



University of
**Southern
Queensland**

THE IMPACT OF EXTERNALLY IMPOSED CHANGE
ON TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL
PRACTICE: A QUEENSLAND SECONDARY SCHOOL
STUDY

A Thesis submitted by

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ABSTRACT

In 2019, Queensland secondary schools experienced their most significant government-mandated change in 50 years with the introduction of external exams. This reform replaced the Overall Position (OP) system with the Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR), shifting the senior assessment system from relying solely on internal school-based assessments to incorporating standardised external examinations. This qualitative case study, conducted in a large secondary school, explored the impact of this change on teachers' pedagogical practices. Using an interpretivist lens, the study examined how various stakeholders, including teachers and school leaders, conceptualised and adapted to the new system. Data collection methods included semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and focus groups, with findings categorised into key themes aligned with the study's conceptual framework. The findings indicated that whilst externally imposed change in schools is inevitable, but when the mandated change is not managed effectively, it can lead to internal chaos and unintended consequences. This study identifies five key factors that support smoother implementation. They are change management, sensemaking, self-efficacy, distributed leadership and emotional labour. These factors emphasise the need to expand strategic intent beyond policy compliance to respect teachers' moral purpose and professional commitment. Leadership structures should prioritise teachers' roles, ensuring alignment between imposed reforms and educators' values. Preserving shared educational principles is crucial, as teachers' moral compasses drive successful change. Supportive leadership, emotional intelligence, and targeted professional development can help alleviate stress and ensure minimal disruption to student learning. Ultimately, policymakers and school leaders must recognise teachers as professionals and acknowledge that teachers' intrinsic motivation fuels their resilience, and their commitment to student achievement. This aspect should be considered when implementing change.

CERTIFICATION OF THESIS

I, Michael Simpson, declare that the Thesis entitled *The impact of externally imposed change on teachers' pedagogical practice: A Queensland secondary school study* is not more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references, and footnotes. The thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

Date: November 2024

Endorsed by:

Professor Dorothy Andrews
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Student and supervisors' signatures of endorsement are held at the University.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. An independent body responsible for developing the national curriculum, setting educational standards, and managing standardised assessments to support consistent education and accountability across Australia.
ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research. An independent nonprofit organisation that conducts research and develops assessments to improve education in Australia and globally.
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank. A ranking system that measures a student's academic performance to determine university entry eligibility in Australia.
Big Organisers	Refers to the initial categories used to organise the collected data.
CCE	Core Curriculum Elements. Refers to the essential subjects, skills, and knowledge areas that are required to be taught within Queensland schools.
Code	Refers to the process of systematically identifying and categorising data, whether through an inductive or deductive approach.
Confirmation	Refers to a quality assurance process used to verify the accuracy and consistency of teachers' judgments in student assessments. This process ensures that the grades awarded to students align with statewide standards.
COVID	Coronavirus Disease
EA	External Assessment. An evaluation conducted by the QCAA, through standardised exams, to assess a student's knowledge or skills.
Endorsement	A quality assurance process that takes place before student assessments are administered. During endorsement, the QCAA reviews and approves assessment instruments (such as exams or assignments) developed by schools to ensure they align with syllabus requirements and meet specific standards.
FP	Field Position. Refers to the classification of a subject or course within a particular area of study.

HOD	Head of Department. Responsible for overseeing a specific subject area, managing curriculum, staff, and student outcomes within their department.
HPE	Health and Physical Education
IA	Internal Assessment. Refers to assessments conducted within schools by teachers to evaluate students' knowledge and contribute to final grades.
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
Node	Used to identify a collection of references or “data chunks” pertaining to a specific emerging topic.
PD	Professional Development
PE	Physical Education
PLC	Professional Learning Community. A group of educators who collaborate regularly to share expertise, improve teaching practices, and enhance student learning outcomes.
QCAA	Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority. A statutory body responsible for developing and implementing curriculum, assessment, and certification standards for primary and secondary education in Queensland, Australia.
QCE	Queensland Certificate of Education. A senior secondary qualification awarded to students who meet the requirements set by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority.
QCS	Queensland Core Skills test. A historic standardised assessment for Year 12 students in Queensland, measuring academic skills for the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE). It has now been replaced by a new assessment system.
QTAC	Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre. The organisation responsible for managing university applications in Queensland. It processes applications, provides advice, and allocates university offers based on criteria like the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).
Ratification	A quality assurance process conducted at the end of the assessment cycle in Queensland's senior secondary education. Ratification involves

	verifying and formally approving final student results before they are certified and reported.
ROSBA	Review of School-Based Assessment. A historic evaluation process focused on improving assessment practices and curriculum for senior secondary education in Queensland.
SACE	South Australian Certificate of Education. The senior secondary school qualification awarded to students who successfully complete their studies in South Australia.
SAI	Subject Achievement Indicator. A historic score that reflects a student's achievement in a particular subject as part of their Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE).
SRQ	Subsidiary Research Question. A secondary question that supports the main research question. It helps to explore specific aspects or subtopics of the broader research issue, providing more detailed insights and contributing to the overall study.
TAFE	Technical and Further Education. Refers to a system of vocational education and training institutions in Australia that provide practical, career-focused courses and qualifications in various fields, including trades, business, health, and technology.
U.K.	United Kingdom
U.S.A	United States of America
VET	Vocational Education and Training. refers to education and training programs that provide students with the practical skills and knowledge needed for specific careers or trades. VET focuses on hands-on learning and prepares individuals for the workforce in areas like construction, healthcare, business, and technology

PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE

Pedagogical practice refers to “the act and discourse of teaching” (Alexander, 2004, p. 8). This produces a broad and substantive definition for investigating impacts on pedagogical practice, thus including all forms of teaching practice, namely, the curriculum, planning, classroom instruction, and assessment (Black & Wiliam, 2018). Within this broad definition, the impacts will be viewed within the breadth and depth of a teacher’s role. As Alexander (2008) emphasised:

Pedagogy is the act of teaching together with its attendant discourse of educational theories, values, evidence and justifications. It is what one needs to know, and the skills one needs to command, in order to make and justify the many different kinds of decision of which teaching is constituted. (p. 24)

This definition of pedagogical practice encompasses the complexities of teaching, including organisational norms, student interactions, and the negotiation of core values. Within this dynamic reality, teachers make decisions that directly impact student learning. All aspects of their role are fundamental to effective teaching and thus constitute their pedagogical practice.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Preamble

History suggests that externally imposed change to education is inevitable. A research study by Volansky (2023) suggested that national governments enforce imposed educational changes to hold schools accountable for students' learning experiences. Most reforms aim to ensure education is equitable for every student, build teacher capacity, and align with global pressures (Volansky, 2023). Further, Fenwick (2011) implied that many government-led reforms have the same accountability goals: increasing teacher standards and accountability across education sectors and improving student outcomes.

School reform is a highly volatile area and involves critiquing systems that impact millions of people. For this reason, and as Volansky (2023) pointed out that educational reform should not be taken lightly. It is a necessary avenue whenever outcomes do not meet the expectations of the society it serves (Volansky, 2023). These outcomes are built by parents who want their children to be successful, governments who push economic agendas, and workplaces that need certain characteristics and skills in their workers. For this reason, education will always be unsatisfactory, as Volansky (2023) emphasised:

This *perpetuum mobile* is subject to the influence of spatial and temporal circumstances: changing social, economic, national, or global realities that require education to adjust to an ever-evolving world environment. Aspirations that can never be fully satisfied keep education systems in constant motion toward the next cycle of changes. (p. vii)

The focus of this study was to view externally imposed change from the viewpoint of teachers and explore the impact on their pedagogical practice. The study used the modifications to Queensland senior education in 2019 as a real-life example of an externally

imposed change that could have significantly impacted teachers' practice. The change impacted all Queensland schools regardless of their sector. For Queensland, this includes State schools, Catholic schools and Independent schools. The system was referred to as the new Queensland Certificate of Education system (QCE), and it was the most significant change to the senior assessment system in Queensland for around 50 years (Willis et al., 2019) The long-standing system had resulted in embedded values and beliefs, which guided Queensland teachers' practice as schools were responsible for setting, administering, and marking the assessment of student learning. The results would be submitted to the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA), and a student's Overall Position (OP) would be calculated for tertiary entrance purposes. The new system changed this process and introduced externally administered assessments to calculate an Australian Tertiary Admission Ranking (ATAR) which is used for tertiary entrance.

There are other senior certificate pathways for Queensland students; however, this study focused on the ATAR pathway, which was anticipated to create significant discussion around the research topic. Every teacher brings a different story, which can affect how they conceptualise imposed change. The change that required Queensland teachers to modify their pedagogical practices proved to vary based on years of service, beliefs, experience with other education systems, and potentially other unknown factors. Furthermore, this aspect had multiple implications for school leaders implementing the new system. The ability of school leaders to negotiate the change impacted teacher practice in various ways. It was anticipated that this context would provide insight into the different factors affecting teachers' pedagogical practice when confronted with externally imposed change to education.

