and information to be managed in an efficient manner. ▪ Information systems to be maintained regularly and district and school personnel to receive same day support. ▪ Improve internal business processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 100% of Ministerials responded to within timeline. ▪ District and school personnel express satisfaction with level of support provided ▪ Streamlined internal business processes.

INDIVIDUAL POSITION DESCRIPTIONS & WORK PROFILES

Systems of Action

Appendix 4

Internal Team Structure

Team	Membership	Purpose
<p>Team Fraser-Cooloola (monthly meetings – every 3rd week)</p>	<p>AO - .4 AO .6 EA – Curriculum EA – Senior Schooling EDS ESO MES PEO/PM PEO/SS PPO RDO RSSO SFO SGO SLPIC SSAA ST ST</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Report on team progress against targets ○ Celebrate achievements ○ Co-ordinate district responses to emergent issues and priorities ○ Identify potential risks and generate strategies to ameliorate ○ Provide for team members well being
<p>District Management Team (weekly meetings)</p>	<p>PEO/PM PEO/SS SFO Team Leader – Curriculum, Teaching & Learning (MES) Team Leader – District Business Services (ESO) Team Leader – School & District Performance (EDS) Team Leader – Workforce Capability (PPO)</p>	
<p>Four Core District Office Teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum, Teaching & Learning • School & District Performance • Workforce Capability • District Business Services 		

External Team/Cluster Structures

Team/Cluster	Membership	Purpose
District Management Team	PEO/PM PEO/SS SFO Team Leader – Curriculum, Teaching & Learning (MES) Team Leader – District Business Services (ESO) Team Leader – School & District Performance (EDS) Team Leader – Workforce Capability (PPO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To build a self-sustaining culture that deals with professional learnings, advancing the notion of a productive alliance ○ Cluster and school recognition ○ Open and honest communication between clusters and District Office ○ Feed forward and feedback to District Office ○ Access to Team Leaders – Curriculum, Teaching & Learning, School & District Performance, Workforce Capability, District Business Services ○ Act as a conduit between cluster
Band 5/6 Cluster	Two representatives of all principals of band 5/6 schools in Fraser-Coolooloa District.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To identify and manage cluster priorities ○ Provide support network for principals ○ Clear and transparent linkages to district decision-making processes
Gympie Alliance	Two representatives (one primary and one high school) of all principals of primary, P-10 and high schools in Gympie district (excluding Band 5/6 schools)	
Hervey Bay Cluster	Two representatives (one primary and one high school) of all principals of primary and high schools in Hervey Bay district.	
Maryborough Cluster	Two representatives (one primary and one high school) of all principals of primary and high schools in Maryborough district (excluding Band 5/6 schools)	
<p>Note: Special Schools are represented with one representative from either Hervey Bay or Gympie</p>		

Component 4 – Investigative and conceptual research

Research question two: How effective was the process of organisational redesign and implementation that was undertaken in the Fraser-Cooloola Education District?

Research question three: What are the critical leadership skills for leading organisational redesign in an educational setting?

Postscript

In this final component of the author's EdD folio, the findings, conclusions and recommendations emanating from the study are presented. The initial process of data analysis was completed more than four years ago. It therefore seems important to comment on the significance, if any, of the considerable passage of time that has transpired in the interim.

First, it is now apparent that the quality of the three case studies that comprised the research was somewhat uneven. All three case studies were designed to be distinctive both in thematic focus and methodological approach. In hindsight, the inclusion of case study 3 (curriculum reviews of two schools) could be seen as somewhat problematic. The researcher is of the view that the data collection and general empirical base informing this study were not as comprehensively developed as was the case with other two studies. The question might well be asked, therefore, of why case study 3 is included. The decision to include this case study was made primarily on the basis that the overall research design is conceptual and autobiographical in nature, not empirical. The researcher's personal observations, and the generic applications of Limerick's construct on metastrategy, were of significance in the conduct of case study 3 even though the empirical base is not as strong as might be desired. While the data that were collected in case study 3 revealed limited insights into constructs associated with

metastrategy, they were nevertheless consistent with the findings of the two major case studies.

Second, during the time that the research was being conducted (ie the **LINK** strategy was being developed, implemented and evaluated) the education district was undergoing a significant process of cultural change. The **LINK** strategy was intended to be congruent with the culture that was being developed throughout the district at that time.

These two reflections might be taken into account in any consideration of the contents of component four. Further reflections are included in the final section of the folio (4.12).

4.1 Introduction

One of the key principles and assumptions underpinning the organisational redesign process for Education Queensland's Fraser-Cooloola District Office and the resultant **LINK** strategy was an ongoing commitment to continuous improvement, reflection and refinement regarding service delivery. The continuous improvement process, and subsequent identity statement, that drove the approach to service delivery in Fraser-Cooloola District—also entitled **LINK**—centred on the belief that the role of the district office was to provide leadership, information, networking and knowledge to support schools to deliver a compelling future for all students. Such a strategy focused on four key areas of service: curriculum, teaching and learning; workforce management; school and district performance; and district business services. Four interdependent teams were established and used as the primary mechanism for enabling and enacting the delivery of services in these areas.

Thus, the Out of School Services redesign process was not seen as a singular event. In fact it signalled the commencement of a systemic learning journey that was informed by metrics, feedback and commentary relating to the stated intent and culture of Fraser-Cooloola District Office and its service provision—the systemic **LINK** strategy. Thus, the analysis that is undertaken in component four of this EdD folio is in some fundamental respects inseparable from the broader process of district redesign and reculturing.

The redesign of Fraser-Cooloola District Office service delivery, including the Out of School Services, started in 2002 and concluded in 2005.

With that context in mind, the focus of the analysis of Out of School Services that follows is the exploration of aspects of Fraser-Cooloola District Office service provision selected from two of the four above-mentioned areas: curriculum, teaching and learning; and school and district performance. The analysis draws upon the experiences of a range of stakeholders, including the author, in implementing the **LINK** approach to service delivery.

The research methodology of *case study* was selected for three main reasons to guide the research: (a) the apparent potential of such an approach to capture the richness and diversity of the topic and context being examined; (b) to enable the researcher to capitalise on educational developments within a work environment in which he was a systemic leader and (c) the expectation that an EdD folio be based upon authoritative design and methodological principles. The particular approach to case study that was developed for the study was conceptual, evolutionary and mixed methods.

The three case studies were investigated using strategies ranging from surveys and interviews to participant reflection/critique and document analysis. The case studies chosen for investigation were:

- the district's approach to the Triennial School Review (TSR)
- the application of the **LINK** strategy to school curriculum reviews
- the delivery of teacher practica by the district's Learning and Development Centre, Technology.

Each of the case studies (regardless of the strategies applied) employed a framework of four key questions:

1. What evidence is there of the **LINK** strategy in each of the selected areas for case study?
2. What is the relative importance of the **LINK** strategy to each of these areas?
3. Is the **LINK** strategy applicable and appropriate to the service delivery task?
4. What are the implications of the case study findings for the **LINK** strategy?

These questions and findings from each of the three case studies provide the basis for drawing general conclusions relating to the service delivery approach adopted by Fraser-Cooloolo District.

As stated in component 1, three research questions guided the overall direction of this folio. These were:

Research question one: What is the potential of Limerick’s concept of Metastrategy to facilitate organisation redesign within a public sector environment?

This question was explored in components two and three of the folio.

Research question two: How effective was the process of organisational redesign and implementation that was undertaken in the Fraser-Cooloola Education District?

This question is examined in component four of the folio.

Research question three: What are the critical skills for leading organisational redesign in an educational setting?

This question is addressed in component four of the folio.

The above-mentioned framework of four key questions for each case study enabled various forms of data and evidence to be collected regarding the degree of implementation and success of the **LINK** design. Key questions 1, 2 and 3 were aimed primarily at assessing the process and implementation of the organisational redesign strategy. Question 4 (What are the implications of the case study findings for the **LINK** strategy?) was designed to facilitate an assessment of the leadership of the redesign process, as well as to stimulate subsequent broader reflection on organisational redesign at the system level —the focus of research question three.

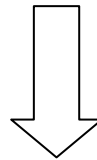
A diagrammatic representation of the “flow” of the research, particularly in relation to folio component 4, is contained in Diagram 1.

Diagram 1.

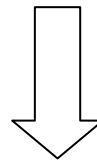
The conceptual ‘flow’ of the research

Research question two: How effective was the process of organisational redesign and implementation that was undertaken in the Fraser-Cooloola Education District?

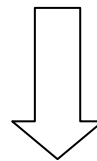
1. What evidence is there of the **LINK** strategy in each of the selected areas for case study?
2. What is the relative importance of the **LINK** strategy to each of these areas?
3. Is the **LINK** strategy applicable and appropriate to the service delivery task?
4. What are the implications of the case study findings for the **LINK** strategy?



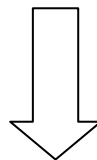
Insights regarding the potential of Limerick’s concept of metastrategy for use in educational settings.



Research question three: What are the critical skills for leading organisational redesign in an educational setting?



The creation of three “domains for organisational redesign” and eleven associated “leadership skill areas”.



Generalisations about the applicability and potential of Limerick’s concept of metastrategy to leadership in the redesign of education systems.

4.2 Research design

A research design can be defined as ‘a plan or strategy’ for conducting research (Wiersma 1995, p. 81). Kerlinger (1986) notes that any research design has two basic purposes. Firstly it provides answers to research questions; secondly, it controls variance. The four key components of the research design formulated for this research were:

1. the development of a working design considering such factors as site selection, length of study and subjects to be studied
2. working hypotheses (research questions and foreshadowed problems)
3. data collection
4. data analysis and interpretation.

This general framework was applied in the development and reporting of each of the case studies that are outlined in this paper. As stated earlier, four key questions were posed for each of the three case studies. The associated elements of generating a working design—such as site selection and study length—varied with the form and type of case study that was proposed. The data collection, analysis and interpretation phases were addressed in each of the selected case study approaches.

Each case study was designed to be unique both in terms of the area of focus and associated methodology. The multiple case study design was formulated with three main aims: firstly to capture data in a diverse range of forms; secondly to enable the research questions to be explored from a different range of perspectives; and thirdly to address the challenge of being both researcher and the responsible officer in the context in which research was being conducted. Each of the case study reports written up using different formats, to reflect (a) the use of different data collection approaches; (b) the multiple case study approach; and (c) the diversity of case study participants and their perspectives. Despite the variation in presentation formats, each of the case studies addresses a common set of research questions.

4.2.1 Selection of case studies: justification

Two of the four broad areas of Fraser-Cooloola District office service delivery provided the focus for the case studies: firstly, curriculum, teaching and learning; and secondly, school and district performance. Case study 1 entitled *School and district performance team implementation of the Triennial Review process—2004* focuses on the school and district performance area of Out of School Services delivery. Case study 2 entitled *Learning and Development Centre (Information Communication Technologies)—2004* and Case study 3 *Curriculum reviews of two district schools—2004* both explore the curriculum, teaching and learning aspects of Out of School Services delivery. A case study was not selected from the area of district business services, due to the transactional/operational nature of the work undertaken by that particular team. The other area of service delivery (workforce management), was considered; however it was not included due to the likelihood of inadequate quality data.

Each of the identified case studies represents examples of significant activity in two of the key service delivery areas. The exploration of these core aspects of Fraser-Cooloola District service delivery were believed, in total, to provide a sound basis from which to explore the applicability of the **LINK** strategy and specifically, the key research questions outlined in the introduction to this paper.

Summary overview of case studies		
Title of case study	Focus	Methodology
1. School and district performance team implementation of Triennial School Review process—2004.	The application of the LINK strategy to the implementation and support by district office personnel of the TSR component of the School Planning and Accountability	Questionnaires; participant feedback and personal interview. Sample size: 16 school principals.

	Framework.	
2. Learning and Development Centre (Information Communication Technologies)—2004	A critical review of the delivery of teacher practica by the District Learning and Development Centre in relation to the LINK strategy.	Critical response to and analysis of QUT research report; professional reflections by centre co-ordinator. QUT report interviews with 43 teachers; 14 administrators and 10 ICT coordinators from 19 schools with 12 from Fraser Cooloola district.
3. Curriculum reviews of two district schools—2004.	Reviews by district office personnel of the curriculum configuration and delivery in two schools	Critical reflection by district personnel involved in the reviews of the application of LINK ; participant observation by principals and staff members of the appropriateness of LINK ; document analysis; personal observations by researcher and interviews/feedback from stakeholders. Sample size: 2 schools.

Table 1

4.2.2 Metastrategy, **LINK** and the three case studies:

The metastrategic approach to management and organisational design postulated by Limerick et al. (1998) was used as the platform from which to develop and test a theory-based framework for the redesign framework for

the redesign of educational services in a school district. (See folio components 2 and 3). The *LINK* strategy resulted from the application of Limerick et al.'s metastrategic framework to the operations of the Fraser-Cooloola District.

4.3 Research methodology: overview

This section provides an overview of the research methodology adopted in this study. Specifically, a description will be provided of the distinctive research methodology applied and a summary of the key theoretical concepts that informed such an approach.

As stated in component one of this folio, there are several distinctive and unique features of the approach adopted to research that informed the development of this folio. Firstly, a significant amount of the work undertaken in the study is conceptual research—the development of ideas and frameworks based on theory and some degree of contextual application that need to be tested further by other researchers. Secondly, the use of the expertise and experiences of the Executive Director Schools was seen as a rich and important source of data and information. Thirdly, a multi case study approach was utilised in component 4—a number of cases examined through the exploration of multiple forms of data and evidence. Multiple forms of data and evidence included the use of the expertise and research report of other researchers and the structured interviews. Finally, the multi faceted aspects of this approach was adopted by the researcher because it was seen to best suit a folio in which a number of discrete research-based components are integrated under an umbrella problem statement.

As stated above, the research methodology adopted in this component of the folio was that of multiple case study: a number of cases examined through the exploration of multiple forms of data and evidence gleaned from disciplined use of generic research strategies. The outcomes from these

case studies were used to address and inform responses to the three research questions.

4.3.1 Key theoretical concepts underpinning research methodology

Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 9) have stated that 'qualitative research, as a set of interpretive activities, privileges no single methodological practice over another.' However, Wiersma (1995) advised that there are two factors that should be considered when determining the methodology for research: the need to be systematic, and the need to ensure validity. While acknowledging the different paradigms that have influenced qualitative research over time, Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 4) offered a generic definition of qualitative research:

Qualitative research....consists of a set of interpretative, material practices that make the world visible. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations.....At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

Wiersma (1995) has described case study as being commonly, but not always, associated with qualitative research. Defining qualitative research, Ertmer, cited in Leedy (1997, p. 55) stated: '...qualitative research is a broad term that encompasses a variety of approaches to interpretative research.' Denzin and Lincoln (2000) regard qualitative research as being 'multi method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter' (p.2). Miles and Huberman (1994) reinforced this view 'One major feature is that [well collected qualitative data] focuses on naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings, so that we have a strong handle on what 'real life' is like' (p.10). Another feature of qualitative research relates to the collection of data from on-site sources where the researcher is able to experience the

nuances of the context. Miles and Huberman (1994) have argued that on-site collection of data allows the researcher to provide the reader with vivid analyses of lived experience, thus creating richness not possible if the data were collected by telephone or written response.