1.2. Background and Context of the Study

Queensland education has had a unique history as a product of being self-contained. Kelly (2014) delved into the essence of Queensland education by analysing four pivotal

reports: the 1970 Radford Report on public examinations, the 1978 Review of School-based Assessment in Queensland Secondary Schools (the ROSBA Report), the 1987 Pitman Report, and the 1990 Vivian Report on Tertiary entrance in Queensland. By examining the relationship between each report and how they reflect current practices and values, Kelly's (2014) work shed light on the nature of education in Queensland. The significance of this paper is highlighted by its inclusion as a critical document in the Queensland Review of Senior Assessment and Tertiary Entrance, and it can be found on the ACER website (Matters & Masters, 2014b).

The impact of the Radford report on Queensland education cannot be overstated. As highlighted by Kelly (2014), this report challenged the status quo and provided a damning assessment of the system's failure to prepare students for post-school life. The report argued that the system was inflexible and ill-suited to meet the needs of students with a more uncertain future than previous generations. At the time, only half of all students attended university, yet all were expected to sit standardised exams at the end of their schooling. The Radford report called for more flexible pathways to cater to this new reality. This point should be emphasised due to the significant influence of the report, which resulted in the abolition of external exams for over 50 years before their recent reintroduction. This is significant due to the presented argument for the new QCE system, which was partly due to fewer students following a tertiary entrance pathway (Matters & Masters, 2014b). Therefore, this is an intriguing contradiction between the two eras.

The analysis of the four landmark reports profoundly explains how they shaped and defined Queensland education. While the Radford report challenged the status quo and identified the inadequacies of the education system to prepare students for their post-school lives, the subsequent reports aimed to improve the system. The ROSBA report, described by Kelly (2014) as the "big brother" of the Radford report, provided insights on developing the

new system. The Pitman report in 1987 analysed the shortcomings of the established tertiary entrance system, while the Vivian report in 1990 acted as a catalyst for change (Kelly, 2014). The introduction of the Overall Position (OP) system in 1992 was a direct result of the Vivian report and remained in place until the new QCE system was introduced in 2019. Despite their differences, all reports recognised the importance of meeting the changing societal needs of students. Notably, none of the reports recommended re-introducing external examinations, which makes the recent move towards external assessments under the new QCE system an intriguing development to explore.

A notable article by Maxwell and Cumming (2011) explored the strengths of not having public examinations at the end of Year 12. It acknowledges the unintrusive refinements implemented since 1992 and comments on their effectiveness at creating a unique system that caters for Queensland's diversity (Maxwell & Cumming, 2011). In the author's own words, "it demonstrates how a comprehensive approach to curriculum and assessment can be successfully designed and improved over time through imagination and persistence and satisfy stringent quality assurance requirements" (Maxwell & Cumming, 2011, p. 200). These authors claim that the relative stability, when compared to other systems, had enabled both a positive and organic development. Any changes have been grounded in evidence from the various generational education leaders and the flexibility in which they worked, enabling them to navigate their students' needs while delivering a world-class curriculum.

Despite the clear positives in 2012, the Queensland Government announced that there would be a review of the overall assessment system (van Vonderen & Langbroek, 2012). One of the significant factors was the fear of declining academic performance among Queensland students compared to students in other states and territories (Wordsworth et al., 2014). This appeared to be reinforced by major Queensland Universities utterances in the press leading

up to the announcement that Queensland's education was declining in its effectiveness (ABC, 2009). These comments identified shortcomings in how students were assessed in Year 12 and their subsequent selection for university programs. The Queensland government's claims that the OP system was supposed to be reviewed after ten years further justified the review; however, it had been 20 years since its inception. Maxwell and Cumming's (2011) article had argued that there was no need to review before this time, using the system's strengths as key reasons for not changing direction.

Another argument by the Queensland Government was that since the last review of tertiary entrance in Australia in 1990, there had been a seismic shift in social patterns, policy goals, and student behaviour that had deeply impacted senior assessment and tertiary entrance (Matters & Masters, 2014b). Although Maxwell and Cumming (2011) discussed that these issues had been reflected in the introduction of the Queensland Certificate of Education in 2008 (Maxwell & Cumming, 2011), they recognised a wider range of pathways and alternative forms of learning. The Queensland Government's decision-making was influenced by the Federal government's agenda for streamlined education. This is evident because the Queensland Government's announcement for the review coincided with the Federal government's push for massive reform in the education systems of Australian states and territories (QCAA, 2018). The QCAA website confirms this by stating that the new senior syllabuses were rewritten to align with the outcomes of the proposed new Australian senior Curriculum model (QCAA, 2019a).

Matters and Masters (2014b) provided further evidence of the connection between the Australian senior curriculum and the new QCS system through their review of the Queensland senior assessment system. The authors noted:

The nature of teaching and learning in senior secondary schools is undergoing change.

The recently developed Australian senior curriculum has set new priorities for

learning in the final years of school. These priorities continue to emphasise learning in the disciplines, but they also include the development of a broader range of skills and attributes considered necessary for life, study and work in the 21st Century. (p. ix)

The statement highlights a shift in the approach to learning in senior secondary schools, as noted by Matters and Masters (2014b), and suggests that recent reforms at national and state levels are intended to drive teachers to adapt their teaching methods. Learning is fundamentally rooted in the classroom, so successful reform must resonate within that setting to be effective. However, as Newmann (1993) pointed out, the way these changes are implemented can deeply influence their success. This notion is crucial to the study, as it investigates how externally mandated changes impact teachers' pedagogical practices and the outcomes of these reforms.

Over time, Queensland has developed a richly embedded and justified senior secondary assessment system that has placed quality teaching and learning at the centre. Therefore, further discussions are needed to understand the current mandated change. It is thought-provoking to discuss the recommendations made by Matters and Masters (2014b) to the Queensland government in their review of the current senior assessment system. It is clear from the review that it was the catalyst for the development of the new system and was fundamental in ensuring the integrity of Queensland education (Matters & Masters, 2014b). Firstly, one of the more general but essential recommendations was that the OP system's usefulness was coming into question, and its plausibility to meet future needs was slim (Matters & Masters, 2014b). Secondly, the researchers argued that one of the main strengths of the Queensland system is the teacher-centred approach, and the new system should not aim to be redesigned based on the discussed historical opinions or external pressures (Matters & Masters, 2014b). This preservation of core ideals was a fundamental implication for the

research of this thesis. What remains of the old system, whether values or procedures, could have several implications for the impact on teachers' pedagogical practice.

The revelation that the OP system was ineffective suggested some intriguing conjectures about the state of Queensland's senior secondary schools. According to Matters and Masters (2014b) review, teachers and students viewed the QCS test as a hindrance for the year, negatively impacting student results. Moreover, schools had devised methods, often with the assistance of consultants, to exploit the system's reference. Schools had focused extensively on coaching students specifically for the test, raising ethical and reliability concerns regarding the accuracy of results (Matters & Masters, 2014b). Additionally, some schools manipulated data and encouraged students to seek alternative pathways to maximise the school's OP results (Matters & Masters, 2014b). Furthermore, the Queensland system has become a hybrid using Australian Tertiary Admission Rankings (ATAR), which have been in place in all other Australian states and territories since 2008. This measurement was implemented in Queensland to differentiate between levels of OP1s, allowing high-level tertiary education courses to select the highest-achieving students (Matters & Masters, 2014b). Additionally, the system's evolution through a range of minor changes resulted in an inexplicably complex system for students who may have wondered how their achievement was judged (Matters & Masters, 2014b). Matters and Masters (2014b) findings highlighted ethical and reliability issues with the old system but also highlighted the strength of its core principles.

Matters and Masters (2014b) made recommendations on how a new system should operate due to the apparent complexities and issues of the old system. Table 1 shows an excerpt of the recommendations made by Matters and Masters (2014a), with a focus on those that specifically affect assessment and require changes in teaching practice. The table includes entries from 12 recommendations.

Table 1.1*Extract of Recommendations for Changing the QCE System*

Recommendation	Extract
1	The OP system should be discontinued and the interface between secondary completion and university selection should be redesigned. The implications are that SAs would no longer be generated, OALs, OPs and FPs would no longer be calculated, and the QCS Test would be discontinued. Under the new model, Subject Results would be reported on a finer scale for use by universities in their selection decisions (p. 3)
2	Student attainment in each Authority Subject should be reported by QCAA in the form of "Subject Results" indicating the level of knowledge, understanding and skill that the student has attained. These should be directly comparable across teachers and schools and function as standalone measures of senior secondary attainment, independently of how they might subsequently be used (p. 3)
3	The certification of student attainment in each senior subject should be based on a set of four specified types of assessment activities. QCAA should specify the nature of each activity, the conditions under which it is to be completed and the marking scheme for assessing students' performances. One of the four assessment activities should be externally set and marked by QCAA (p. 3)
4	Students' Subject Results should be reported as integers on a scale of 1 to 60, with the suppression of a total mark of 0. Each Subject Result should be calculated as the sum of a student's mark on the external assessment (in the range 0 to 30) and marks on the three assessment activities set and marked by teachers (each in the range 0 to 10). Teachers' assessments should not be statistically scaled against the external assessment (p. 3)
5	An External Assessment in each subject should be set and marked by QCAA and completed at the same time under the same supervised conditions in all schools. If resourcing is an issue, priority should be given to developing External Assessments for subjects with high enrolments, subjects which are foundational for university courses, and subjects for which external assessment is most practicable. For the vast majority of senior subjects, the External Assessment should contribute 50 per cent of the Subject Result (p. 3)

Recommendation	Extract
6	Three School Assessments should be specified for each subject. The nature, intentions and parameters for these three assessment activities should be specified by QCAA, with teachers in schools annually designing local versions of each. The three School Assessments and the External Assessment should be designed jointly to provide appropriate coverage and balance of the subject syllabus and in general should address different kinds of learning and achievement within the subject (p. 3)
7	<p>QCAA should assure the validity and reliability of School Assessments in each subject through a revised approach to moderation that includes three elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Endorsement - Confirmation - Ratification (p. 4)
8	QCAA should establish a guild of Assessment Supervisors to provide guidance in relation to the proposed moderation processes (the endorsement of assessment activities; the confirmation of marking standards; and the ratification of Subject Results) and to assist in teacher capacity building (p. 4)
9	The Senior External Examinations currently developed by QCAA should be discontinued. Instead, all students who are undertaking a senior subject should be required to complete the four assessment activities specified by QCAA for that subject (the three School Assessments and one External Assessment) (p. 4)
10	If tertiary institutions choose to construct an ATAR, then this should be computed using an inter- subject scaling of Subject Results reported by QCAA (each on a GO-point scale). In setting new eligibility rules tertiary institutions should consider reducing the number of subjects and restricting combinations of subjects (p. 4)
11	The Queensland Government should invest additional funding in the creation of high-quality assessment and certification processes to underpin a reformed senior secondary credential. A priority order of subjects should be established in the event that it is not possible to fund the development of externally set and marked assessments in all senior subjects (p. 4)

Recommendation	Extract
12	The QCAA should build into its assessment processes a greater focus on skills and attributes now being identified in senior secondary curricula as essential to life and work in the 21st Century (for example, teamwork, problem solving, creativity, verbal communication) (p. 4)

Note: Adapted from Matters, G., & Masters, N. G. (2014b). *Redesigning the sencondary-tertiary interface: Queensland review of senior assessment and tertiary entrance*. Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).

https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=qld_review

The recommendations in the report proposed solutions to the identified issues with the OP system. The primary focus was on the requirement for a more dependable and valid approach to senior assessment in Queensland. A crucial aspect of the recommendations was the need for meaningful, clear, subject-specific accomplishments for all key stakeholders (Matters & Masters, 2014b). However, the challenge for the QCAA, schools, and teachers was dealing with five decades of entrenched practices and values. For this reason, the context provided an ideal opportunity to view externally imposed change within an education system and its impact on teachers' daily practice.

1.3. Motivation for Undertaking the Study

This study was particularly interesting to me due to my experiences working within Queensland education. With 15 years of experience as a teacher in the Queensland system, I was trained within the prior QCE system and experienced the impact of the new system firsthand as a teacher of senior mathematics. It was reflection on my practice due to the introduction of an external examination that highlighted the need to investigate this in detail, moving from a system where I wrote the assessment and taught the students within their context to a 50% external examination and the unknown factors that raised many questions. It challenged the research on a philosophical level, leading to a desire to explore the impacts of mandated imposed change on teacher practice.

1.4. Literature that informs the study

Several areas of literature on imposed change in education were explored when determining which direction this study should take. The literature review in Chapter Two examined previous research in the education system and presented the findings with four distinct sections. After conducting the literature review, it was clear that imposed change operates within many lenses, with each focus becoming smaller as it moves more towards the school context. Firstly, there is imposed change in organisations as a general philosophical overview (Andersen, 2021; Bartunek et al., 2006; Sverdlik & Oreg, 2015). Secondly, there is a more system-specific focus, namely and important to this study, educational systems (Almeida et al., 2014; Ingersoll, 1994; Limerick et al., 1993; Paquett, 1997). Thirdly, the nature of imposed change within the context of this study is Australia and, more appropriately, the state of Queensland (Allen, 2012; Beare, 1983; Brennan, 2011; Matters & Masters, 2014a, 2014b). Lastly, it viewed imposed change at the school level, drawing on the complexities of organisational management (Conway & Andrews, 2016; Eaker et al., 2020; Exley, 2015; Putnam & Borko, 2000; Schein & Schein, 2017; Venables, 2018). The review was fundamental in honing the study on the important factors associated with imposed change and developing a conceptual framework that guided the study.

The process of undertaking the literature review began by understanding the nature of imposed change from a general philosophical viewpoint. Important aspects were discovered, such as imposed change to organisations leading to negative outcomes such as job loss, reduced status, conflicts in personal life, and threats to the psychological well-being of employees (Bartunek et al., 2006). Other researchers such as Andersen (2021), Bridges (2003), Geddes (1992), Rains (2013), and Sverdlik and Oreg (2015) all emphasised that although imposed change in organisations is often unsettling for the individuals involved, it is

a regular occurrence for modern-day organisations. For this reason, examining the interactions of imposed change with organisation members is an essential line of research.

This study focused on investigating imposed change in education systems. The literature review identified key research from various international education systems and highlighted the many reasons change is forced upon schools. The most popular view was that education systems were continually striving to develop students for societal needs (Charlton, 1997; Franklin, 2010; Ingersoll, 1994; Menzies, 1996; Paquett, 1997; Watkins & Lodge, 1999). This was also true for Australia's education system which was shown to move through many phases of educational reform (Beare, 1983). This included moves towards standardised curriculum through the late 20th century to align itself with global trends (Brennan, 2011). Any move proved difficult for the federal government to achieve due to the traditional independence of the education systems within each state. Nevertheless, it highlighted that Australia was not immune to the nature of imposed change and was striving to align itself with 21st-century needs.

In addition to examining the nature of imposed change in educational systems, the literature review took a more focused view on imposed change in educational organisations, it discussed organisational culture, teacher mindset and leadership theory and examined the many implications of implementing imposed change in schools. Firstly, it identified that successful change was reliant on a culture that cultivated learning between the educational members. Researchers such as Butler et al. (2004), Conway (2009), Eaker et al. (2020), Leat et al. (2006), Meirink et al. (2009), Putnam and Borko (2000), and Wallace and Priestley (2011) highlighted that a culture of continuous learning was fundamental to successful change and school improvement. Secondly, teacher mindsets were a powerful influencer on the success of reform. Teachers bring their own beliefs, values, and experiences to their practice and these can directly influence the direction taken by imposed change (Hatch &

Yanow, 2009; Kendall & Kendall, 2012; Putnam & Pacacnowsky, 1983; Putnam & Borko, 2000; Venables, 2018). Thirdly, successful reform is critically related to the ability of the school leaders to implement the change, which proved to be a fundamental impact of imposed change on teachers' practice (Crowther, 2009; Kendall & Kendall, 2012; Lambert, 2007; Miles & Snow, 1986; Morgan, 2006). The literature emphasises the importance of this research as implementing imposed change in schools is often unpredictable and relies on a variety of key components that are distinctive to each situation.

1.5. Justification for the Study

The literature review situated research on imposed change within the education sector, focusing on the challenges faced by Queensland schools as they shifted from the OP to the ATAR system. The literature underscored the significance of this research, highlighting the unpredictable nature of implementing imposed changes in schools and the necessity of various key elements unique to each context. Queensland's particular scenario, marked by a prolonged period of minimal change that has shaped teachers' pedagogical practices, offered a valuable opportunity to enhance existing research on the effective management of imposed change by school leaders.

For fifty years, Queensland operated under a teacher-led senior assessment system, where educators had control over subject-specific assessments, fostering core values and beliefs about the advantages of a meaningful and contextual curriculum for students. The introduction of the ATAR system, with its tighter restrictions on senior assessments and the reintroduction of external examinations after five decades, has the potential to curtail teacher autonomy. This significant shift provided a chance to examine imposed change through the experiences of Queensland teachers, enriching the complex and often uncertain body of research, which is inherently context specific. In an ever-evolving educational landscape, this

research is essential to understanding how imposed change can be managed to maximise benefits for teaching and learning.

1.6. Focus of Study

The following primary research question, along with several subsidiary research questions, was the focus of this study. At this point it seems necessary to define pedagogical practice in the context of this study. Pedagogical practice refers to “the act and discourse of teaching” (Alexander, 2004, p. 8). This produces a broad and substantive definition for investigating impacts on pedagogical practice, thus including all forms of teaching practice, namely, the curriculum, planning, classroom instruction, and assessment (Black & Wiliam, 2018). Within this broad definition, the impacts will be viewed within the breadth and depth of a teacher’s role. As Alexander (2008) emphasised:

Pedagogy is the act of teaching together with its attendant discourse of educational theories, values, evidence and justifications. It is what one needs to know, and the skills one needs to command, in order to make and justify the many different kinds of decision of which teaching is constituted. (p. 24)

This definition of pedagogical practice encompasses the complexities of teaching, including organisational norms, student interactions, and the negotiation of core values. Within this dynamic reality, teachers make decisions that directly impact student learning. All aspects of their role are fundamental to effective teaching and thus constitute their pedagogical practice.