Minichiello et al. (1995, p.5) contended that an interpretive approach to qualitative research allows for 'understanding of direct lived experience rather than construction of abstract generalisations'. Yin (1989) contended that, when undertaking research, the case study method is suitable for presenting data that will contribute to the body of 'knowledge of individual, organisational, social, and political phenomena' (p.14).

The research methodology of case study is typically applicable to practical situations. For example Burns (1996) advocated the use of case study research as it enables exploration and description of the real life context, allowing for 'how', 'who', 'why' or 'what' questions to be asked. Examples from an education context documented in the research literature include the evaluation of the needs of a particular cohort of students and program planning, implementation and effectiveness of practice. In supporting the use of case study in educational settings, Lancy (1993, p. 140) stated: 'The case study, used alone or as part of a large scale quantitative study is the method of choice for studying interventions or innovations. And education is replete with these.' Case study allows an investigator 'to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events such as ...organisational and managerial processes' (Yin 1989, p. 14). Burns (1996) stated 'The case study....typically involves the observation of an individual unit, e.g.....a family group, a class, a school, a community' (p. 364). The evaluation of the educational services delivered by a district office would therefore be an area broadly suited to case study methodology.

Key issues in establishing the scope of the 'case' include having clarity about 'what will be reported at the end of the study' and identifying appropriate research questions. According to Stake (2000) the conceptual structure of a

case study is usually organised around a limited number of research questions.

In a later (2006) study Stake contended that a researcher who does not have an intrinsic interest in one case study may choose to study a number of cases that may be similar when investigating a particular issue. Stake contended that the similarities or differences between multiple cases may be important to development of a better understanding about a wider range of cases. Stake (p. 138) referred to the study of multiple cases as 'collective case study'. Yin (1994) asserted that there are advantages and disadvantages when using multiple case studies as opposed to a single case study. In support of multiple case studies, Yin (p. 52) stated: 'The evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling, and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust.' Yin raised the extensive resources and time needed to conduct multiple case studies as two potential disadvantages or issues of concern that need to be taken into account when considering conducting research of this nature.

The arguments put forward by Stake (2006) and Yin (1994) proved to be particularly helpful in designing the current research.

To gain an in-depth understanding of the events or processes being investigated, Patton (1990, p. 90) suggested that 'it is more desirable to have a few carefully done case studies one can trust than to aim for large, probabilistic samples with results that are dubious because of the multitude of technical, logistic, and management problems'. When designing multiple case studies, Yin (1994, p. 53) advised that the researcher should consider whether the results are likely to be replicated across the studies: 'Each case must be carefully selected so that it either (a) predicts similar results or (b) produces contrary results but for predictable reasons.'

Yin (1994) declared that a major strength of case study research is the opportunity to use a variety of sources of evidence which allows for

triangulation of the data: '...any finding or conclusion in a case study is likely to be more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information....' (p. 92). Minichiello et al. (1995) contended that interviews are one of the best forms of data collection when seeking to interpret the meaning of someone's actions. However, Wiersma (2000) advised that other sources of data may be available that may contribute to responding to the research problem. 'These other sources often consist of records maintained on a routine basis on which the study is being conducted' (p. 263). Burns (1996) argued that the main techniques for data collection when using case study methodology are 'observation (both participant and non participant depending on the case), interviewing (unstructured and structured), and document analysis' (p. 365). When listing sources of data Ertmer, cited in Leedy (1997, p. 158) chose to be more general in her approach: 'Data gathered in case studies can be in the form of words, images, or physical objects.'

Case study is by definition a holistic research methodology that utilises multiple sources of evidence to analyse or evaluate specific instances or phenomena (Anderson, 1999). The forms of evidence used by case study researchers range from documentation and participant observation to site-based analysis. However the prime source of case study data is usually interview. In applying this data collection methodology a case study researcher aims to 'add a greater depth of understanding of issues that relate to the case at hand' and to identify key case respondents (Anderson, 1999). In support of interviews as a significant source of data, Yin (1994) suggests that: 'interviews are an essential source of case study data, because most case studies are human affairs' (p. 85). However, he cautioned that interviews should be regarded as being verbal reports, and may be subject to bias and poor recall. For this reason, to ensure validity, Yin advised that data collected during interviews should be corroborated with information from other sources.

When describing interviews as a data collection technique for case studies, Yin (1994, p. 84) stated: 'Most commonly, case study interviews are of an

open-ended nature, in which you can ask key respondents for the facts of a matter as well as for the respondents' opinion about events.'

Gillham (2000) explained that, despite the enormous amount of time involved, interviews are an appropriate means of data collection when the questions that the researcher wishes to ask are open-ended, and when a small number of people who are easily accessible are involved. Furthermore, when utilising interviews, if anonymity is not important then a 100% response rate is desirable.

Burns (1996) and Best and Kahn (1998) asserted that, together with in-depth interviewing, observation and document review are the main techniques for collecting qualitative data. Describing the use of observation as a source of data, the researcher pointed out that 'when observation is used in qualitative research, it usually consists of detailed notation of behaviours, events, and the contexts surrounding the events and behaviours' (p. 253). Yin (1994, p. 87) advised that visits to the case study site should provide opportunities for direct observation, ranging from formal to casual data collection: 'Observational evidence is often useful in providing additional information about the topic being studied'.

A case study researcher may use a wide range of documents as sources of data. Burns (1996) advised that documents might include minutes of meetings, agendas, policies, administrative reports, files, diaries, budgets, and photographs. He advised that such documents are 'important as another way to corroborate evidence devised from other sources' (p. 372). However, Burns cautioned that documents are written with a specific purpose or audience in mind, and that they may be biased or inaccurate.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) cite Hodder, who recommended that documents should be interpreted according to the context or conditions under which they were produced. He cautioned that meaning might be taken away: 'Once words are transformed into a written text, the gap between the 'author' and the 'reader' widens and the possibility of multiple reinterpretations increases'

(p. 704). Hodder also raised the concern that 'as a text is re-read in different contexts, it is given new meanings, often contradictory and always socially embedded' (p. 704). Despite such concerns regarding the use of documents as sources of evidence, Hodder did support the comparison of texts with other data. Comparison of the contents with other sources of data allows for particular biases to be recognised and understood.

Another key decision in framing a case and subsequent study is the selection, explanation and justification of the selection of a sample within the defined 'case' or 'bounded system'. Within every case area, there typically exists the opportunity for the researcher to select a sample according to some criterion, for example, numbers of people to be interviewed; numbers of school sites to be visited and documents to be reviewed.

The most common form of sampling is 'purposive' or 'criterion based, non-probabilistic'. Non-probabilistic sampling is generally applied where there is no way of estimating the possibility/probability that any element has of being included in the sample and no assurance that every element has some chance of being included. Purposive or criterion sampling is based on the assumption that the researcher needs to select a sample that will potentially provide the most learning or information potential. Simply, 'purposive' or 'criterion based' sampling requires that one establish the criteria, bases or standards necessary for units or areas to be included in an investigation or study (Patton 1990; Goetz and LeCompte 1984).

Particularly applicable to any form of research methodology are matters related to the sourcing and sources of data, collection and analysis. The purpose of data analysis is to find meaning in the information collected from one or more sources. Minichiello et al. (1995, p. 247) described data analysis as 'the process of systematically arranging and presenting information in order to search for ideas'. Data analysis can be divided into three stages that Minichiello et al. (1995, p. 247) described as 'coding the data', 'refining one's themes and propositions' and 'reporting the findings'. Sturman (1997) notes

that depending on the data collection approach this data analysis may range in approach from the 'journalistic' and the 'narrative' to the 'statistical'.

Yin (1994) advised that—as with all research—construct validity, internal and external validity, and reliability should be carefully considered when using case study methodology. Yin recommended three approaches to increase construct validity: multiple sources of evidence; a chain of evidence; and a review of the draft case study report by the key participants in the study. External validity refers to the extent to which results or findings are generalisable beyond the immediate case study. Concerns about internal validity arise in causal or explanatory studies when inferences are being made, and all of the contributing factors cannot be verified or identified (Yin, 1994). Another consideration in relation to validity is what Limerick et al. (1998) term the 'collaborative researcher'. Limerick et al. suggest it is both appropriate and instructive to have a researcher who undertakes the dual roles of researcher and participant.

Another consideration is the reporting of the case study. The researcher is faced with a major challenge—about what to include and (of equal importance) what not to include (Anderson 1999). Most case studies rely on generalisations, concepts and isolation of key themes that emerge from an examination of the contextual data and information. Such material is generally a very 'rich, thick' description of the phenomena under study. The challenges for the researcher will therefore be twofold: the distillation of the essential themes that respect the integrity of the raw material; and provision of a heuristic experience for the study audience. As referred to earlier, the critical guide for the researcher in these deliberations will be the stated intended outcomes of the study and the need for sufficient, defensible material.

4.4 Case study 1: School and district performance team implementation of the triennial school review process—2004.

4.4.1 Context

One of the four strategic foci areas established for district office service delivery was that of school and district performance. The key objectives and goals of the performance team were stated as:

1. assist schools and other district office core teams to develop a high performance culture incorporating the systemic agendas of the Education and Training Reforms for the Future and QSE 2010 targets
2. provide leadership and focus in school renewal
3. collect, interpret, analyse and evaluate school, district and systemic information to proactively assist cluster level planning and development
4. sponsor networks and community partnerships
5. build open and trusting relationships
6. underpin strategic conversations focusing on performance outcomes and development
7. build knowledge and skills to improve current and future capability of principals, schools and district teams.

The team comprised the Executive Director Schools, Senior Finance Officer, Performance Measurement Officer and the Community Partnerships Officer.

One of the key areas of responsibility for the School and District Management Team was the leadership and implementation of the revised Education Queensland 'School Planning and Accountability Framework' (SPAF). This framework presumes to provide an integrated approach for all state schools in relation to planning, review and accountability requirements. Specifically, all Queensland schools are required to implement a three year strategic planning and review cycle along with an annual operational and planning cycle (Education Queensland, 2002). The three year planning and

review cycle comprises either the Triennial School Review (TSR) and a School Planning Overview or the Triennial School Review and a Partnership Agreement, depending on the particular school-based management option adopted by an individual school.

The notion of a Triennial School Review (TSR) was an additional and new feature of the revised SPAF guidelines. The SPAF notes that the TSR is a two part process that involves school self-assessment followed by verification by the Executive Director Schools. The systemic guidelines suggest that the self-assessment process be led by the principal. It should provide evidence of, and information about, achievements over the past three years and document the school's strategic direction for the next three year period. The related process of verification requires the Executive Director Schools to validate that the outcomes of the review and the strategic direction set for the school are 'relevant and meaningful' (Education Queensland 2002). Beyond the broad guidelines and concepts provided by SPAF, no detailed requirements have been provided by the system with respect to approaches to school self-assessment and the resultant verification process.

In Fraser-Cooloola District, some sixteen schools were concluding their three year planning cycles in 2004 and would therefore be engaged in the TSR process.

Each school undertaking the TSR process negotiated their particular approach to the task and the related outcomes with the Executive Director Schools and key stakeholders such as parents, staff and members of the school community. The complexity and range of strategies adopted by schools in undertaking the TSR varied according to the experience of school leaders, the size and complexity of the school and the willingness of such key stakeholders to engage in the process.

The variety of data collection instruments used by the sixteen schools in undertaking their Triennial School Reviews is outlined in the table below.

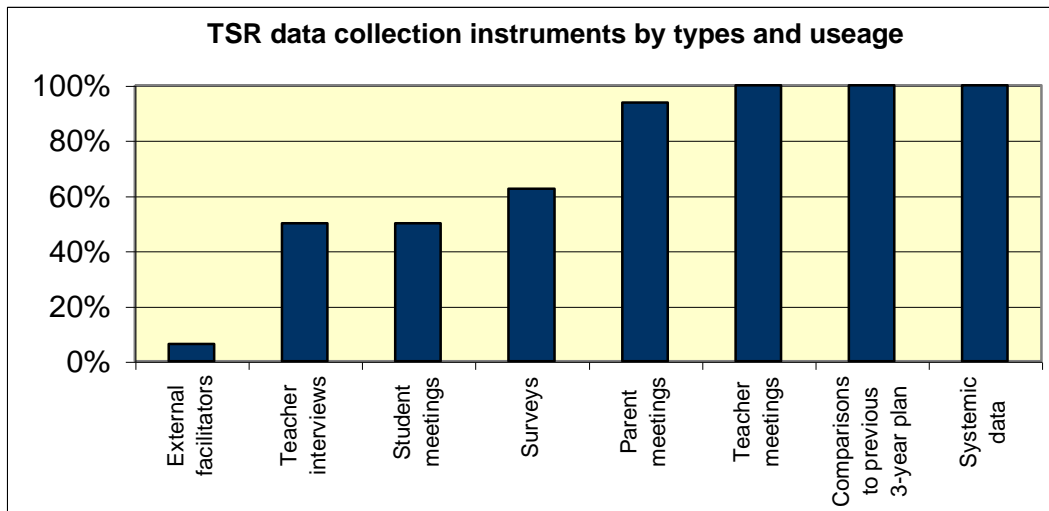


Table 2

Support by District Office personnel was offered to all schools undergoing the TSR process using a range of models. All schools attended a pre-TSR meeting conducted by the Executive Director Schools and the Performance Measurement Officer (PMO). At this meeting, key information about the TSR process was distributed together with the following:

- draft template of a three year plan
- presentation of trial TSR process
- examples of surveys and questions for focused conversations with staff and community
- each school's historical data and projected targets presented in a user-friendly form
- alternative processes suitable for a TSR.

As mentioned, each school submitted a plan outlining the overall design of their approach to the TSR task. After an analysis of these plans, district office personnel negotiated with each principal the level and type of support to be provided by the district office.

The following tables outline the type of support offered by District Office personnel to schools and the percentage of school engagement in each case.