1.6.1. Research Aim

The aim of the study was to examine the impact of externally imposed change on teachers’ pedagogical practice by investigating their lived experience through the stories of the individuals involved in the change.

1.6.2. Primary Research Question

What emerges as the impact of an externally imposed change on teachers' pedagogical practice in a Queensland secondary school?

1.6.3. Subsidiary Research Questions

SRQ1. How have teachers at a Queensland secondary school conceptualised the new QCE system concerning their pedagogical practice?

SRQ2. How have the school leaders of a Queensland secondary school conceptualised and prioritised the new QCE system concerning teachers' pedagogical practice?

SRQ3. What has contributed to the impact of the new QCE system on teachers' pedagogical practice in a Queensland secondary school?

1.7. Methodology

The study used a qualitative case study methodological approach, focusing on Queensland teachers in a regional secondary school experiencing the imposed change. The case in this instance was the sampled school which was experiencing the change. The school was chosen for convenience and accessibility because it was my place of employment during the commencement of this study. This was a logical selection due to the certainty of being immersed in the study's context, which could, therefore, be defined as a shared experience with the participants. Cohen et al. (2018) and Merriam (2010) each defined a case study as a bounded system of investigation with contained variables, where a detailed examination is carried out on a real-life sample to catch its intricacy and distinctiveness. This definition suits the intended study and emphasises the advantage of an easily accessible site.

My situation lends itself to the very time and place the phenomenon occurs, which is a key feature of case study research. A study by Creswell et al. (2007) explained that there should be no doubts about the suitability of the case in defining the area of inquiry. The case study should be able to build a thorough understanding of the phenomenon by accessing

multiple data sources (Creswell et al., 2007). The study relied heavily on teacher perspectives, so a case study seemed appropriate for investigating the research topic. Whether positive or negative, externally imposed change impacted Queensland schools, and accessing different perspectives was invaluable. The research topic was a living, breathing reality for the individuals residing in the school. The real-time experiences, the conceptual framework, and my positional power justified using a case study approach.

1.8. Research Design

There were four phases to this study's data collection and analysis with each being suitable for investigating the subsidiary research questions,

1.8.1. Preliminary Phase

The preliminary phase involved a focus group consisting of some key Heads of Departments. This focus group structure enabled an expansion of the initial study parameters and challenged my assumptions regarding the research topic. It created dialogue opportunities between the participants and presented the research with the opportunity to view them in a more natural setting. The gathered data were analysed and used to inform the subsequent phases.

1.8.2. Phases One and Two

Teacher and Deputy Principal interviews were used to gather evidence on how the new QCE system has impacted teachers' pedagogical practice. The interviews were semi-structured by nature and allowed for a conversational style to draw out the participant's experiences (Cohen et al., 2018). Furthermore, the open-ended questions aimed to gather data while allowing for focused yet in-depth responses to view how the participants had conceptualised the imposed change.

1.8.3. Phase Three

Phase three was identified for quality assurance. Each participant was presented with a summary of their response and was allowed to clarify any misrepresentations. Furthermore, time was given to catch-up interviews in case emerging themes or important points needed clarification.

1.9. Structure of Thesis

This thesis is presented in six chapters. Chapter one offers an introduction and background of the study, including a brief overview of the context and the research questions that guide the study. The content of chapters two to six is summarised as follows.

1.9.1. Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter offers a view of the literature regarding imposed change on education systems. The initial section utilises research to define imposed change and its holistic impact on organisations, examining the complexities it introduces for change agents as the people implementing the change, and recipients as the people experiencing the change, including their psychological reactions. The second section synthesises current and historical studies to define the nature of imposed change within education systems, focusing on the unique challenges in the Australian context. The third section analyses the key components of current imposed changes in Queensland education, highlighting significant alterations to the senior assessment system and their potential organisational impacts while examining the principles and values influencing teachers' pedagogical practices. Finally, the last section delves into the complexities of implementing imposed change at the school level, reviewing the literature on change management strategies and their influence on teachers' practices, internal influences, organisational culture, and individual mindsets, culminating in a conceptual framework to guide the research on the impact of imposed change on teachers' pedagogical practices.

1.9.2. Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter three provides an overview of the research methodology followed to undertake the research. There is a discussion of the research context, with a focus on emphasising the paradigm and beliefs guiding the study. It then thoroughly explains the research design, including the types of evidence to be collected and the criteria for selecting the participants. Furthermore, it provides a detailed account of how the data will be analysed and quality assured, including how I minimised bias and increased the study's validity. It also gives an outline of the ethical considerations underpinning the data collection.

1.9.3. Chapter 4: Data presentation

This chapter presents the narrative of the data collection phase. It presents the data collated from the focus group and several semi-structured interviews in relation to the study's subsidiary research questions. Its role in this thesis is to present the facts as found through the data collection tools. The data collected proved to be invaluable, offering profound insights into the participants' intricate thoughts, emotions, and perspectives. Chapter four enhances the study's robustness and offers an in-depth understanding of the diverse challenges and adaptations educators encounter due to the dynamics of imposed change. Consequently, this chapter serves as a fundamental piece in unravelling the complex stories of the participants, thereby enriching the overall research investigation.

1.9.4. Chapter 5: Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Chapter five consolidates participant responses into common themes and provides a thematic interpretation of the evidence, addressing the subsidiary research questions. The data collection and analysis process establishes a foundation for synthesising various factors, allowing for a comprehensive discussion. This chapter elucidates the multifaceted nature of imposed change within educational organisations, highlighting potential positive outcomes, the inherent complexities, and the frequent frustrations experienced by teachers. It explores

how educators endeavour to refine their pedagogical practices, aiming to create an environment where students can thrive amidst the uncertainties of the educational landscape.

1.9.5. Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion

Guided by the overarching research question, this chapter delves into the lessons that can be learned from the participants' experiences. It begins with a revisit to the study's context, followed by a discussion on seeking clarity on the impact of imposed change, which aims to answer the primary research question. It then focuses on the study's contribution to the knowledge base on imposed change and the practical application to educational organisations, including a list of recommendations for policymakers proposing imposed change. Following this is a discussion of the study's limitations and some further research considerations.

1.10. Chapter Summary

This chapter introduces an original contribution to externally imposed change's impact on teachers' pedagogical practice. It provides background and context to the research topic, outlining the motivation behind the study. The chapter presents the research aim and questions, along with the methodological approach and research design that guided the research process. Additionally, it includes a brief overview of the relevant literature and justifies the need for this study. A detailed literature review is provided in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Queensland schools have undergone a significant imposed change in senior assessment for the first time in over 50 years (Willis et al., 2019). This literature review examines research on externally imposed educational change in support of this study, focussing specifically on changes to the senior assessment system in Queensland, known as the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) system. Considering the historic and unique context of Queensland education system, as discussed in Chapter One, this review acknowledges that school leaders were tasked with leading their teaching staff through a mandated change, and teachers' personal experiences, beliefs, and values surrounding Queensland education had shaped their pedagogical practice.

This literature review examines previous research regarding imposed change on education systems and presents the findings in a deliberate structure consisting of four sections (see figure 2.1). Firstly, the review reports on imposed change to organisations as a holistic entity. Secondly, it discusses imposed change in education and how imposed change is identified in an Australian education context. Thirdly, it contextualises imposed change in relation to this case study by discussing the imposed change in Queensland education, and finally, it discusses research around imposed change in Queensland schools and highlights the key considerations for this study.

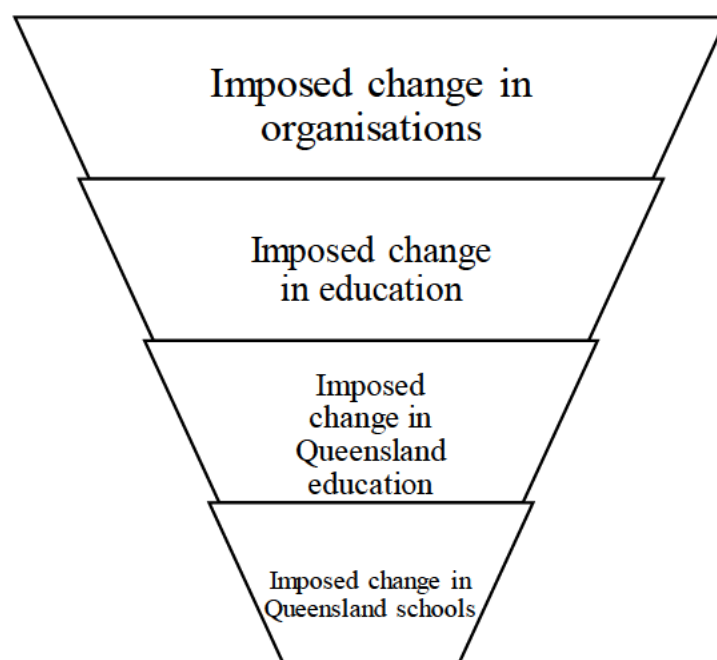
The first section uses research to define imposed change and what it means holistically for organisations. It looks at the many complexities which imposed change causes for the change agents and change recipients. This includes research on the psychology behind the reactions of the organisational members upon whom the change is being imposed. The second section aims to bring together current and historical studies to define the nature of imposed change in education systems. This includes an exploration of what imposed change means in the Australian context which is wholly unique and brings many complexities and

challenges. The third section looks at the key components of the current imposed changes to Queensland education. It identifies the significant alterations to the senior assessment system and the potential impacts at the organisation level. Additionally, it examines the principles, values, and beliefs that characterise Queensland education and influence teachers' pedagogical practices.