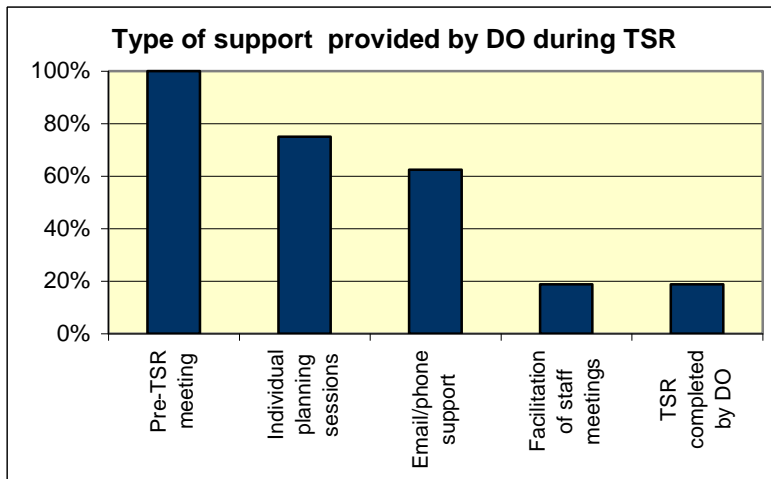


Table 3

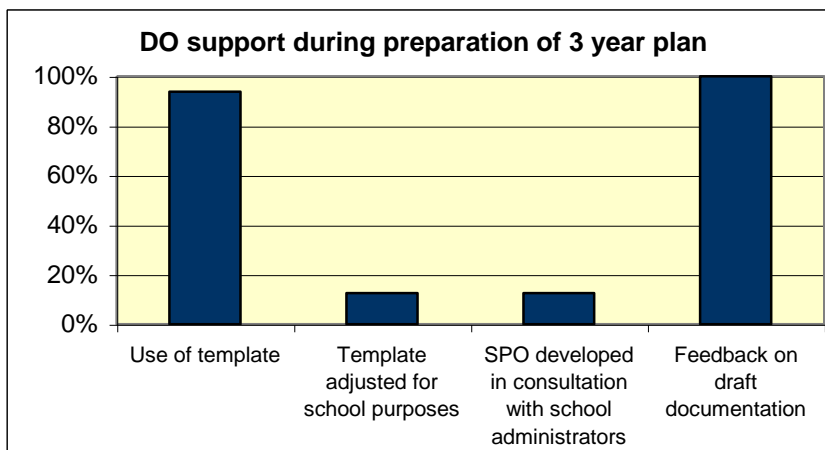


Table 4

4.4.2 Data collection

In the context of this particular case study, the researcher, because of potential conflict with his formal role as Executive Director Schools, addressed the issue of possible research bias by employing a third party to assist with the collection of data. As part of the process of obtaining feedback on the Triennial School Review and Verification process, the Principal Education Officer–Performance Measurement (PMO) emailed the district office vision and identity statement (**LINK**) and seven key questions to all administrators. Principals were asked to use the material as a basis for self-reflection and as preparation for the next step in the data collection process. These questions were formulated by the researcher and discussed with the above-mentioned officer. This individual was also a participant in the TSR

verification process because of his proven skills in data collection and analysis.

Feedback was then obtained through the mechanism of a personal interview between the PMO and the principal of each of the 16 schools involved in the verification process. In one instance, the deputy principal of a school was interviewed due to the retirement of the principal. In another case, feedback was obtained via email owing to the relocation of the principal to a remote site. The length of each interview was approximately one hour. The majority of interviewees had engaged in some degree of self-reflection prior to the interview data collection phase.

The questions that were used to elicit data were:

1. Can you describe your school's approach to the TSR?
2. How did the school utilise district office personnel in TSR process and the subsequent development of the school's three-year plan?
3. What level of awareness of the **LINK** strategy do you have? – (1) no awareness; (2) limited awareness; (3) some awareness; (4) great awareness
4. In your opinion what evidence was there of the **LINK** strategy in the TSR Verification process?
5. From your TSR experience, describe the relevant importance of each element of the **LINK** strategy. 1–5 scale: (1) no importance – (5) great importance
6. In your opinion, how can the **LINK** strategy be refined and improved?

For the purpose of this study, data collection questions one and two above provided contextual information only.

At the conclusion of the data collection phase, which was undertaken over the course of a one month period, the researcher and the Performance Measurement Officer had a series of meetings to discuss possible approaches to the task of data analysis. It was agreed that this process

would be undertaken in three stages: data display; data reduction; and data conclusions. The above-mentioned six questions were used as the initial framework through which to examine and analyse the feedback. The 100% participation rate of the sample of sixteen school leaders ensured a significant level of authority and reliability could be attached to the data that were submitted.

A draft report based on their responses to the questions was prepared and sent to each of the participants by email for review and validation.

Specifically, each principal and/or administrator was asked to read the document and to provide a response in relation to the following key questions: (a) Do you agree with the conclusions outlined in the report? (b) What aspects of the report need to be clarified? (c) What statements in the report cannot be substantiated or need to be changed? This aspect of the process was managed by the researcher in collaboration with the PMO to ensure a consistent approach to the issue of potential bias.

A 100 per cent return rate from participants was gained in response to the questions posed to check the validity of the prepared draft report. Follow-up telephone communication with respondents who initially failed to provide return email responses was undertaken by the PMO. The feedback from research participants affirmed the key findings and conclusions outlined in the draft report. Eighty per cent of the participant feedback suggested only minor technical adjustments to the document. For example, two participants suggested greater clarity was required in relation to statements made in sections of the report.

4.4.3 Findings

Question 1: What evidence is there of the LINK strategy in this case study?

When asked about their level of awareness of *LINK*, 70% of administrators interviewed were either aware of *LINK* or had great awareness of *LINK*. Of this group, 38% indicated they knew what *LINK* stood for, primarily through the modelling and application of the strategy undertaken by district office personnel. One administrator amplified this point with the following comment:

'Reference to the strategy is made by various staff in interactions in many significant activities'. Another administrator said that her significant understanding of **LINK** was due in part to time spent in the role of acting Executive Director Schools.

However the remaining 30% of the sample group of principals indicated either limited or no awareness of **LINK**. Of these, one person saw the **LINK** strategy as 'just another way of framing how a group is operating and I don't see any relationship between **LINK** and the way people are operating or have been operating'. In short, this individual suggested that there was no discernable change in the approach to service delivery with the adoption of **LINK**—with district office personnel remaining 'accommodating and professional'. Another person felt that they had no ownership of **LINK**, stating 'I wasn't sure where it fitted in'. One of the other respondents thought that it was 'terrible', that 'it was too big' and that it needed to be more 'punchy'. This respondent offered no focused commentary with respect to **LINK** and its application to the TSR process.

The following chart details the levels of awareness of **LINK** amongst administrators who had undergone the TSR in 2003.

Levels of awareness of LINK strategy

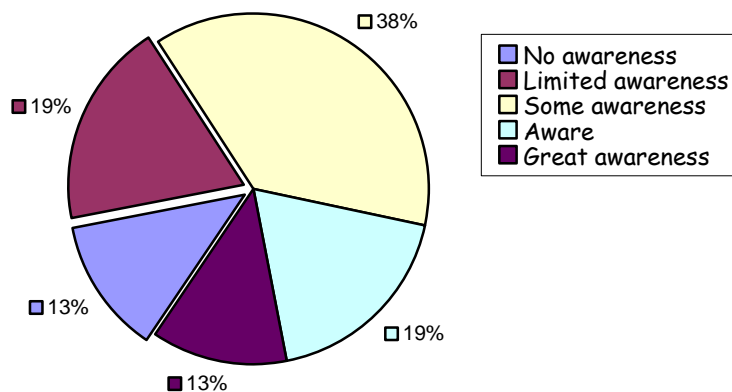


Table 5

The vast majority of administrators interviewed (94%) indicated that **LINK** strategies and principles were evident throughout the entire TSR verification

process. Each of these administrators indicated that whilst they were unaware of the TSR verification process being designed according to the **LINK** strategy at the time of verification, upon reflection it was very clear that all elements were evident in the process. One administrator (6% of the sample) indicated that he saw no evidence of a relationship between the verification protocols and **LINK**.

All of the school administrators (100%) felt that leadership by the Executive Director Schools and Performance Measurement Officer was evident throughout the entire TSR process. In the verification stage of the TSR process, all participants thought that their peers modelled shared leadership very powerfully, by engaging in dialogue about the ‘true story’ behind the reporting/planning document and by being able to question and be questioned. Indeed, the majority of administrators felt that this process indicated that the leadership dimension was the single most important element of **LINK**. In other words they considered that without the type and approach to leadership as outlined in the **LINK** statement, the district’s approach to TSR verification would not have been successful. This is reflected in the following feedback from one of the participants:

The TSR process was relatively new to us. It required strong DO leadership and guidance to develop a quality process in the first instance. It was also this leadership being facilitative, creative and enabling that contributed to our ownership and therefore commitment to the process.

Others felt that leadership was also evident in the verification process through the use of facilitators and the establishment of a supportive and challenging environment that encouraged principals to be both leaders and learners. Administrators generally liked the use of peer facilitators as this gave the review days credibility and developed these individuals as leaders.

Administrators felt that an information element of **LINK** was evident when each principal shared the narrative associated with their school’s TSR journey. Generally, administrators felt that as they told the real story of a

school, they were able to share genuine information. Elements of their narrative included: styles, techniques and strategies in both the TSR and in response to issues facing individual schools; ideas/suggestions for conducting future TSRs; the degree of community consultation; a realistic picture of where each school was up to; feedback on performance by others; and research-based practice. One administrator reported that the TSR process allowed principals to get back in touch with system directions; with how a 'school direction came into being'; and with the different ways that information could be used to shape and inform the strategic direction of their school.

Through sharing this information and in telling the 'real' story, other elements of **LINK** were engaged. For example, it was noted that the use of different groupings broadened awareness of other schools' TSR activities and increased the professional best practice knowledge base of all participants.

As one administrator indicated:

This was probably the most powerful aspect of the DO TSR/SPO support strategy. The networking that occurred in the first instance between schools working together on the TSR process in collaboration with DO staff and then later at the review meetings held in DO. Finally, the networking opportunities available to the wider school community as part of the process were evident and powerful.

Administrators' comments indicated they felt that significant networking was evident in the verification process:

- As schools are isolated, networking gives you peace that you're not alone
- Feeling supported
- Networking is a subtle form of leadership
- Good to mix with different bandings and types of schools
- Gave the day a focus for true and meaningful discussion and the time given for networks to be formed
- Building relationships because 'you can't achieve anything without meaningful relationships'

- Chance to work out DO roles, support, input and suggestions for process from EDS and PMO
- Opportunity for mutual points of advantage to be identified.

Networking was obvious through TSR processes as well as verification, with 100% of schools networking to differing degrees with other schools (inter- and intra-district) and district office. Administrators reported that a real effort to create these connections was obvious throughout the entire TSR process. Through the element of networks, administrators also reported the use of 'peer facilitators' as being useful as they set the scene prior to verification and created more trust and honesty.

Some post-TSR verification outcomes have been observed by the principals, as follows:

- the development of relationships and networks between facilitators and participants
- the opening of doors for enhanced cooperation between schools, e.g. through sport, beginning teacher programs
- collaborative planning between schools
- a clear link between TSR and networking at a cluster level.

Eighty per cent of administrators felt that learning came as a result of information, and that a lot of knowledge was gained through the district's approach to the verification aspect of the TSR process.

Participants indicated that the knowledge gained and generated included

- an awareness of other school sites and their strategies and approaches to shared issues such as community/parent engagement
- an awareness and exposure to creative, diverse and innovative thinking
- a broader perspective on TSRs and the possible strategies that could be applied to engage a school community in the process of review
- enhanced knowledge about their own school
- greater knowledge across district and cluster

- enhanced knowledge of the programs and priorities of Education Queensland’s Central Office
- a basis for self-reflection and comparison about their approach to principalship
- awareness of gaps in school operations and possible strategies on how to address them. For example, behaviour management review is a direct result of the TSR verification process.

As one administrator reported:

The process ‘forced’ school communities to look at a range of data that they may simply not have had enough time to review. Further to that it forced an analysis of that data. This increased our knowledge of a range of aspects of the school climate. The networking mentioned previously increased our knowledge of other participants in our school community and of our peers’ school communities. This perspective is invaluable.

Question 2: What is the relative importance of the LINK strategy to each of these areas?

The relative importance of each element of *LINK* as perceived by the sixteen research participants is outlined in the table below.

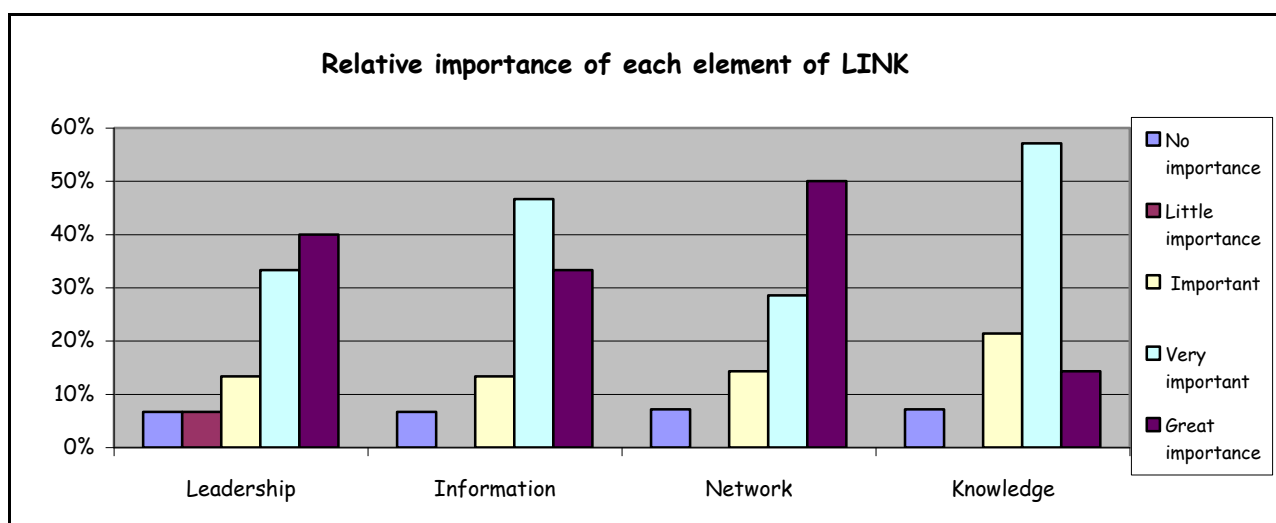


Table 6

The majority of administrators rate each element as being either important, very important or of great importance. 87% of administrators felt Leadership was either important, very important or of great importance, with 93% of administrators rating Information, Networks and Knowledge in the same category.

The relative importance of each element is depicted in each of the following tables.

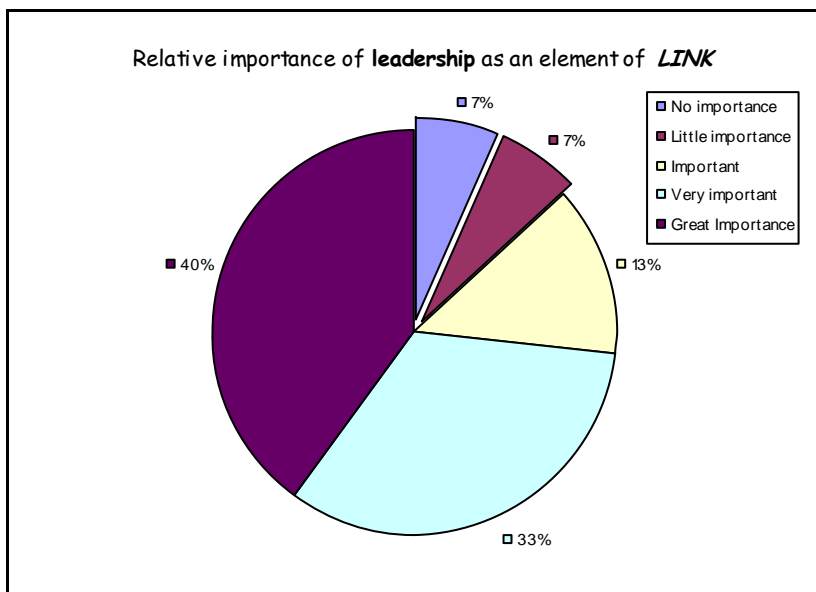


Table 7

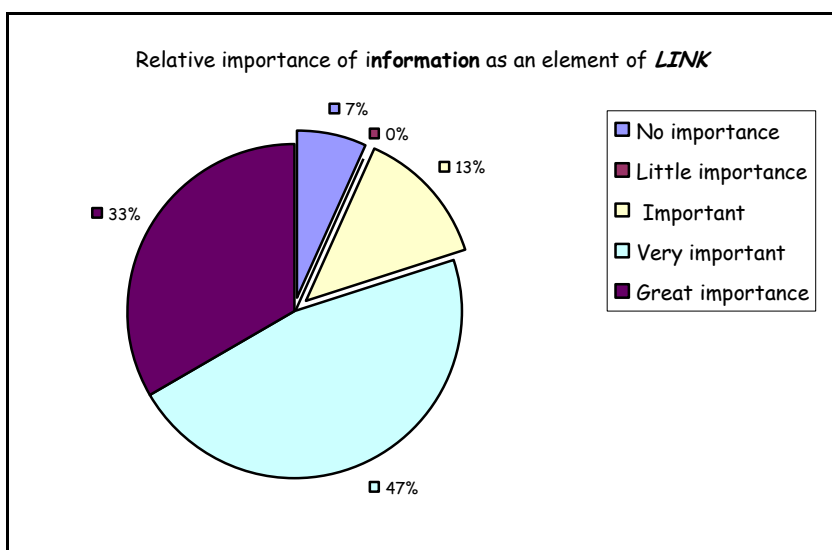


Table 8

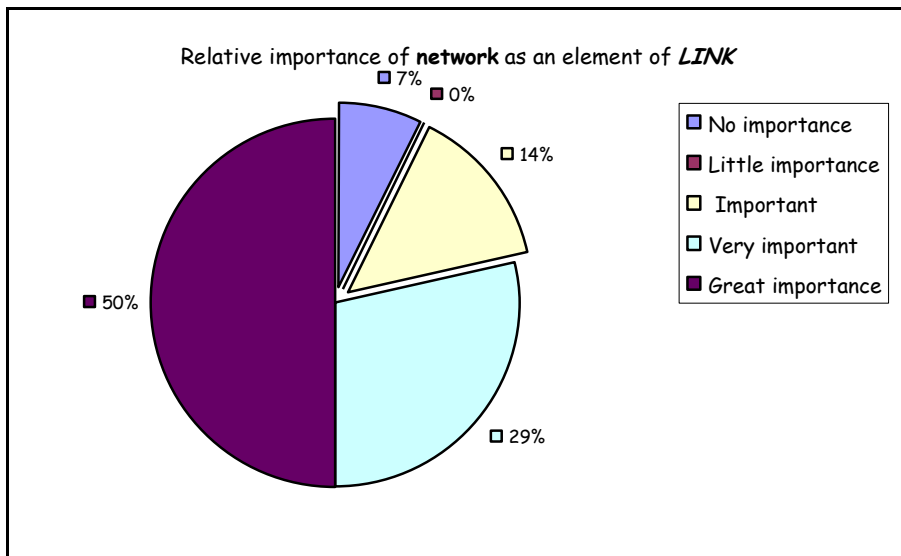


Table 9

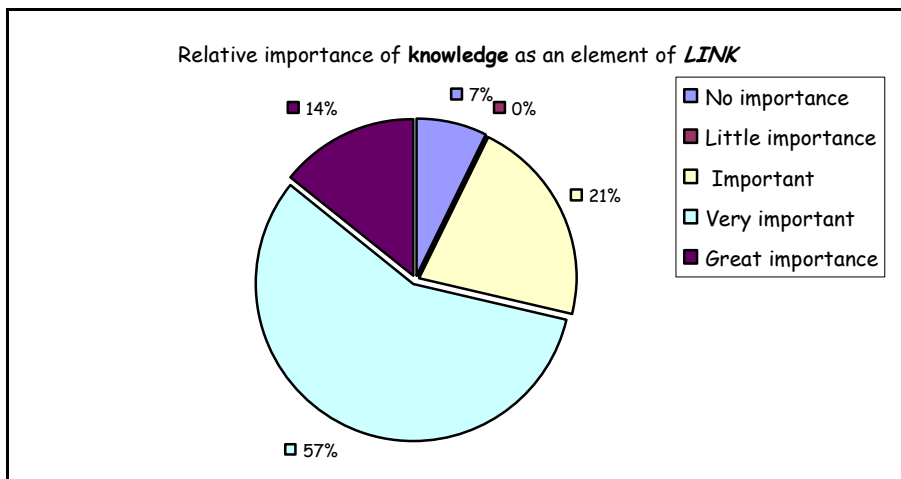


Table 10

One administrator identified the following indicators drawn from the various aspects of the *LINK* statement as the most important in the Fraser-Cooloola TSR verification process:

Leadership—‘A clear commitment to performance improvement’;

Information—‘Provoking, challenging and motivating schools, the district and or the system to respond and act’;

Networking—‘Building open and trusting relationships’ and

Knowledge—‘Building the capacity of the district to meet new challenges and opportunities’ and ‘Contributing to the critical exploration and examination of current practices’.

In the context of this study, there is significant evidence to indicate that participants valued all dimensions of the **LINK** strategy.

Question 3: Is the LINK strategy applicable and appropriate to the service delivery task?

All administrators stated that the approach taken to the TSR verification process underpinned by the **LINK** strategy transformed a potentially compliance-driven exercise into an extremely valuable learning and development process—one that enhanced leadership capacity, contributed to personal learning and built new knowledge. Participants also acknowledged that the approach provided an opportunity to challenge people by broadening knowledge and improving relationships. All administrators acknowledged that the dual objectives of compliance and learning were achieved through the process. Participants emphasised the importance of the learning and development element of the process, which made it extremely worthwhile. One administrator thought that the process ‘provided the Executive Directors–Schools with the perfect opportunity to be in the best possible position to sign off on individual TSR. Accountability is assured’.

Other comments included that the outcomes of this particular process had impacted on the culture and development of clusters and the district as a whole. For example, participants felt that levels of trust between individuals had increased; there was a demonstrated willingness to share; people felt valued and certain behaviours were being challenged.

One administrator was concerned about the professional maturity of individuals and their abilities to deal with the conflict/tension that does arise in this process. This respondent suggested that some principals in the district

would find the verification process challenging and confronting due to the focus on honest conversations and feedback.

Another participant provided the caveat that the outcome of the TSR verification process 'might be dependent on colour of glasses one wears and levels of their magnification—the way individual administrators portray or tell their story'. This comment certainly points to the need for a process such as this to be rigorous.

All administrators were complimentary of the support and leadership of District Office personnel in the process. They referred to District Office personnel as hard working, professional, and very supportive throughout the process and some thought that 'planning was timely with plenty of forward notice of timelines'. One administrator felt that the setting of timeframes was critical to the success of the process because 'at the end of the day, process and document has to be compliant'. Another administrator indicated that good support was provided and always available if required. This is supported by another administrator's feedback:

- Continue to provide the quality data and look at ways to incorporate more data in that process. It is a waste of time for every school to 'reinvent the wheel' in terms of data gathering and representation.
- Continue with the present model of sharing and review. It was a particularly powerful idea.
- Continue to provide samples of data gathering tools and instruct schools in their use and if possible provide electronic tools to enhance the representation of data from specific tools.
- Continue to have school representatives talk about their schools to 'tell the story' that drives the data with an audience that appreciate it and to others who need to hear it.
- Continue collaborative planning process—TSR and SAROP.

One administrator acknowledged that there was 'no set format of process and end product which allowed for individual creativity and enabled the school to respond to the individual school context and needs of the community'.

One administrator approved of the professional and intellectual conversations with the Performance Measurement Officer (PMO) and Executive Director–Schools (EDS). This person valued the opportunity to speak and engage at a different level. The more strategic level of dialogue helped the individual to bring the various system and school level agendas together. Another reported that removing administrators from schools for a day gave them time to focus exclusively on strategic matters.

Because of participants' high level of satisfaction, there were few suggestions for improvement. Most of the feedback centred on management of the process at a district level. For example, one administrator (6%) felt that the timelines might be reviewed to ensure complementarity with school planning. The other area for improvement referred to was that of the depth of interrogation of the individual and their school in the verification process. One administrator thought that since the EDS and PMO have background knowledge and data, that they should push boundaries more. However participants acknowledged that the EDS modelled a powerful feedback strategy in asking for participants to provide each other with both positive feedback and a challenge for their personal consideration.

One administrator felt that both the TSR and SAROP processes needed to identify good practice and publish information because the information is currently only being shared on the grapevine.

Question 4: What are the implications of the case study findings for the LINK strategy?

In relation to the sixth interview question, 'How can the LINK strategy be refined and improved?' very few suggestions were offered by respondents.

There was no significant theme or issue raised in these limited comments. Few suggestions for improvement were offered for two key reasons: (a) key individuals involved in the development of the **LINK** strategy were involved in leading the application of the strategy and (b) the strategy could readily be applied to the verification task. Significant feedback was provided by principals in relation to the focus of the case study—the TSR and verification process. These thoughts are captured in the sections below.

Administrators felt that both the TSR and verification processes would benefit school performance. The TSR gave schools long-term direction and the three-year timeframe between TSRs was felt to be achievable. Administrators felt that whilst embedded within a systemic framework, the TSR has to be a school-driven process; or as one principal noted: ‘otherwise the only process is ‘a one size fits all’ – it’s got to be a living, breathing school-based process’. One administrator felt that the entire procedure was dependent on the quality of the processes employed.

Administrators generally felt that the District Office-designed TSR and verification processes turned a compliance process into a valuable learning exercise. However one school administrator felt that the TSR verification process in conjunction with the district’s SAROP process was ‘too much’ in terms of time commitment.

An outcome of the process was a perceived increase in principals’ levels of awareness of their responsibility to maintain networks, initiate new learning and knowledge and provide feedback to District Office regarding ideas for future review processes.

Comparative leadership was considered to be very important by one principal. This person was concerned with measuring the quality of her own leadership and gaining a heightened sense of reality. For example, ‘Leadership is very important but we need to learn what reality is. What is really happening in other schools? I think I’m OK but am I? I have a need for comparison with others to determine how we are really doing’.

One administrator felt that by obtaining feedback on the TSR verification process, it 'gave guts'/more substance to the **LINK** strategy and therefore increased administrator awareness of **LINK**.

Two administrators indicated that they felt concerned prior to the verification process because they did not want the process to be 'competitive'. However, this concern increased one administrator's knowledge about documentation and the process; he indicated - it forced the person to 'be sharper', especially around data. Both administrators were subsequently extremely pleased with the process and its outcomes.

General comments were that the process was extremely positive, because it values people and opinions; values administrators as equal leaders; provides an opportunity to moderate people's own judgements and to check assumptions; contributes to the enhancement of leadership density across the district with the use of such strategies as peer facilitators; and demonstrates the need for collaboration between individuals and schools to achieve strategic and contextual goals.

The comments above also provide some implications for the LINK strategy. One of the important strengths of the strategy is that it is a flexible framework that allows for customised responses to be developed—not only to particular aspects of out of school service delivery but according to the individual need of principals, schools and others. The comments from case study principals also indicate the importance of district office personnel who are highly skilled in group facilitation, leadership and questioning. There is also a strong indication from principals that the application of the **LINK** strategy contributed to capacity building in significant ways.

4.5 Case study 2: Learning and Development Centre (Information Communication Technologies [ICT]—2004)

4.5.1 Context

The Kawungan LDC-ICT was opened in December 2000 by the Director General of Education Queensland. As a result of system policy changes, the centre was closed at the end of the 2004 school year. The charter for the centre's services was focused on working with classroom teachers on ICT integration, based on a model implemented in Victoria six years previously and trialed in Queensland at Woodcrest State College (formerly Springfield State School) for the previous three years.

The LDC-ICT at Kawungan was responsible for delivering ICT-related professional development to schools across approximately ten districts. It derived from the Statewide Out of Schools Services initiative but was adapted in accordance with the Fraser-Cooloola **LINK** strategy. Specifically, the District co-ordinator was given the mandate of developing a centre that would reflect the principles of **L**eadership, **I**nformation, **N**etworking and **K**nowledge. The co-ordinator met regularly with the Executive Director Schools (also the researcher) as part of a process of ensuring that LTC operations were in accordance with the principles of the **LINK** strategy. Specifically, the Executive Director would typically pose questions such as the following to the co-ordinator:

- How are the practices of the LDC developing the *Leadership* aspect of **LINK**?
- How are you developing networks in and across districts so that they reflect the **LINK** definition of networking?
- How does the work of the LDC contribute to the generation of teacher knowledge as defined in the **LINK** strategy?

During the four years of its existence, what was enacted at the Kawungan LDC-ICT was seen as a measured and conscious response to the problems

associated with the professional development of teachers in the integration of ICT into the curriculum. The five components of the centre's vision were to:

1. improve student-learning outcomes through the establishment of a professional learning community focused on supporting best practice in teaching and learning with technology
2. engage teachers as learners, researchers, team members and reflective practitioners about technology as a tool for learning
3. enable teachers to establish their own learning pathways through conversations, collaborations and action research about learning technologies
4. engage teachers in meaningful conversations and collaborations on using learning technologies through action research and situated learning experiences
5. support teachers in sustainable local networks.