The final section focuses on the complexity of implementing imposed change at the school-level. This section explores literature regarding key strategies and characteristics of change management in schools, and its influence on teachers' practice. Given the nature of teaching, this literature review explores internal influences on teaching practice as well as that of organisational culture, and individual mindsets in negotiating the complexities of imposed change. This review enabled the development of a conceptual framework which focused the research study on the impact of the imposed change, on teachers' pedagogical practices.

Figure 2.1

Literature Review Structure



2.1. Imposed Change to Organisations

This section aims to take a holistic view of imposed change as it relates to organisations. The discussion extends beyond the educational context, encompassing the complexities of imposed change across various organisational settings.

2.1.1. The Nature of Imposed Change

Imposed change refers to a higher authority introducing and implementing organisational initiatives that directly impact the recipient's meaning-making of their current duties (Bartunek et al., 2006). For example, when a governance initiative is introduced in the health sector it directly impacts the doctors and nurses who work within this environment. A study by Bartunek et al. (2006) explored imposed change implemented in a hospital and concluded that this significant change had resulted in major stress for the organisational members as they attempted to make sense of the change. Further, Bartunek et al. (2006) found that significant organisational changes had potentially led to negative outcomes such as job loss, reduced status, conflicts in personal life, and threats to the psychological well-being of employees. This study suggested that imposed change can impact both the work and personal lives of employees.

Imposed change in modern organisations involves the implementation of change that affects individuals' understanding and perception of their duties. Andersen's (2021) metaphor of Proteus, the shape-shifting Greek God, emphasised the need to navigate and embrace change to maintain currency in a constantly moving landscape. It was believed that if one could capture Proteus, he would be compelled to reveal the future, regardless of the form he assumed. The analogy suggested that as society evolves and undergoes dramatic changes, it necessitates new ways of responding and adapting to these shifts (Andersen, 2021). Nevertheless, as discussed by Bartunek et al. (2006) this event is highly stressful for the members of the organisation, and it can have a significant effect on their well-being, which extends outside of work.

A study by Sverdlik and Oreg (2015) and another more recently by Andersen (2021) found that imposed change can occur in any form and usually results in individuals creating new buy-ins and perceptions of whichever aspect of life it impacts. This impact had also been reported by Rains (2013) who found that despite the change being identified as positive, it is often unsettling, and this is due to the inherent search for stability in human's lives (Bridges, 2003; Lewin, 1947). Noteworthy of Rains (2013), research is the acknowledgement that there is a minority of individuals who do not perceive organisational change as threatening or disruptive. These people view change as a learning experience and often have relative stability and control in other aspects of their lives.

An older study by Geddes (1992) showed change that occurs outside of an individual's control is interconnected with emotional significance. Change can take the form of many complex ideas, ranging from minor to major transformations in a person's life (Geddes, 1992). The intensity levels of such an event can be moderately or highly intrusive, with the latter leading to more severe impacts on individuals' well-being. Geddes (1992) described that change encompasses personal, professional, and spiritual dimensions, and moves individuals from the predictable to the unknown, irrelevant of whether they have a high ability to cope with stress and anxiety. This study found that humans seek stability, but it is impossible to not experience change at some point in a person's life. Effectively coping with change entails individuals accessing resources and support which direct them towards adapting to the new circumstances (Geddes, 1992). This study highlighted the impacts of wellbeing and mental state on those impacted by the change.

In corroboration with Geddes (1992), Sverdlik and Oreg (2015) found that change which occurs beyond someone's control can influence their wellbeing and functions. Furthermore, even events enacted by choice, such as adjustments to parenthood, immigrating to a new country, or changing occupations, can impact individuals at a substantial level

(Sverdlik & Oreg, 2015). In addition, Limerick et al. (1993) found that, during previous generations, organisational change was a rare occurrence; however, in the present-day, changes occur regularly as organisations attempt to stay in tune with their clientele. This is further reinforced by Andersen (2021) who discussed that earlier organisations would have edged toward the more cautious side of organisational change to maintain the status quo and retain its members' skillset. The main reason behind this was competing markets moving more slowly than in the digital age (Andersen, 2021). Therefore, there has been a need in the modern era for a deeper understanding of imposed change and its impact on organisations.

2.1.2. *The Kübler-Ross Model*

Leybourne (2016), Mayers-Elder (2008), and Rains (2013) each related to a framework developed by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in 1969 directly to a person's reaction to imposed change within their workplace. The Kübler-Ross model highlighted five key stages of grief namely, denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance (Corr, 2022). Although the model was aimed at personal life changing events, it has become a source for modelling other situations such as imposed change in organisations (Rains, 2013). If leaders are aware of how change can affect individuals, then they can offer tailored support, which recognises the emotional needs associated with each stage (Leybourne, 2016; Rains, 2013). These studies give pragmatic examples of how this framework can be used (Corr, 2022). For instance, during the denial stage, leaders can provide clear explanations and rationale to help individuals accept the change. In the anger stage, leaders can create a supportive environment for people to express their frustrations, while during the bargaining stage, open dialogue and exploring alternatives can be helpful. In the depression stage, leaders can provide empathy, resources, and opportunities for individuals to cope with their feelings, and in the acceptance stage, leaders can offer reassurance and encouragement to facilitate a smooth transition. It is important to note that while these studies offer insight into how change in an organisation can be managed, people do not move through the stages of grief uniformly and leaders must use

situational awareness when implementing the framework (Corr, 2022). These studies highlight the awareness of individual feelings and perceptions fundamental for the success of imposed change.

2.1.3. *Clear Communication of the Purpose*

A study by Bartunek et al. (2006) explored the importance of change agents developing a joint understanding of the imposed change with the recipients. They argued that when the change agent assumes that the recipients share a common understanding, this could lead to misguided decisions during the implementation phase (Bartunek et al., 2006). The different perceptions of recipients can result in complex interactions which undermine the intended purpose of the change (Bartunek et al., 2006). The findings underscored the importance of recipients perceiving the change as empowering. This perception has a lesser impact on perceived losses, such as an increased workload (Bartunek et al., 2006).

Interestingly, the Bartunek et al. (2006) study highlighted the need to preserve psychological contracts between organisations and the members by ensuring that the presentation of imposed change is transparent with the implementation phase (Bartunek et al., 2006). In agreement with Bartunek et al. (2006), a study by Bolman and Deal (2021) outlined that change will rarely be successful if collaboration is not utilised in the imposed change design. This study found that a situation where collaboration has not been used will almost always result in stiff resistance later in the implementation phase (Bolman & Deal, 2021). It is implied that the notion of consistent sense-making between change agents and the participants is essential for the path of least resistance.

2.1.4. *Resistance to the Change*

Resistance has been a highly researched concept within imposed change theory. Piderit (2000) defined resistance as behaviour aimed to safeguard individuals from the perceived consequences of imposed change. This often arises between employers and employees and is exacerbated by poor collaborative practices (Piderit, 2000). Furthermore,

both Piderit (2000) and Rains (2013) found that the disruptive nature of change upsets the organisations status quo by challenging embedded belief systems, traditional practices, and perceptions. The resistance resulted in emotional outcomes, identified as aggression and frustration, which leads to undesirable behaviours during the change process (Rains, 2013). This aligns with earlier research by Argyris (1978), Coch and French (1948), and Zander (1950), who all agreed that resistance to change is a defensive response triggered by feelings of frustration and anxiety. A common theme within these studies is that resistance to change is often used as a negative term; however, it gives the change agents insights into the emotional state of the recipients.