The LDC-ICT was located within Kawungan State School. Such a location was decided upon in order to offer a "situated" learning environment: participants would not only learn about approaches to ICT integration, but see these in practice. The core mode of operation of the LDC was a three-day practicum program, using a constructivist approach, with a specific focus on the effective integration of ICTs into classroom practice.

The Centre was housed in a modular or temporary building (which still exists), and took up the full space, which consisted of two classroom spaces. One space had been divided into sections for an office, technician's work area and eating area. The other space was the main workspace for holding practica. It contained a general meeting or conference table large enough for all participants to be seated around, a professional library area and a computer for each participant. The layout was designed to model that of a classroom. The whole centre had been furnished for adults.

The three-day practicum model was usually (but not always) organised over three consecutive days during the normal working week. The first day was

largely devoted to participants' sharing of their professional expertise with IT, classroom visits, hands-on software exploration and the allocation of professional readings for 'homework'. The day would begin with goal setting and end with a personal reflection on the day and a review of the initial goals. The second day began with professional discussion—with the homework readings providing the framework—and generally involved another review of goals. This was followed by facilitated self-directed exploration with a view to achieving personal goals. The final day was a continuation of the exploration and culminated in action planning for classroom implementation, followed by a whole group sharing process whereby achievements from the three days would be shared with the other participants, together with the resulting action plans. Professional networking was encouraged and facilitated during the practicum but could not be sustained exclusively by the LDC beyond this three-day practicum period.

Schools were encouraged to send their teachers in pairs to increase the chances of newly acquired knowledge and skills being shared and implemented on return to the school. It was also desirable that the school have in place an ongoing plan to support the teacher in implementing their project as well as sharing their experiences and successes with the rest of the staff.

Two of the key questions which cropped up continuously during the period in which the LDC was operational were: 'Is this an effective model of professional development?' and 'How could it be improved?' In January 2003 the LDC-ICT, with Education Queensland's Fraser Coast District, engaged the researchers Lloyd and McRobbie from the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) to undertake a study of the services of the LDC-ICT at Kawungan.

The study focused its final analysis on a general consideration of the effectiveness of the Kawungan LDC-ICT and on the three key concepts of impact, value and sustainability as described in the resulting report; the study was conducted from March to June 2003 by two Queensland University of

Technology researchers under contract to Education Queensland. It represents the first formal evaluation of the LDC-ICT model of professional development within Education Queensland and represents the first formal reporting of the operations of the Kawungan LDC-ICT since the delivery of its first practica in Semester 1, 2001. This report along with the reflections of the centre's coordinator was used as the main sources of information that informed this case study. Specifically, a series of meetings was held with the QUT researchers, and also the LDC co-ordinator, for the following purposes

- to establish the implicit and explicit meanings of LINK in the work of the LDC;
- to ascertain the level of success, or otherwise, of the LDC

A large body of research already existed around the factors that are essential for an effective professional development program; however none of these specifically interrogated the preferred model of service delivery within the identified context— the practicum program. While the program had been developed with theoretically-based essential factors in mind, the question persisted as to its effectiveness in making a difference in the application of ICTs to classroom practices.

This research comprised a qualitative case study of the practicum program offered by the Kawungan LDC-ICT. Its main source of data was semi-structured interviews with practicum participants, relevant school administrators and ICT coordinators. The research brief was to carry out a broad-based investigation of the professional development practica conducted by the Kawungan LDC-ICT. The research was designed, firstly, to describe the operations of the centre; and secondly, to measure the perceived and actual outcomes of the practicum program in terms of its three key concepts: impact, value and sustainability.

The qualitative nature of the data being collected required that generalisations be drawn from conversations with the teachers. These generalisations were then validated through links to contemporary research

around teachers' self-perceptions of ICT abilities, pedagogical developmental continua and a literature review of professional development models.

4.5.2 Data collection

The data for this case study were collected and analysed by highly qualified University researchers led by Professor Campbell McRobbie of the Queensland University of Technology. The author-researcher then interrogated the database, with the LDC co-ordinator, to ascertain the nature and impacts of the *LINK* strategy.

As noted, the main instruments of data collection used by the QUT researchers involved semi-structured interviews. All schools chosen for the research were state schools and all interview subjects were employed by Education Queensland in various roles including teacher, teacher's aide, principal, deputy principal, head of department, ICT coordinator. Additional data from sources such as records of participation, resource agreements, digital presentations and anonymous practicum feedback sheets were supplied by the Kawungan LDC-ICT to provide background to its operations.

Schools were initially selected to achieve a balance between those perceived as 'successful' and 'less successful' in terms of their use and integration of ICT in the curriculum; the choice was then further refined by (a) level of schooling, namely pre-school, primary, and secondary (including P–10); and (b) size and geographic location of the school. A sample of participating schools was selected with the final sample being two pre-school, ten primary, three P–10 and four secondary (with a total of 19 schools). Of these, twelve were within the Fraser-Cooloola district. The seven schools outside the Fraser-Cooloola district were specifically chosen as case studies of the Kawungan LDC-ICT's 'outreach' program and representing fledgling clusters of schools collaborating on the integration of ICT in the curriculum.

The QUT study was conducted over a period of four months (from February to June, 2003) and involved field studies in nineteen schools (including pre-

school, primary and secondary settings). A total of 43 teachers (two pre-school, twenty-four primary (including one teacher aide), eleven secondary, six P–10) were interviewed individually in semi-structured interviews of approximately 45–50 minutes duration. Interviews were also conducted with 14 school administrators (nine primary, three secondary, two secondary departments [P–10] and 10 ICT Coordinators (five primary, three secondary, two P–10).

Although continuous comparative data analysis was conducted informally, an intensive phase of data analysis occurred throughout July and August 2003 following the completion of the school-based interviews. The analysis revealed that there were four models of activity being represented by the respondents (models referred to here referred to as Groups A, B, C and D). The following typologies (and group codes) were used as an organising device. The profile of participation in this study was Group A (fourteen schools), Group B (one school), Group C (three schools) and Group D (one school). The models could be described as:

- school support for the participation of teachers (and others) in a three-day practicum at Kawungan LDC-ICT as a school initiative (Group A)
- an absence of school support for the participation of teachers (and others) in a three-day practicum at Kawungan LDC-ICT as a school initiative (Group B)
- school support for the participation of teachers (and others) in a three-day practicum at Kawungan LDC-ICT as a cluster initiative (Group C)
- support and interaction of the host school, Kawungan LDC-ICT, with the three-day practicum program (Group D).

As noted above, the researcher had worked with the LDC coordinator to formulate a critical reflection on the findings of the QUT report and its relationship with the **LINK** strategy. Specifically, a series of meetings was held with the QUT researchers, and also the LDC co-ordinator, for the following purposes:

- to establish the implicit and explicit meanings of LINK in the work of the LDC;
- to ascertain the level of success, or otherwise, of the LDC.

Methodically, therefore, this case study relies primarily on formal document analysis, supplemented by interrogation of the formal (University) researchers and consideration of their research outcomes in the context of the District's **LINK** approach. One of the key challenges in adopting such an approach was that of ensuring the key findings of the report and themes of the report were not compromised because of the different purposes associated with its examination. Using the **LINK** framework, the report was analysed independently by the researcher and the coordinator. After this step, both parties critically examined their professional reflections and a set of common findings was distilled. It was on this basis that the following synthesis was developed.

4.5.3 Findings

Question 1: What evidence is there of the LINK strategy in this case study?

As stated above what was being enacted at the Kawungan LDC-ICT was a measured and conscious response to the problems associated with the professional development of teachers in the integration of ICT in the curriculum. The vision for the Kawungan LDC-ICT had five components. Each of these components is derived from the **LINK** strategy, as outlined below:

1. Engage teachers as learners, researchers, team members and practitioners reflecting about technology as a tool for learning. This occurs through encouraging teachers to adopt **Leadership** roles within their professional communities and to accept the challenge to interrogate their own practice in an accountable manner.
2. Improve student learning outcomes through the establishment of a professional learning community focused on supporting best practice in teaching and learning with technology. This is achieved through ensuring that all **Information** covered within the professional learning community is

clearly linked to systemic initiatives and has its basis well founded in contemporary research.

3. Support teachers in sustainable local **Networks** through exploring opportunities to develop valued professional partnerships between and within existing network groups.
4. Enable teachers to establish their own learning pathways through conversations, collaborations and action research about learning technologies through developing their capacity to identify what they value and build their own **Knowledge** base over time.
5. Engage teachers in meaningful conversations and collaborations on using learning technologies through action research and situated learning experiences. This occurs through facilitating pathways to contemporary **Information** but also through enhancing the participants' capacity to build their own **Knowledge** from that information.

Question 2: What is the relative importance of the LINK strategy to each of these areas?

Within the LDC none of the **LINK** elements/components were seen to be isolated from the other and all were integral to the operations of the centre. However, it became clear that the emphasis on each of these did vary in accordance with the particular learning experiences undertaken. As stated above, the fundamental principles informing the operations of the LDC aligned strongly with all elements of the **LINK** strategy.

Question 3: Is the LINK strategy applicable and appropriate to the service delivery task?

The following findings from the QUT study clearly demonstrate how the LDC-ICT at Kawungan succeeded in embedding their operations within the LINK strategy.

(a) Leadership and information

The three-day practicum at the Kawungan LDC-ICT represented a valuable learning experience for teachers, both personally and professionally. It acted as a catalyst in changing the belief systems and practices of its participants and earned the support and praise of those associated with it. There was a remarkable uniformity of positive responses to the program—irrespective of the individual's age, gender, the area of teaching or schooling level taught.

The reasons for the program's success are clear. It led by example and treated its participants with professional respect. It offered support which was practical and set achievable goals. It created a non-threatening environment that supported teacher learning. This was achieved through careful planning and the establishment of a robust technical network, which was well maintained. The program was further supported by the authenticity and currency of the content of the courses offered, particularly in regard to policy and curricular change.

The concept of 'partner schools' emerged from identified needs—particularly those of secondary schools—and was a product of direct negotiation between the schools and the Centre. There were three 'partner schools': Gympie SHS, Maryborough SHS, and Urangan SHS. The 'partner' schools engaged in whole school visioning, to consider the use of ICT as a component of curricular change. The Centre coordinator resisted invitations to go into schools as an external change agent where there had been no prior association with the practicum program. The rationale for such refusal was based on the belief that to be sustainable, change must come from within the school.

There were increasing demands on the Centre and particularly the Centre coordinator, to adopt a leadership role in ICT within the Fraser-Cooloola educational district. The coordinator took responsibility for development and review of the 'ICTs for learning' agreements, and participated in the

Productive Pedagogies and The Arts (Key Learning Area) syllabus implementation team at district level.

(b) Knowledge and networks

Changes in teaching practice were noted in the schools visited in the course of this study and without exception these were directly attributable to the practicum program. It can be stated unreservedly that the practicum program offered by the Kawungan LDC-ICT met its own stated objectives. Its value lay in its engagement of teachers in professional dialogue and in renewing collegiate relationships in schools and professional networks. The sustainability of the practicum program at Kawungan LDC-ICT was assured in the short term (two to three years) while teachers undertook their first general practicum and others returned for refresher courses.

The work of the Centre was increasingly externalised. This phenomenon of externalisation was associated with the following developments: 'outreach'; the 'partner schools'; an informal process of 'networking the networks'; and leadership roles.

(c) Leadership and networks

'Outreach' is the term ascribed to the ongoing support (both in person and 'virtual') given to those schools (and clusters of schools) that attended the practica. This included follow-up visits to schools to provide advice or to act as a 'sounding board' for ideas for curriculum integration; present pre-negotiated workshops (particularly on pupil-free days or within local conferences); and liaise with school administrations. Such support may be part of 'whole school visioning' whose facilitation is coming to be a key role for the Centre. Teachers interviewed at Kawungan State School referred to these as 'road trips' and were aware of (and supportive of) this role for the Centre. The Centre's coordinator, one other teacher and the centre technician have made these trips together or individually to such districts and centres as Chinchilla, Mt Isa and Moura. The centre coordinator had plans to

involve other teachers from Kawungan State School in the 'outreach' programs and there was an enthusiasm for this activity by those to be involved and the school administration. The Centre coordinator conducted an international practicum in July 2002, at the request of an international school in Papua New Guinea.

(d) Networks

The Centre did become a lynchpin for networks, for example specific school clusters and groups such as Early Childhood and Special Education specialist teachers. The Centre coordinator referred to this as 'networking the networks' (J. Cochrane, personal interview, cited in Lloyd and McRobbie 2003). The Centre worked informally to support existing networks, to make connections between these networks and to facilitate a pooling of resources.

The Kawungan LDC-ICT expanded its activities but maintained its vision and commitment to its original aims. The changed (and emergent) activities were in direct response to the demands of the schools it supported and represented. They are also consistent with the broader aims of state education in Queensland.

This case study clearly showed that the Kawungan LDC-ICT delivered on its promises to engage teachers and to engender curriculum change in schools. It also showed that the format of the practicum—with its extended time and opportunities to 'play' in a non-threatening environment—was instrumental in this success. The strategy whereby schools sent participants in pairs was also seen to be valuable as this engenders collaboration with a life existing well beyond the practicum period. The practice of having heterogeneous cohorts within the practicum was a further strength in that it mandates reflection—as individuals describe their environments to others. There was little which could not be seen as practical and purposeful in the design of the practica. This depth of planning combined with the inspired teaching of the Centre coordinator made the practicum at Kawungan LDC-ICT a rare example of effective professional development in the area of ICTs in education.

With the LDC's closure due to systemic changes in funding methodology, the networking aspect of **LINK** assumed an even greater level of importance in supporting teachers' professional development and learning.

Question 4: What are the implications of the case study findings for the LINK strategy?

The case study shows an immediate applicability of the **LINK** strategy to an area of service delivery that involves a consultancy approach: building the capacity of individuals; responding to individual needs and circumstances; and generally, value adding in a particular area of knowledge. This study shows the importance of having individuals with well-developed and sophisticated skills in the area of facilitation and network development when applying the strategy. In the context of this study, the ingredient for the successful application of **LINK** was a highly skilled individual who also had expert knowledge of a particular area.

4.6 Case study 3: Curriculum reviews of two District schools—2004.

4.6.1 Context

A key area identified for district service delivery was that of curriculum, teaching and learning. In terms of district Out of School Services, Fraser-Cooloola District resources included the following:

- two Learning and Development Centres (one in the area of literacy and one in technology)
- two Educational Advisers (one in the area of curriculum and the other with focus area of Senior Pathways and various support personnel such as a Senior Guidance Officer).

Prior to creation of the **LINK** strategy, the professionals delivering these services operated largely in isolation from other service providers in the field of curriculum, teaching and learning. Each of these operators was a highly

skilled and valued member of the Fraser-Cooloola District team. In the redesign process, the Manager of Education Services was identified as the team leader responsible for effective Out of School Service provision to schools in this district.