A study by Barsade et al. (2018) explored a concept named “emotional contagion” which refers to the process by which emotions and behaviours can be influenced by an individual or group. This research suggested that this model can be applied to understand how unconscious and conscious emotional behaviour affects the outcome of imposed change (Barsade et al., 2018). In an earlier study, Judge et al. (1999) acknowledged that an individual’s reaction to change is influenced by their change schematic. The schematic has been constructed by prior experiences of change events and specifies how individuals influence others. These personality dispositions play a significant role in how they behave during the change phase within themselves and towards others (Barsade et al., 2018; Judge et al., 1999). For instance, confident and easy-going traits may be more effective at coping with change; however, inflexibility and resistive traits can lead to reduced output, disengagement, quarrels, and hostility for extended periods (Rains, 2013). Moreover, emotional contagion theory would indicate that individuals who exhibit more negative behaviours gravitate together to seek validation for their emotional state (Barsade et al., 2018). The studies emphasise the importance of leaders understanding their subordinates and how they behave and react to irregularities within organisational life.

2.1.5. Interactions Between Organisation Members to Imposed Change

Interactions between school employees can have varying effects on the organisations implementing imposed change. A study by Limerick et al. (1993) on organisational management discussed some of the challenges faced by organisations in the 21st century. Blueprints were used to describe cultural mindsets within organisations (Limerick et al., 1993). Limerick et al. (1993) stated:

We have come to call these mindsets managerial ‘blue prints’ in order to stress that they are not just passive ways of understanding the managerial world – they are images of the way organisations ought to be managed, and they directly affect managerial choice.... Each blueprint is deeply related to a set of social and economic conditions and tends to be associated with different eras of social and economic development. (p. 28)

The authors explained that three blueprints can be constructed by looking at the history of Western management and a fourth blueprint represents the mindset needed for organisations in the 21st century (Limerick et al., 1993). Using the “Forth Blueprint principle” to define an organisational culture which is suitable for the modern world, the authors outlined the key characteristics for a change culture (Limerick et al., 1993). The more suitable environment entails members taking responsibility for their own careers, feeling uncontrolled by the organisation, empowered by learning, and having well-defined values in-line with the organisation (Limerick et al., 1993). This does not mean the individuals are any less committed to the organisation. It simply means they actively reflect on mission statements and values rather than purely following directions (Limerick et al., 1993). They ensure their world aligns and this motivates them for the common good of the organisation. This study aligns with the ideas of Butler et al. (2004) and Exley (2015) where progress is at its peak when people are motivated to share ideas and act positively on the organisation.

The counter argument is also presented by Limerick et al. (1993). This cultural consideration is referred to as, “Third Blueprint principles”. Dependent on the make-up of its members and social constructs, the organisation could be restrictive for reform to occur. For instance, having members at the organisation who have been employed for 30 years or more can create a culture of corporate citizenship. Limerick et al. (1993) highlighted that for these members “a long-service award is not trivial – it represents the successful completion of reciprocal rights and obligations – the fulfilment, overtime, of citizenship of the organisation” (p. 107). These individuals believe that due to their commitment, their role should be continuous and not alter (Limerick et al., 1993). This unspoken phenomenon can affect the culture of the organisation (Limerick et al., 1993). It is within the experienced members that new employees seek council, and their words and actions could be influential when implementing imposed change.

Referring to Limerick et al. (1993), psychological contracts can be a substantial problem towards successful reform. Limerick et al. (1993) described that members operating within the third blueprint often find any change personally devastating as it entails a redefinition of self. This fits with the complexity of the intended study. If an organisational culture exhibits this characteristic, then it could have a negative effect on the impact of the imposed change. They may expect this psychological contract to be exchanged for security and protection from the imposed change (Limerick et al., 1993). Furthermore, the members in question may opt out of reform initiatives due to having moderate amounts of past success and this can influence other organisational members.

Researchers van den Heuvel et al. (2015) agreed with Limerick et al. (1993) and explained that, if a member's psychological contract with the organisation is not considered, then it could impact negatively on imposed change initiatives. van den Heuvel et al (2015) outlined that “the psychological contract focuses on implicit and largely unspoken promises

between an employer and an employee” (p. 284). The problem occurs when the assumed agreement is unable to be upheld due to unforeseen factors acting on the organisation (van den Heuvel et al., 2015). van den Heuvel et al. (2015) showed that mistrust due to the employers not fulfilling the agreement can produce behaviours which inhibit organisational improvement. If the more experienced members are exhibiting behaviours which act negatively on the organisation, then this can impact the less experienced members.

2.1.6. Summary

This section of the literature review has examined research on imposed change in organisations and the impacts on individuals. Imposed change has been defined as organisational initiatives, often introduced by governing authorities, which affect normal employee duties. The stress that imposed change can cause on the members of the organisation has been discussed and the research indicates that imposed change could lead to negative outcomes. These impacts could range from job loss, reduced status, conflicts in personal life, and influence psychological well-being. The studies show that implementing imposed change successfully requires organisational leaders to fully understand their employees’ emotional needs. Additionally, the literature highlights how the Kübler-Ross model can be applied to imposed change theory, the importance of clear communications between change agents and the recipients, and the key understanding of why individuals experience resistance to change. Moreover, it shows that some organisational members have unspoken agreements with organisations and their reactions influence each other’s response to imposed change. The following section aims to contextualise imposed change within education as the focus of this study.

2.2. Imposed Change in Education

Historically, educational governing bodies implement imposed change to improve educational outcomes and maintain currency within society. This section is dedicated to reviewing literature that highlights global trends in education systems which resulted in

imposed change. The focus of discussion is between 1972, when the previous Queensland senior assessment system was introduced, to 2014, when the new system was announced. This review acknowledges that the articles presented display situations which have since passed and the lessons already learnt; however, understanding them will help define imposed change in the context of education. The following discussion will place the concept of imposed change within education as a global entity and then relate this to the Australian system within which this study exists.

2.2.1. Historical Global Trends

Since the establishment of the previous Queensland senior assessment system in 1972, there have been many examples of imposed change in education (Chatalalsingh & Reeves, 2014; Matters & Masters, 2014b). In Limerick et al. (1993), “Managing the New Organisation”, the authors predicted key differences between 20th century and 21st century organisations highlighting the need for future generations to prepare for employment in a new type of workforce. Raising similar questions, early articles such as Charlton (1997), Menzies (1996), and Paquett (1997) inquired as to whether schools were appropriately developing students for a new economically driven world. The popularity of such discussions appeared to influence many educational systems to implement imposed change during this time.

Watkins and Lodge (1999) conducted a study in the late 20th century which found that changes were needed in the United Kingdom (U.K.) education system. The authors reasoned that current teaching practices were not in line with the student’s realities. The study compared U.K. secondary schools to the outdated Victorian factory model and used this as an argument for improvement. They found that the current system had a "top-down" approach, where schools were loosely organised and relied on bureaucrats to hold them accountable. They proposed that schools should take more control by challenging the assumptions in which teachers operate (Watkins & Lodge, 1999). This example emphasises a close tie to the

current research for this period (Charlton, 1997; Limerick et al., 1993; Menzies, 1996; Paquett, 1997).

Ingersoll's (1994) study provides an example within the United States of America (USA) education system during the early 1990s. This author found that schools in the USA were archaic organisations based on outdated values and were lacking in passion and life for the profession of teaching. Moreover, Ingersoll (1994) identified two conflicting lenses being used to argue for imposed change. The first lens described schools as loosely coupled systems, where teachers are free to make decisions for the benefit of their students. Whereas, the second lens viewed schools as rigid and hierarchical, with overly controlled teachers, not willing to take risks to improve outcomes (Ingersoll, 1994). Nevertheless, despite the differences between the two lenses, the author shows that both argue for imposed change to align with global, societal, and student needs.

Another example of imposed change within the USA system, the Franklin (2010) study explored the restructuring of a U.S. urban school into smaller learning communities to enhance student performance. The study found that this initiative aligned with the overarching governmental goal of closing education gaps between privileged and disadvantaged communities, as set forth by the "No Child Left Behind Act" (Government, 2005). Thus, this imposed change further emphasised the nature of educational analysis during that time.

More modern illustrations of imposed changes concur with the previous examples. For instance, Almeida et al. (2014) discussed the restructuring of the secondary education system in East Timor, which aimed to improve the socio-economic system through the development of human resources. Furthermore, Yeung et al. (2012) discussed the restructuring of the Hong Kong education system as a response to socio-economic and political influences from mainland China and various trading partners. All the examples

given in this section show a consistent trend in the global education sector. Each reform has distinct reasons behind it. However, they demonstrate a similar theme: the need to restructure to ensure more effective preparation of students for the modern world.

2.2.2. Imposed Change in Education: Australia

Australia has experienced many phases of discussion regarding educational reform. Four decades ago in the 1980s, there was much written on how the education system could cater for young Australians more effectively. One compelling piece by Beare (1983) pointed out that changes being implemented in Australian education during this era were influenced by cultural factors such as immigration, a surging unemployment rate, evolving marriage and family structures, and a volatile economy. This raised concerns about the ramifications of these changes. Beare (1983) highlighted that imposed change often comes with impacts that must be cautiously handled by school administrators and educators.

Further, Beare (1983) found that although mandated changes are typically well-considered, the systems they impact can exhibit irrational responses due to the unpredictable behaviour of the change recipients. In addition, due to various conflicting stakeholders, such as national, state, and local politics, the efficacy of such reforms must be evaluated with a degree of patience (Beare, 1983) and therefore he contrasted the changes taking place across Australia's diverse states and their complex dynamics. Historically, each Australian state controls its education system and while there have been movements for a standardised Australian curriculum, each state has responded differently to the needs of its constituents.

2.2.3. A Standardised Curriculum

Despite the rhetoric in the 1980s, the move towards a standardised curriculum in Australia did not take place until the late 2000s. Following global trends regarding imposed change, the National Curriculum Board in Australia argued that, given the changing global landscape, Australia needed to establish a world-class curriculum that caters to the needs of all young Australians (Brennan, 2011). Additionally, the Government of South Australia

(2006) found that concepts such as globalisation, which emerged in the latter part of the 20th century, were now real-world issues impacting Australian students. and the current curriculum expectations were insufficient for these students' futures.

In 2008, Australian Education Ministers argued for five improvement areas for Australian education. They suggested the world had changed significantly for individuals since education was last reformed (ACARA, 2012c). Table 2.1 shows a summary of the findings from the “Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians” (MCEETYA, 2008).

Table 2.1

Summary of Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians

Recommendation	Description
1	Global integration and international mobility heightens the need to nurture an appreciation of, and respect for, social, cultural and religious diversity, and a sense of global citizenship.
2	Australians need to become ‘Asia literate’ by building strong relationships with Asia.
3	Globalisation and technological change are placing higher demands on education and skill development in Australia, and the nature of jobs available to young Australians is changing faster than ever before.
4	Due to complex environmental, social, and economic pressures, Australians must be able to approach problem solving in new and creative ways.
5	Rapid and continuing advances in information and communication technologies (Vroom & Yetton) are causing young people needing high skills in ICT

Note: Adapted from MCEETYA. (2008). *Melbourne declaration on educational goals for young Australians*. Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

https://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/national_declaration_on_the_educational_goals_for_young_australians.pdf

The Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (ACARA) in 2009 began developing a national curriculum and assessment program designed to standardise students' achievement levels across Australia from Prep to Year 10 (Brennan, 2011). The development of the curriculum was influenced by the recommendations put forth by MCEETYA (2008). As highlighted, this document placed great emphasis on the importance of knowledge and curriculum design in supporting the development of globally recognised 21st-century skills (ACARA, 2012c).

Moreover, within the rationale for the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2012b), it was emphasised that Australia needed to promote a world-class curriculum and assessment system that produces confident, creative, active, and informed citizens (ACARA, 2012c). Directed from the highest level of Australian politics, the Australian states and territories were expected to implement this change; however, as previously noted, since states retained control over how the new curriculum would be implemented, it was not implemented as intended or uniformly across states.

Each state was allowed to adopt different aspects of the new curriculum, and it is within these details that is of particular importance to this study. ACARA's document (ACARA, 2012c) stated that:

Jurisdictions, systems and schools will be able to implement the Australian Curriculum in ways that value teachers' professional knowledge, reflect local contexts and take into account individual students' family, cultural and community backgrounds. Schools and teachers determine pedagogical and other delivery considerations. (p. 11)

While the national curriculum was a compulsory change, states and territories retained control over their education systems (ACARA, 2012c). Moreover, schools and teachers were free to design a contextualised pedagogical framework to deliver the new curriculum. This allowance for individuality contradicted the streamlining of content and skills, which was the responsibility of jurisdictions, systems, and schools to coordinate. This consideration raises questions about the nature of imposed change and the need to encourage buy-in while respecting teacher autonomy. This idea is particularly relevant to discussions about the Queensland senior assessment system and the complexities involved in negotiating imposed changes with schools. This study considers this flexibility when examining the impact on teachers' pedagogical practices.

In the aftermath of the implementation of the junior curriculum, Queensland's new senior assessment system sprouted from the federal government's attempt to streamline Australia's secondary senior curriculum in 2009. The aim of ACARA was to produce a more seamless approach to Australian education; therefore, the natural progression was a senior curriculum that mirrored the same developmental principles (ACARA, 2012c). Within the design specifications for the senior secondary curriculum outlined by ACARA (2012a), it referred to the influence of the ACARA (2009) document, the *Senior Secondary Years Position Paper*, which states some implications for the intended study. The recommendations made ten years before the new QCE system's implementation, presented an ambiguity in ACARA's directions. ACARA (2012a) explicitly mandated that "state and territory assessment and certification authorities will determine assessment arrangements and associated processes for assigning students to levels and for generating other assessment information, including subject scores" (p. 23). The implication for this study is clearly within the QCAA's interpretation of this statement based on the state's historical education trend.

2.2.4. Summary

This section has considered imposed change in education and defined it as the process where governing authorities attempt to navigate changing societal and global trends. In the examples discussed, the studies have analysed education systems for their relevance and effectiveness within that era. The underlying theme is that for education to be effective it must change and adapt to its students' needs. Linking to section one, it was discussed that even if imposed change is well thought out, the impact at the school-level needs careful consideration.

Furthermore, this section contextualised imposed change within the Australian education system. It examined the historic details of Australia's education system to define imposed change in Australian schools. Due to the complexities involved in Australian state and territory governance, consistency in education is difficult to achieve. Discussions regarding an Australian standardised curriculum began in the 1980s, but a strategic attempt did not occur until the late 2000s. The proposal aligned with other research on imposed change in education and aimed to bring Australian education into the 21st Century. The Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (ACARA) was established to develop the new national curriculum; however, due to states and territories being allowed autonomy in which aspects they adopt, it produced an inconsistent approach. The Australian senior curriculum was developed in a comparable way, and it is this context that is relevant to this study. The following section explores the current changes to Queensland education. The discussion aims to bring clarity to the significant changes imposed on teacher practice.

2.3. Imposed Change to Queensland Education

As Queensland has not seen significant change to its senior assessment system in over 50 years, it can be assumed that there are ingrained operational principles and beliefs about the way it conducts education. Attempting to capture and understand these key components was essential for this study. Moreover, the ingrained pedagogical practices have the potential

to influence Queensland school's conceptualisation of the imposed change. This section uses comparisons to the previous senior assessment system to understand the implications for Queensland teachers' practice.

2.3.1. Ingrained Operational Principles and Beliefs

As discussed in Chapter One, the previous Queensland senior assessment system had seen minor moderations over the 50 years of its inception; however, the fundamental principles remained consistent (Allen, 2012; Matters & Masters, 2014b). Queensland teachers were at the centre of teaching, learning, and assessment. Teacher autonomy was credited by Maxwell and Cumming (2011) as the reason for the system's success as teachers were empowered in such a way that the system adapted organically to generational challenges.

Teacher-driven assessment had been at the heart of quality learning experiences for Queensland students. According to the QCAA (2010), assessment was defined as the purposeful, systematic, and ongoing collection of information about student learning, and this core principle had been the foundation of assessment procedures since the abolishment of the first external exams. The practice of teacher-led collaborative assessment and judgements on student performance was a key aspect of pedagogy in Queensland. It was therefore crucial that this study examined how teachers are adjusting to the demands of the new system. (Allen, 2012; Matters & Masters, 2014b; QCAA, 2010).

One critical area for this study was the argument for authentic pedagogy to be at the heart of the new system. The QCAA (2010) stated:

In all education systems, it is an assessment that dominates the curriculum. If a model of assessment is restrictive, it will narrow the learning experiences of students. In the Queensland system, assessment is determined within the classroom — it is an integral part of teaching and learning. School assessment programs include opportunities to determine the nature of students' learning and then provide appropriate feedback or intervention. When authentic pedagogy is practiced, the teachers do not teach and

then hand over the assessment that “counts” to external experts to assess what the students have learnt. Authentic pedagogy occurs when the act of “teaching” involves placing high-stakes judgments in the hands of teachers. Since the abolition of external exams, Queensland’s teachers have been able to broaden the ways in which students can demonstrate what they have learnt rather than try and predict what examiners might be looking for. They have catered to the diverse learning needs of students by offering a variety of assessment experiences. And all this assessment “counts”. (pp. 4-5)

This purposeful statement reinforced the strength of Queensland’s core principles. The fundamental shift in teaching and learning in Queensland over the past five decades had established practices that go beyond teaching students for high-stakes exams (Allen, 2012; QCAA, 2010). It was necessary that this study observed the impact of the new senior assessment system on teacher practice in relation to the teaching and learning culture that had developed in Queensland education over the last 50 years.

2.3.2. *Queensland’s Overall Position (OP) System*

To understand Queensland’s embedded practices, it is necessary to provide a brief outline of the procedures used during the prior system era which resulted in an OP used for tertiary entrance, as this is the focus of the study. The previous system used a combination of subject-specific assessment internally set and administered by schools, and a Queensland Core Skills test (QCS) set and administered by the QCAA, to calculate tertiary ranks (Matters & Masters, 2014b; QCAA, 2010). This model of internal subject-specific assessment meant that Queensland schools were responsible for planning, implementing, and marking all assessment for each subject they delivered to students (QCAA, 2010). Moreover, senior teachers were able to construct context-driven work programs from QCAA syllabuses and select a range of assessment instruments that suited specific student cohorts (Matters & Masters, 2014b). This flexibility gave teachers confidence in making judgments that favoured

their students' learning (QCAA, 2010). Furthermore, context specific criteria, based on QCAA standards, were used by teachers to make judgements on student work (Matters & Masters, 2014b). The standards criteria allowed students in Queensland to have a range of contextualised learning experiences, while ensuring they reached the same learning standard as their peers. This practice was a key characteristic of senior education in Queensland.