One of the key areas of concern and responsibility for the Fraser-Cooloola District team was to support schools in the implementation of key system directives and initiatives such as literacy; outcomes-based education; syllabuses; whole school curriculum design and pedagogy. As noted earlier, core accountability for the performance of district schools and principals rested with the Fraser-Cooloola School and District Performance team, and ultimately, the Executive Director–Schools. In this context, the Executive Director–Schools identified a small number of schools that were of concern with regard to their effectiveness and performance—particularly in the area of curriculum, teaching and learning. After consultation with the principals of these schools the Executive Director–Schools engaged members of the Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Team to form review teams to provide an assessment, advice and feedback in relation to the above. In collaboration with these key parties the Executive Director shaped the review terms of reference and relationship with the *LINK* strategy.

This case study focuses on the delivery of *LINK*-related curriculum services to two of the abovementioned schools: a small primary school ('School A') with a teaching principal located in a rural setting; and a secondary school ('School B') located in a regional city. In the case of School A, the Executive Director Schools—working with members of the district office staff and district principals—had undertaken a whole school review, and the principal's performance was being formally managed by the Executive Director Schools. In relation to School B, the school was reviewed and the principal's performance was also being monitored by the Executive Director Schools. A review of student achievement data in the case of School A indicated significant areas for attention and concern with respect to student and teacher performance. In the case of School B, the need for a review of the

school's curriculum direction and construction was an agreed outcome of a whole school review and the school's strategic planning processes.

The terms of reference established for the review of School A were (a) to establish a clear understanding of the current curriculum operations of the school within the frameworks of the systemic curriculum documents such as Whole School Literacy and the School Curriculum plans and (b) to identify areas of curriculum development that would allow for the future growth of improved outcomes for both teachers and students. The reviewing team were the coordinators of the Literacy and Technology Learning and Development Centres and the Education Adviser–Curriculum. The Performance Measurement Officer and Executive Director Schools also provided specialist support and advice to the team in relation to systemic data and approaches to the task of review.

In relation to School B, the review was intended to provide commentary on its curriculum operations at the administrative and direction setting level. In particular, it focused on the capacity of the administrative team to lead and effect change in relation to a range of curriculum initiatives. The terms of reference for the review were to (a) establish a clear understanding of the present curriculum operations of School B; (b) ascertain the extent to which current systemic initiatives had been led by the administration team through strategic leadership and embedded in school practice; and (c) identify areas for curriculum development that would allow for future growth of and improved outcomes for both teachers and students at School B.

The **LINK** strategy was used explicitly by the review team to structure the approach and nature of the review. Following is an example from the agreed review documentation:

‘Leadership by members of the curriculum team will be displayed by: (a) providing leadership committed to improved performance in School B's curriculum; (b) assisting in the achievement of shared goals at the school, district and system level; (c) facilitating collaborative action in pursuit of shared goals; (d) ensuring School B is able to achieve to its

highest level of performance in regards to curriculum; (e) continuing support for the ongoing needs of all students; and (g) generating passion, enthusiasm and commitment in curriculum, teaching and learning at School B'.

The review of School A was conducted through (a) introductory meetings with the Principal, Executive Director Schools, teaching staff and review team members to outline the terms of reference for the review, timeframes, agenda and associated processes; (b) staff completing survey instruments related to the degree of implementation of key systemic curriculum initiatives; (c) a review of existing curriculum documents to ascertain whether or not they aligned with stated Education Queensland policy direction; (d) completion of such documents to ensure accountability; (e) review of actual planning and practice by teachers to ascertain the extent to which curriculum, teaching and learning directions were being implemented and the quality of such practices; and (f) a review of school data related to student learning outcomes.

4.6.2 Data collection

The dual roles of Executive Director Schools/researcher and the issue of potential bias were considered and addressed differently in the two curriculum review contexts. The researcher asked each member of the review team as participant observer to critically reflect on the key guiding questions of the research. The Executive Director Schools made explicit his role of researcher and it was on this basis that the team members responded. In short, the related process involved the researcher working with key individuals involved in the reviews from a service delivery perspective rather than a curriculum perspective.

Feedback was also sought from the principal and key staff members of both schools involved in the review process. Strategies employed to generate this feedback included interviews with key stakeholders such as classroom teachers and support staff; a review and analysis of key curriculum and school procedural documentation; discussions with members of the district's School Planning and Accountability team and personal observations. As a

result of the review process, the team produced a report for the Executive Director and each principal based on this feedback. This document was used as a basis for discussion with the principals by the Executive Director Schools with respect to the review process, the approach taken by the review team and the findings in relation to the objectives of the exercise. Team members participated in the feedback processes employed by the Executive Director Schools.

With regard to School A, the researcher guided the discussion with the principal, three classroom teachers and prepared a draft summary report for their consideration. After each individual considered this information, further meetings were held to refine some interpretations and draw out themes. A particular problem or issue with this part of the process was dealing with the lack of capacity and leadership of the principal. The issue of the principal's performance was inhibiting the potential of the report and its implementation.

In the case of School B, the Executive Director Schools declared to the key stakeholders at a whole school meeting –all forty two teaching staff members, the three members of the school's administration team and the seven Heads of Department— his role as a researcher, aiming to elicit feedback in relation to the general guiding questions for this paper. Feedback was gained from the principal of School B and review team members in relation to the following questions: (a) What is your understanding of the district's **LINK** strategy? (b) What evidence was there of each of the elements of **LINK** in the approach adopted by the district office team with respect to the curriculum review? (c) In your opinion, what is the relative importance of the elements of **LINK**? and (d) is the **LINK** strategy applicable and appropriate to the service delivery task? In the case of the principal, some initial discussions were held and then the researcher sent a copy of the above questions via email. The principal provided responses to each of the questions by return email. A follow up discussion was held between the researcher and the principal.

In terms of data analysis and validity testing, the researcher generated a series of common themes apparent from the data and subsequently, drafted the following commentary. This summary was provided to each of the team members involved in each review and the stakeholders who provided feedback—the data collected was from each of the Heads of Department and the three members of the school’s administration team. This process confirmed the general findings stated in the draft report, with minor adjustments.

4.6.3 Findings

Question 1: What evidence is there of the LINK strategy in this case study?

In shaping the terms of reference for both reviews, each team used the **LINK** statement to identify the review focus areas, the approach to be taken to the task and the expected and/or resultant outcomes for all stakeholders. The networking element of **LINK** is an example. In the context of School A, networks would be fostered by the curriculum team through (1) working with the staff from the school to respond to the challenges of curriculum design and development; (2) the sharing of expertise and practice; and (3) promoting and enhancing relationships with other schools.

Members of each of the review teams felt that the **LINK** framework provided a clear direction and reminder in broad terms of the form of service delivery required in relation to the task of curriculum review. This was supported and acknowledged by both principals involved in the reviews. For example, the principal of School B noted ‘educational advisers involved in the review used a negotiated set of terms of reference to scope and focus the intent of the process and the approach they would take couched in relation to the **LINK** strategy’. However, review team members felt that the **LINK** strategy did not provide them with the necessary direction with respect to the key questions and specific areas for curriculum review. Team members felt that they struggled to make the connection between **LINK** and the key questions that needed to be asked or reviewed in relation to the implementation of key

systemic curriculum initiatives. Moreover, in order for team members to adequately assess the level and quality of the implementation of these initiatives by individual teachers in their classrooms, the team felt also that the **LINK** framework offered little support and direction. The review team with the support of members of the district's school planning and accountability team were able to draw on other research-based frameworks to generate relevant questions and support materials.

Each of the review processes highlighted the potential and subsequent effectiveness of members of the Fraser-Cooloolo District office team combining to respond to a particular aspect of school operations. Three of the district office staff members of the review team noted that this task clearly displayed the value of using the expertise and leadership of key district office personnel to provide detailed insight into and subsequent assessment of a school's curriculum, teaching and learning planning and implementation. The school personnel involved in both reviews acknowledged the advice and feedback provided by curriculum review team members. For example, the principal of School B indicated in feedback that both knowledge and currency in relation to curriculum development and policy changes were highly valued.

Two members of the curriculum review team felt that aspects of the task were made more challenging because they did not have detailed, intimate background knowledge of the culture and broader issues of the school. Others did not see this as an issue given that they felt well supported by members of the district's School Planning and Accountability team who were able to provide them with the necessary advice and direction.

One of the concerns expressed by the team was that of role clarity. Team members felt that because the context of the School A review was a negative one, the principal and teachers felt that their working relationships had been called into question. Feedback from the review team indicated that they believed that their individual roles had shifted from one of advice and support to that of reviewer. This was not the case in relation to School B. Feedback from the principal of this school indicated that there developed a very strong

professional partnership between the team and key decision makers and agents of change in the school. However the curriculum review process in this school has proven to be a difficult area for change due to some related professional differences amongst members of the school's administration team.

Question 2: What is the relative importance of the LINK strategy?

In the case of each school, the leadership dimension of **LINK** was identified as the most highly valued component related to district office service delivery. However, feedback acknowledged the importance and relevance of seeing leadership as interrelated with the other components of **LINK**: information, networks and knowledge. For example, the principal of School B notes:

I believe the element of leadership is the most important aspect of the **LINK** strategy in order to establish a direction and purpose of the activity. The experience and expertise of the team members supported by the Executive Director Schools gave the review credibility and clarity. As the term '**LINK**' suggests however each of the elements is interrelated as was in evidence in this case.

In the case of School A, the 'information' and 'networking' aspects of the **LINK** strategy were seen in one sense to be problematic by review team members given the lack of demonstrated capacity for key individuals such as the principal to grasp basic level curriculum knowledge and concepts. Therefore, the capacity building dimension that underpins all aspects of **LINK** was not in evidence in this case. However the principal of School B clearly identified and acknowledged the importance of this aspect of the **LINK** approach. The principal made reference to the following statement by the Executive Director Schools:

Unlocking school capacity requires a process and product (report) that is owned and valued by the school and seen to provide a credible picture of the school's effectiveness. This is with a view to

the school being able to predict, both its points of leverage as well as its current and future challenges.

Review team members were able to provide examples and refer to other contextual examples to inform their data gathering and to reference their report commentary. However, review team members also acknowledged that the 'information' dimension of **LINK** was vital in giving the review validity, shaping its objectives and in identifying particular areas for further inquiry by individual team members. Some feedback from School B indicated a concern with respect to the interpretation and use of the data in shaping some report conclusions. The principal of School B noted that some report conclusions did not fully take into account work that was being undertaken in a few aspects of the school's curriculum delivery.

The process of curriculum review in the context of School A indicated a degree of confusion amongst stakeholders regarding the application of the **LINK** framework to the task of curriculum review. However, this was not the case for School B. The principal of this school clearly displayed an awareness and understanding of the application of the **LINK** strategy to the provision of district service delivery.

Question 3: Is the LINK strategy applicable and appropriate to the service delivery task?

In general terms, there is evidence to suggest that the **LINK** strategy could be applied to the task of whole school curriculum reviews in two distinct school contexts. The **LINK** strategy helped review team members define their accountabilities and the approach to be adopted in supporting each school to undertake a curriculum review. In both cases, the **LINK** strategy helped establish the precise nature of the support required to both deliver the review and gain an understanding of the existing capacity of each school to respond to the review findings. The needs and requirements of each school both in terms of service delivery support and capacity were different; hence the resultant response was customised using the **LINK** framework.

One issue that made an assessment of the applicability of **LINK** to the task problematic was the lack of a shared common language and understanding of the strategy. Members of the district team had an understanding of **LINK** but the other key parties involved in each of the reviews did not. This factor provided a significant challenge for these individuals as they endeavoured to collaboratively conduct the respective reviews as well as inform stakeholders about **LINK**. It was evident that key groups in both schools had little awareness or understanding of the **LINK** strategy, given their lack of engagement in its development from a stakeholder perspective. This further contributed to the lack of development of a shared understanding and expected outcomes from the review process. Another important and related factor was that the individual members of the review team from district office felt that they had limited experience in applying the **LINK** strategy to specific service delivery tasks. Team members indicated that due to this lack of opportunity to apply the strategy they were unable to fully develop a sophisticated understanding of the strategy and bring this to the task of curriculum reviews.

Nevertheless despite the above-mentioned concerns related to the application of **LINK**, feedback from one of the two principals indicated that the assistance provided by the district office team members had indeed been worthwhile and had contributed to the improvement of the school. Specifically, the principal of School B noted that 'due to the assistance of the Fraser Cooloola District Office, the implementation of the Curriculum Review recommendations has developed and will continue to develop a changing culture in the school, with new pedagogies, new possibilities and new opportunities for learning'.

Question 4: What are the implications of the case study findings for the LINK strategy?

There are clearly several implications from this case study for the **LINK** strategy. Firstly, in using the **LINK** strategy there is a need for regular

reviews and for reflection time, to develop the confidence of district office personnel in applying the strategy. Secondly, regular coaching and modelling of the strategy by members of the district office leadership team, with key district office personnel delivering out of school services, would facilitate its adoption. Thirdly, the issue of alignment will be constant. Specifically, during the period when the strategy was being applied in the two schools, more time should have been spent on checking whether or not the thinking of the district office personnel involved in these two reviews was in line with the **LINK** strategy. Fourthly, a significant amount of time needs to be devoted to developing an understanding of the **LINK** strategy before it can be applied in a whole school context. This case study clearly showed that this issue became accentuated by the relative capacity of the workforce in each of these two school contexts. Finally, this case study confirmed that the **LINK** strategy clearly outlines a viable approach to service delivery but does not assist with generating the questions and knowledge required to undertake work in a particular area of service delivery—such as undertaking whole school curriculum reviews.

4.7 Summary: Response to case study key questions

Each of the three selected case studies considered the following key questions:

1. What evidence is there of the **LINK** strategy in each of the selected areas for case study?
2. What is the relative importance of the **LINK** strategy to each of these areas?
3. Is the **LINK** strategy applicable and appropriate to the service delivery task?
4. What are the implications of the case study findings for the **LINK** strategy?

A brief summary overview of each of the three case studies and commentary in relationship to the **LINK** strategy is outlined in the following table:

Case studies and relationship with <i>LINK</i> strategy		
Title of case study	Focus	Relationship with <i>LINK</i> strategy
1. <i>School and district performance team implementation of Triennial School Review process—2004.</i>	The application of the <i>LINK</i> strategy to the implementation and support by district office personnel of the TSR component of the School Planning and Accountability Framework.	Strong evidence from data to indicate applicability of <i>LINK</i> to Out of School Service task/activity. Strong evidence of each element of the <i>LINK</i> strategy. Minimal suggestions offered in case study data re improvements to <i>LINK</i> .
2. <i>Learning and Development Centre (Information Communication Technologies)—2004</i>	A critical review of the delivery of teacher practica by the District Learning and Development Centre in relation to the <i>LINK</i> strategy.	All elements of <i>LINK</i> in evidence within case study. The purpose/function of the LDC immediately aligned with the capacity or knowledge-building and information-sharing elements of <i>LINK</i> .
3. <i>Curriculum reviews of two district schools—2004.</i>	Reviews by district office personnel of the curriculum configuration and delivery in two schools	The most important of the <i>LINK</i> elements were Leadership and Knowledge. Application seen as problematic given lack of contextual understanding of <i>LINK</i> by participants in both schools. A number of suggestions made re improvement in application of <i>LINK</i> strategy: e.g. building a common understanding of <i>LINK</i> with stakeholders before application to the specific task.

Table 11

Response to case study question 1

An analysis of each of the three individual case studies in relation to question one suggests that the **LINK** strategy was strongly evident in each. The **LINK** strategy was utilised as a framework from which district office personnel and teams shaped approaches to the delivery of a diverse range of services, from school reviews to professional development for teachers. Each of the selected case studies also displays service providers' interpretation of the **LINK** strategy—for example, the attempts by a curriculum review team to use the **LINK** strategy as both a framework to approach a service delivery issue and a means to scope the specifics of the review itself.

Response to case study question 2

In one sense, the relative importance of each of the elements of **LINK**—Leadership, Information, Networking and Knowledge—appears to be both variable and dependent on the contextual aspects of the selected case study areas. This was clearly exemplified in the case study focusing on the review of curriculum in two schools. On the other hand some of the case study material indicates that the interrelationship between each of the elements of **LINK** is essential; and that no one element is more important than the other. The LDC-ICT experience illustrates this point.

While all of the elements of **LINK** are clearly present in each of the case studies, there appears to be greater importance placed by stakeholders on the *leadership* and *knowledge* dimensions of the strategy. In short, in each of the three case studies *leadership*, and to a lesser degree, *knowledge*, are identified by stakeholders as functions that are critical to the successful delivery of a quality service. In each of the three case studies, the leadership of respected, expert district office staff was highly valued. Feedback indicates that these individuals and teams generated knowledge for stakeholders and helped schools collaboratively address issues. The generation of networks and networking of key groups was a theme in each of the case studies. **LINK** contributed to the enhanced sharing of practices, ideas and understanding by stakeholders on a range of matters. The resulting focus on networking led to the generation of a range of networks with various characteristics, involving

principals, subject area specialists, classroom teachers and personnel from other institutions. The information dimension of **LINK** was certainly a key trigger for district office personnel in shaping the nature and direction of district office service delivery. For example, the curriculum reviews were informed by quality data and relevant material gathered and monitored by district office personnel. Stakeholders and district office personnel in the main valued the depth and quality of information provided as it enabled more informed discussion and decision-making.

The **LINK** strategy provided district office staff with a clear frame of reference from which to reflect on their individual behaviors and practices; it assists them in framing their approaches to particular aspects of the district office delivery regime. The **LINK** strategy demonstrated in the three case studies provides the answer to the 'how' aspect of delivering service at a district level.

For clients and district office staff there was clearly a set of behaviors, or perhaps a culture, that exemplified the manner in which services were delivered in the Fraser-Cooloola District. For example, the **LINK** strategy was strongly underpinned by the commitment of stakeholders to deliver both quality services and support that built and contributed to the development of individual and school capacity.

Response to case study question 3

The case studies clearly indicated the **LINK** strategy did not provide answers to particular knowledge issues or areas of service delivery and engagement. For example, the curriculum reviews case study clearly demonstrated that the **LINK** strategy helped district office personnel frame their general approach to the task, but did not provide the knowledge base to allow them to undertake the task in the first instance.

The case studies also indicated a range of levels of awareness of the **LINK** strategy among stakeholders. For example, the group of principals involved in the TSR process showed a high level of awareness of **LINK**; while in other

case studies levels of understanding varied. However, when the strategy was explained and modelled by district office personnel, stakeholders generally made the connection between the approach to service delivery and **LINK**.

Response to case study question 4

The case studies have clear implications for the Fraser-Coolooloa District office, and specifically for the **LINK** approach to service delivery. Firstly, the studies demonstrated that the constant challenge in implementing the **LINK** strategy at a district level is to consistently and constantly model what it stands for. Secondly, the different interpretations of **LINK** made by some district office personnel suggest that **LINK** must be regularly explored and reflected on by the district office team. A commitment to gaining and checking on the alignment of individual and team values with those espoused by **LINK** is necessary to ensure that the high quality of service delivery is maintained and enhanced. Thirdly, **LINK** was clearly seen as a frame of reference for district office personnel in developing responses to service delivery. Fourthly, the **LINK** strategy described a set of behaviors or a culture of service delivery; however it provides little direction with respect to knowledge questions related to processes such as curriculum reviews and triennial school reviews. District office personnel need to be highly skilled, with the ability to operate in the manner or cultural environment described by **LINK**. Finally, the **LINK** approach to service delivery does build capacity both for stakeholders and district office team members—for example, members of the curriculum, teaching and learning team working in the area of review, and principals involved in the TSR verification process and aiming to improve in the area of information communication technologies.

4.8 Case studies: summary

This analysis has provided an opportunity to review and assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the Fraser Coolooloa District's **LINK** service delivery strategy. The **LINK** strategy—generated from the application of the metastrategic approach to organisational redesign—was enacted in 2002. One of the key concepts and assumptions in the redesign process was

a clear commitment to measuring and assessing performance; subsequently, such feedback and information would be utilised to enhance the district's approach to service delivery. Three distinctive and representative case studies drawn from the majority of Fraser-Cooloola District service delivery areas were documented in an attempt to capture data and narratives to inform such a discussion. These studies clearly indicated that the **LINK** strategy provided a generally successful, clearly articulated and distinctive approach to the delivery of services within the Fraser-Cooloola District.

4.9 Responses to the three major research questions

Organisational design is often configured as architected routines representing relatively hard, discrete issues that managers can fairly easily influence and change. In spending so much time on these constructs, managers often give short shrift to the people and the cultural aspects of the change process associated with the implementation of the reconfigured or redesigned organisation. Leadership of change that attempts to balance and align the people and cultural aspects in tandem with the structural solutions is uncomfortable, fuzzy and sometimes intangible and mostly, not understood (Roberts 2005).

This folio endeavours to capture key experiences of, and perspectives on organisational redesign undertaken in Education Queensland's Fraser-Cooloola District between 2001 and 2005. The Queensland Department of Education and the Arts education district organisational structure provided the context in which a redesign of education service delivery was developed. The task of organisational redesign was seen by the Executive Director Schools as a complex activity involving more than the typical structural response. Moreover, any response needed to be informed and shaped by contemporary organisational redesign theory.

As noted in the introductory statement of the folio, there is a paucity of current research in the area of organisational design that is based on such theory. Hence, after an initial scan of the literature, Limerick et al.'s

metastrategic framework was deemed to be the most suitable conceptual model from which to approach the redesign process. That is, the approach to management and organisational design postulated by Limerick et al. (1998) was used as the basis from which to develop and test a theory-based framework for the redesign of educational services in a school district. The **LINK** strategy resulted from the application of the metastrategic framework. The three case studies were undertaken to examine the application of the **LINK** to the task of delivering services in an education district.

There were **three key research questions** that guided the overall direction of this research study. These questions are as follows:

Research question one: What is the potential of Limerick's concept of metastrategy to facilitate organisation redesign within a public sector environment?

This question was explored in Folio components two and three.

Research question two: How effective was the process of organisational redesign and implementation that was undertaken in the Fraser-Cooloola Education District?

This question was examined in Folio component four.

Research question three: What are the critical leadership skills for leading organisational redesign in an educational setting?

This question is addressed in Folio component four, below.

Response to research question one (*What is the potential of Limerick's concept of metastrategy to facilitate organisation redesign within a public sector environment?*)

Limerick et al.'s metastrategic management cycle (1998) is an approach to strategic management that is constituted of four elements:

1. Founding vision –

The vision for the organisation, as derived from its founding purposes

2. Identity –

- *Values*
- *Mission*

3. Configuration design –

- *Strategy*
- *Structure*
- *Culture*

4. Systems of action –

Practical, real life systems that transpose goals and values into action
(Limerick et al. 1998, p.152ff).

Limerick et al.'s concept of metastrategy was further developed by Crowther et al. into five functions that are asserted to constitute the essential functions of school principals in successful school reform:

Visioning – *in which inspiring images of preferred futures provide the basis for school development*

Identity generation – *in which distinctive school cultures are generated from analyses of community contexts*

Alignment of organisational elements – *in which schoolwide approaches to pedagogy, infrastructural design, values and community values are sought*

Distribution of power and leadership – *in which teacher leadership and parallel leadership processes are nurtured*

External alliances and networking – *in which schools collaborate with other schools and agencies to enhance their effectiveness* (Crowther et al. 2002, pp.50-51).

It is apparent from this study that the framework of metastrategy - based principally on the work of Limerick et al. - can be applied purposefully to organisational redesign in a public sector context.

One of the primary reasons for the obvious applicability of the metastrategic framework is the strong research base that informed its development. Each of the components that constituted the original conception of the framework

was found to be extremely relevant in shaping and scoping the response to the organisational redesign of Out of School Service delivery. Upon reflection and application, some of the components or elements of the original model needed to be given greater emphasis than the theoretical framework implied. For example, the element of 'culture' receives only a cursory mention in Limerick et al.'s (1998) original description of the model; however it is a vitally important consideration when doing this work in public and or private sector contexts, particularly education. For the purposes of this study, some additions were made to the original framework after a review of related research, primarily in the areas of organisational redesign and change management, most notably in relation to processes of school-based learning. Moreover, the study clearly suggests that processes of microstrategy - such as leadership development, resource management and organisational communications - as described by Limerick et al. (1998), need to be considered and integrated within the metastrategic framework. This apparent need is captured in Diagram 1.

Furthermore, since the formulation of the metastrategic framework by Limerick et al. in 1998 some key concepts that have become evident in the literature would add to the framework's sophistication and application to the task of organisational redesign. A notable example is the work of Goold and Campbell (2002) and their benchmark tests or criteria for assessing the worth and value of an organisational redesign.

Finally, this research may also have brought a different meaning and perspective to some of the elements of the metastrategic framework. For example, the concept of organisational alignment as observed and analysed in this study relates to the need to have stakeholders identified and their expectations considered as an important variable, along with vision, systems of action and culture, in successful organisational design.

Limerick et al.'s metastrategic framework was not designed with the field of education specifically in mind. In considering the potential of the framework for organisational redesign tasks in education, more work clearly needs to be

undertaken in relation to how it can encompass the core work of schools, namely teaching and learning.

A concern in applying the metastrategic framework was its particular form of language. The building of a shared understanding requires unambiguous communications and the language of metastrategy, as derived from corporate systems, requires adjustment if it is to be meaningful in education contexts.

Overall, the study indicates that Limerick et al. metastrategic framework is applicable to the task of redesign in relation to an Out of School Service function within an education bureaucracy, and presumably has equivalent applications in other education contexts.

Response to research question two (How effective was the process of organisational redesign and implementation that was undertaken in the Fraser-Cooloola Education District?)

The effectiveness of the processes of redesign and implementation of the Out of School Service function of Fraser-Cooloola Education District can be seen to be both problematic and open to debate.

The three case studies captured in component four of this folio indicate that to varying degrees the **LINK** strategy was applied. As noted in the postscript to component 2 of this folio, Goold and Campbell (2002) have outlined a nine question taxonomy in response to the question 'Do You Have a Well-Designed Organisation?' This nine question test or criteria was used as the benchmark against which the processes of organisational redesign and implementation of the Out of School Service project were assessed. Goold and Campbell's taxonomy (2002, p. 117) is as follows:

The Market Advantage Test: Does your design direct sufficient management attention to your sources of competitive advantage in each market?

The Parenting Advantage Test: Does your design help the corporate parent add value in each market?

The People Test: Does your design reflect the strengths, weaknesses, and motivations of your people?

The Feasibility Test: Have you taken account of all constraints that may impede the implementation of your design?

The Specialist Cultures Test: Does your design protect units that need distinctive cultures?

The Difficult Links Test: Does your design provide co-ordination solutions for the unit-to-unit links that are likely to be problematic?

The Redundant Hierarchy Test: Does your design have too many parent levels and units?

The Accountability Test: Does your design have effective controls?

The Flexibility Test: Does your design facilitate the development of new strategies and provide the flexibility required to adapt to change?

The Goold and Campbell (2002) taxonomy applied to the design of the present study, with supporting reflective general commentary, is shown in Table 12 below.

Test	Question	Assessment	Commentary
The Market Advantage Test	Does your design direct sufficient management attention to your sources of competitive advantage in each market?	Not applicable	This test is more applicable to a non-educational setting and competitive advantage was not seen as a priority in the Out of School Services design process.
The Parenting Advantage Test	Does your design help the corporate parent add value to the organisation?	Yes, definitely	This was seen as a key feature of the design and implementation phases. For example, how does an education district office value add to schools? The design was strongly informed by learning; reflection and value adding. The case studies indicate how the LINK approach value-added to such system policies as the School Planning and Accountability Framework (SPAF).
The People Test	Does your design reflect the strengths, weaknesses, and motivations of your people?	Yes, to a degree	The operating environment (characterised by a limited number of resources) dictated that any relationship with District Office personnel must be about building capacity and networks. Staff needed to be supported and prepared to work in this manner. Case studies of SPAF and Technology Centre reflect this.
The Feasibility Test	Have you taken account of all the constraints that may impede the implementation of your design?	Yes, definitely	The Out of School Services design was formally approved and implemented. The issue of sustainability and adoption in a public sector setting is ongoing.

The Specialist Cultures Test	Does your design protect units that need distinct cultures?	Uncertain	The design itself was distinctive and therefore required a particular approach to service delivery to be adopted. The design was undertaken in full awareness of the need to meet system requirements whilst adopting a unique developmental approach.
The Difficult Links Test	Does your design provide co-ordination solutions for the unit-to-unit links that are likely to be problematic?	Yes, to a degree	The design influences (based on postmodern theory) required individuals and groups to identify and generate responses/links in relation to service delivery.
The Redundant Hierarchy Test	Does your design have too many parent levels and units?	No	The design was essentially flat in terms of levels because of the nature of the principles that informed the metastrategic approach to design.
The Accountability Test	Does your design support effective controls?	Yes, definitely	Key elements of the design were metrics and a continuous cycle of reflection.
The Flexibility Test	Does your design facilitate the development of new strategies and provide the flexibility required to adapt to change?	Yes, definitely	This was another key feature of the design—commitment to learning, reflection, sharing of ideas and the generation of new meaning and approaches to problems/issues.

Table 12. Goold and Campbell's Taxonomy (2002), applied to the Out of School Services Project.

The above-mentioned table and supporting commentary clearly indicate that the redesign model and associated processes were of a high standard. Specifically, when assessed against the benchmarks of Goold and Campbell's (2002) framework the model and associated processes met the majority of the tests. However, it must be noted that this is only one set of benchmarks and the assessment of the degree of success of the task needs to be considered in the context of other research data such as the case studies outlined in this research study.

Response to research question three (*What are the critical leadership skills for leading organisational design in an educational setting?*)

One of the complex features of this study was the dual role of researcher and project manager that was assumed by the author of this folio. Limerick et al. (1998, p. 250) suggest that such a relationship is increasingly common, a reflection of the changes related to the development of management theory that are required in emerging research paradigms:

Research that starts with the agent generates interpretive theories that are the outcomes of collaboration between the 'researcher' and the participant. In effect, the participant becomes a collaborative researcher.

With this consideration in mind, responding to research question three requires a description of the processes that appear to be essential in leading and managing organisational design in an education system context. The discussion that follows has been informed and generated from a 'collaborative researcher' position. In reflecting on the roles of leading and managing the processes of organisational design, there are a number of important micro-strategies that have clearly emerged.

In essence, in reflecting upon each of the case studies and the particular form of adoption of the metastrategic design approach in each, the researcher has

identified eleven critical leadership skills sets, across three domains, that were significant in leading and managing the process of organisational redesign in an educational setting.

Critical leadership skill sets across three domains

These eleven skills follow on from each other and grouped three distinct domains:

(a) Domain one - individual leadership capacity and action

The key skill in this domain is at the level of the leader as an individual who must develop clarity regarding professional values and beliefs about such issues as the nature of organisations and the nature of the design task.

(b) Domain two -conceptual development

In this domain, the following key skills were seen as important: developing a set of informed options in relation to the redesign task; undertaking engaged purposeful communication that is aimed at creating greater knowledge about the design or adding value to the intended design and the quality of its implementation; the creation of a common language as a platform for engaging stakeholders; leading in a manner that encourages creative difference and distinctiveness, to ensure ownership and contextual responsiveness; and acknowledging ethical considerations—about how such issues as data collection, stakeholder engagement and reporting will be undertaken; displaying a capacity for reflective appraisal.

(c) Domain three - organisational implementation

The final domain of key skills relates to the identification, engagement, management and of leadership of key stakeholders; an assessment of leverage points; identification of key networks and agents; and the

implementation of representative and effective governance arrangements.

The diagram outlined below is configured in layers designed to indicate the relative importance of, and relationships between, each of the above-mentioned domains of critical leadership skill areas. The three layers of the diagram are apparent in the inner, middle and outer circles. Each circle represents a key domain of skills that a leader needs to consider when undertaking the task of organisational redesign in an educational setting. The first subgroup or domain of leadership skills is entitled 'Individual leadership capacity and action' and is noted in the inner circle of the diagram; the middle circle, 'conceptual development', represents the key skill areas that a leader needs to undertake to build a picture of the redesign task and a response; and the outer circle and the final domain, 'organisational implementation', represents the individuals and groups that need to be engaged with to deliver the redesign and support its implementation. Each of these domains is explained in greater detail below.

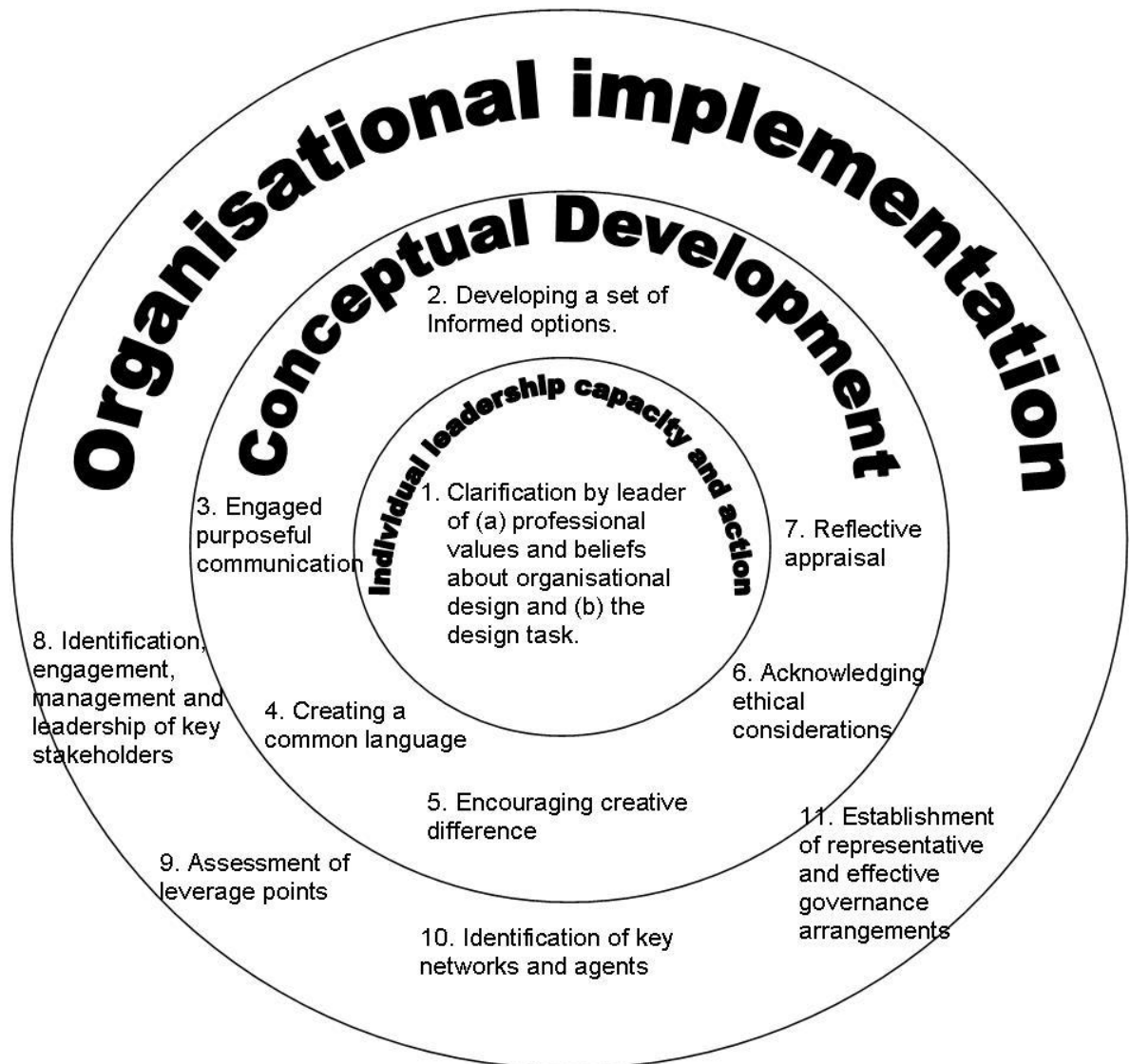


Diagram 2: Critical leadership skills across three domains for organisational redesign in an educational setting.

The inner circle or domain involves clarification of both values and design. This stage is seen as the first and necessary stage before any other phase of design, or redesign, is undertaken. Without clarity of thought by a leader—in terms of their own professional beliefs/values and their appreciation for the formal parameters of their position and role—no realistic sense can be made of the organisational redesign task.

The middle circle and second domain summarises six critical skill areas that a leader needs to undertake in approaching the organisational redesign process. A leader needs the ability to work in a constant and consistent manner, integrating and utilising the six strategies: creating the common language of the strategic conversations; communicating clarity of message; developing a set of informed options; acknowledging ethical considerations; encouraging creative difference and on a regular basis, undertaking reflective appraisal.

The outer circle and third domain contains four key skill areas. It recognises the need for a leader to identify, engage, manage and lead key stakeholders; make assessments in relation to the key leverage points to support the proposed change (power brokers and opinion makers); set up appropriate and representative governance arrangements; identify networks such as school clusters and key agents such as industrial organisations that have an interest in the change process. These individuals and groups provide the necessary guiding coalition to support the organisational redesign process and enable it to have a better chance of implementation.

Analysis of the above eleven key leadership skills

1. In the context of this study, it was vitally important to me as the organisational metastrategic leader to clarify and articulate professional values and beliefs about how organisations should operate, and then to enact them as the redesign proceeds. For example, Case study 1 shows how a system framework related to school planning and accountability can be applied and shaped into an activity that models the core values of learning, reflection and value-adding to professional practice. These were necessary and vital initial steps before the Out of School Services change process was commenced.

2. In framing the design task, and the subsequent application of the desired approach to service delivery, another key leadership task was to develop a

series of possible options informed by a considered view of such issues as system guidelines and directions, contextual realities and current research in relation to educational and other organisations. Therefore, it follows from my experience with this study that in leading system design a leader must have an excellent capacity to map and contextualise the organisation's landscape and relevant theoretical constructs.

3. In developing the model for organisational redesign, it was important as a leader to engage and communicate with stakeholders about the language of change. The **LINK** strategy enabled this purpose to be served well.

4. Creating a common language helped to provide a shared basis from which further steps in the change process could be undertaken, and subsequently understood. Moreover, the communication was purposeful and aimed at creating added value knowledge. For example, in the context of each of the case studies the **LINK** strategy was communicated and applied with the deliberate intention of generating enhanced value and knowledge.

5. Another important strategy in leading this change process was to encourage creative diversity and distinctiveness—at both conceptual and applied levels—within the agreed set of beliefs and values. In leading the design and implementation process, it was important to allow the different stakeholders to make meaning and refinements to the **LINK** strategy in their different contexts and in accordance with their personal values and styles. This point is captured in each of the three case study descriptions, with different forms and interpretations of this above strategy related to the work of district office personnel. In encouraging this feature, I believe that the design and implementation stages were enriched and enhanced.

6. One of the fundamental issues in leading the Out of Schools Services process of change was to give consideration to the core ethical question of 'Am I doing the right work as a leader?' In the context of an educational

bureaucracy, as a system wide leader, it was an important point of ongoing reflection for me to clarify the work that was most important to me and to ensure that some form of balance could be struck between the needs of the system centre, my own professional values/beliefs and the needs of schools. The use of metastrategy enabled me to undertake this process.

7. In all phases of the redesign and implementation process, it was vitally important to engage in, and challenge others to undertake, reflective appraisal. Each of the case studies reveals (to varying degrees) evidence of asking key individuals to make informed judgements about the success or otherwise of their work and the application of the **LINK** strategy. In leading this change process, mechanisms and opportunities were created to continually capture feedback and reflections.

8–11. In formulating and leading the Out of Schools Service change process, it was important to identify current and required leverage points and agencies—such as networks, opinion leaders / power brokers and governance arrangements. The identification and awareness of these points and agencies helped to build a common understanding and guiding coalition to support the change process. This brought about a degree of shared ownership and commitment, as key individuals and groups took the opportunity to develop and shape the proposed design outcome. For example, when developing the **LINK** strategy, principal networks, industrial unions and a representative governance group were provided with opportunities to inform, guide and react to any proposed model for out of school service delivery.

4.10 Recommendations for further research

As a result of this study, further research is recommended.

1. In applying the concept of metastrategy (Limerick et al. 1998, p.157) to any future task of organisational redesign, particular consideration and attention should be given to the notion of 'systems within system'—how are the parts 'compatible and mutually reinforcing'? In the context of this study, how a district approach to Out of School Service delivery was supported and reinforced by the total system?
2. Further studies using the metastrategic approach to organisational design and redesign in the field of education beyond the area of Out of School Services need to be undertaken to test its applicability and value. Potential areas of focus could be the individual school or a cluster of schools.
3. A set of benchmarks need to be generated to measure the quality of organisational redesign proposals in public sector settings, taking into account specific contextual factors. On the basis of the research undertaken in this study, such a framework to assess organisational redesign should include benchmarks that measure the "value add" to the organisation; the focus and contribution of the redesign on the capacity building of staff and an assessment of the contribution of any proposed organisational change to enhanced accountability.
4. The three-level model related to the leadership skill areas for leading system organisational redesign in an educational context that was developed from this study should be applied to other similar organisational tasks in order to test the validity and broader applicability of the model.
5. Findings from this study should be used as a basis for contributing to the depth and direction of current theory related to organisational redesign.

The findings would be of particular relevance to issues such as leadership capacity and capabilities; culture; communication; resources; and the establishment of a set of quality indicators or benchmarks for successful organisational redesign.

4.11 The contribution of the present study

My experience in completing this study has clarified for me what I now regard as the core meaning of organisational analysis: *a process of creating and defining organisational models or frameworks to help managers to understand organisational phenomena; discuss them with others and identify what might be done to transpose them into an enhanced reality.* I believe that this study provides an insight into the challenge identified by Limerick et al. of leading systemic organisational change within an education system, and in so doing has significantly enhanced my own professional capability. As Limerick et al. stated:

It is our view that managers in education systems are only now beginning to appreciate that organisational choice goes with the territory of management in the post modern era...Indeed, it is perhaps their greatest responsibility if they are to transform their organisations.

(1998, p. 28).

This study has, I believe, captured some of the dynamics involved in the application of theory to the task of leading a process of organisational redesign at a system level within a public sector agency. The redesign task related to the provision of Out of School Services at an education district level showed (a) the applicability and adaptation of the metastrategic framework to the task; (b) the framework tested and applied for the first time to a task of this nature; (c) the key skills that are important for leading and managing the challenge of systemic organisational redesign; and (d) the innovative approaches to redesign that could be pursued within a bureaucracy.

Viewed more generically, this study may add significantly to the field of organisation research—one that has largely been inactive and where the associated practices applied within organisations have been problematic and based on outmoded theories.

4.12 A final personal reflection

The completion of this folio represents the culmination of an intriguing, challenging and at times, frustrating eight years of endeavour. During this substantial period of time, many changes of a professional and personal nature have impacted upon the realisation of this folio—the death of my loving father, the failure of my marriage, the onset of a debilitating personal illness and the decision to undertake another system leadership role within a state education jurisdiction. Along the way, I have questioned my self worth and emotional resilience to complete this most testing of intellectual pursuits.

My two primary reasons for undertaking doctoral studies were to test my thinking as an organisational leader and to enhance my capacities as an education system leader within a public sector organisation. At this point of reflection, I believe that the completion of my doctoral study has contributed significantly to these dual objectives. My studies have been instrumental in refining and shaping my approach to successfully undertaking system leadership within two state education systems. I believe that I now have enhanced capacity with the critical skills required to lead with confidence in an ever-changing public sector.

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