To ensure consistency across districts and the state, the QCAA implemented processes to check school-based judgement of student work. This system consisted of subject-specific district and state panels responsible for randomly reviewing a maximum of nine student folios submitted from Queensland secondary schools (Matters & Masters, 2014b; QCAA, 2019a). The review panels contained subject-relevant practitioners with the goal of finding evidence which supported teacher judgement (QCAA, 2019a). There were two times when district panels would meet. One was at the end of Year 11, where panels would advise on the quality of assessment and judgments administered to the current cohort. This first meeting was unobtrusive as it had no impact on students' senior schooling results (Matters & Masters, 2014b). The second was at the end of Year 12, where the panels analysed student assessment folios and indicated whether the student result should be moved up or down the continuum (Matters & Masters, 2014b). If the teacher did not agree with the advice, they had an opportunity to negotiate with the panel head. If the teacher could not provide supportive evidence, then the school was to make the indicated changes. Additionally, state panels would randomly select folios across Queensland to check consistency (Matters & Masters, 2014b). The results were then confirmed by the QCAA and published on the student's Senior Statement (Matters & Masters, 2014b; QCAA, 2019a). This validation process aimed to ensure consistency of student results across the state.

In conjunction with the final subject-specific results, the QCS test was the other element used to calculate a student's Overall Position for tertiary entrance purposes. This test

was skill-based by nature, with the content built from embedded cognitions and practices within the subject-specific syllabi known as Common Curriculum Elements (CCEs). A five-point scale was used to assess students' application of the CCEs to contextually unfamiliar questions (Matters & Masters, 2014b; QCAA, 2019a). Each year, the content of the paper, the conditions, and the standards criteria were consistent across the state (Matters & Masters, 2014b; QCAA, 2019a). Additionally, the QCAA used the mean and mean difference from subject-specific Student Achievement Indicators (Hussain & Salfi, 2012) in conjunction with school-cohort QCS results to moderate differences between school subject results (Matters & Masters, 2014b; QCAA, 2019a). This process allowed the placement of every Queensland student on a standard achievement scale and the allocation of an OP, ranging from 1-25. Moreover, it enabled tertiary institutions to make informed decisions when setting minimum entry requirements (Matters & Masters, 2014b; QCAA, 2019a).

It would appear from the research that Queensland has a uniquely ingrained system. It is not for this review to provide opinions on the effectiveness of such a process but to highlight the embedded practices in which Queensland teachers had previously been operating. Changing the assessment system potentially changes the very culture of pedagogical practice in Queensland secondary schools. To gain a more concise understanding of the implications for teacher practice, the following parts of this review look at the key components of the new Queensland senior assessment system.

2.3.3. Queensland's Australian Tertiary Admission Ranking (ATAR) System

This section provides an overview of Queensland's ATAR system introduced in 2019 and uses comparisons with the OP system to understand the implications for teacher practice more effectively. The government considered the recommendations made by Matters and Masters (2014a) as outlined in Chapter One and proceeded to evaluate the feasibility of such a model. According to the Queensland Government (2015), the new assessment and tertiary

system would be designed to have minimal impact on Queensland schools and teachers' workloads.

The Queensland Government claimed that the new system's design aligned with the characteristics of Queensland education and the future needs of students. An information pamphlet called *Advancing futures: New senior assessment and tertiary entrance systems in Queensland* (Queensland Government, 2016) explained:

The new senior assessment system will build on the strengths of Queensland's current school-based assessment approach. Teachers will continue to exercise their professional judgement in designing and administering school-based senior assessment. Senior students will continue to be provided with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their skills and knowledge. Under the new arrangements, these features will also be complemented by subject-based external assessment and new processes to support and promote high-quality assessment practice. (p. 3)

This statement aligned with the recommendations made by Matters and Masters (2014a, 2014b), which suggested that the teacher-centred approach to assessment was Queensland education's major strength. Attempting to minimise the impact on this value was the Queensland Government attempt to ensure Queensland education's integrity.

The shift to a new assessment system, which combined internal and external examinations for each subject, was a major implication for Queensland schools. The modification involved several key changes such as eliminating the QCS and its corresponding procedures for calculating tertiary entrance (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2019b). Furthermore, classroom teachers now developed and administered three internal subject-specific assessments, and students completed one externally administered examination per subject studied (QCAA, 2019b; Queensland Government, 2016). This recommendation aligned with Matters and Masters (2014a) recommendation for more rigour

through an external assessment system. The Queensland Government argued that the external assessment will bring more consistent results across the state, which has been identified as a weakness in the OP system as outlined in Chapter One (Matters & Masters, 2014b; Queensland Government, 2016).

The introduced external examinations contribute 25% of all marks available for most subjects, except for mathematics and the sciences where they contribute 50%, (Queensland Government, 2016). Although the decision to incorporate internal assessment into the ATAR system strengthens the argument for minimising the impact on teacher practice, the shift back to external assessment is a significant implication for the intended study. Queensland abolished external assessment in 1972 and the resulting outcome indirectly strengthened teachers' pedagogical practice. Therefore, the impact of combining internal and external assessment on Queensland teachers' pedagogical practice could be a key implication for this study.

Another notable change was the process introduced for developing and administering internal assessment. When introducing the ATAR system, the Queensland Government (2016) stated that, "a range of new processes will be adopted to strengthen the quality and comparability of school-based assessment. Under these arrangements, Queensland's school-based assessment will have the most rigorous quality assurance in Australia" (p. 3). The process would consist of four major areas, as defined by the Queensland Government (2016) and presented in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2

Key Accountability Aspects of the new QCE System

Assessment phase	Description
Common assessment parameters	Senior teachers currently develop school-based assessments based on broad syllabus requirements. Under the new system, QCAA will provide more specific parameters for developing school-based assessments in

	each subject. This will include the type of assessment, the conditions under which it should be administered and a common marking scheme (p. 2).
Endorsement	Existing moderation processes are conducted after assessments have been completed by students. Under the new system, all school-based assessments will be subject to endorsement by the QCAA prior to use.
Confirmation	Under existing moderation processes, schools select samples of completed student work and submit them to QCAA moderation panels. The panels then consider whether the overall subject grades given to students are consistent with the work samples provided. Under a new Confirmation process, the QCAA will select representative samples of completed student responses from each school. Expert assessment supervisors will then consider whether the QCAA marking scheme has been correctly applied for each school-based assessment.
Ratification	QCAA will administer a final ratification process in which patterns of results in school-based and external assessment activities will be analysed to detect issues or anomalies. This may include patterns of results between school-based and external assessment. It may also include anomalies in school, class, or student results due to external circumstances such as illness or traumatic events.

Note: Adapted from Queensland Government. (2016). *Advancing futures: New senior assessment and tertiary entrance systems in Queensland*. The Queensland Cabinet and Ministerial Directory.

<https://cabinet.qld.gov.au/documents/2016/Oct/SeniorTE/Attachments/New%20Systems.PDF>

Table 2.2 outlines key similarities and differences between the ATAR and OP assessment system, which created implications for schools. For example, the idea of cross-state moderation in the form of Confirmation was like the verification process in which the QCAA would be supporting teacher judgments on students' work (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2019a). The only difference being that the QCAA would select

student folios, not schools. Another implication is the restrictions discussed through the Common Assessment Parameters (Queensland Government, 2016). As mentioned earlier, the OP system allowed teachers to create assessment instruments with the flexibility of student context and professional judgement; however, the ATAR system demanded stricter parameters that implied a significant mindset change for teachers.

The process of Endorsement added further changes to teachers' practice (Queensland Government, 2016). The moderation and verification process of the OP system allowed teachers to create assessments, mark them, and report them before being regulated by the QCAA (QCAA, 2010). The new system, however, required schools to obtain QCAA approval before administering assessment tasks, creating a potential loss of agency through requiring approval from a higher authority (Allen, 2012). Additionally, the use of external assessment to explore anomalies in student results was a new endeavour for teachers. The way teachers reacted to these imposed changes were fundamental to this study.

2.3.4. *Ingrained Pedagogy*

Discussion papers regarding the imposed change to Queensland's senior assessment system, such as Matters and Masters (2014b) and QCAA (2018), have highlighted several features which required Queensland teachers to change their teaching practice. One consideration was how teachers would approach teaching and learning due to the new external examinations (Matters & Masters, 2014b). This new element raised questions about the accountability of teachers, not only to schools and their governing bodies, but also to the QCAA. Although external assessment may have reduced the agency of Queensland teachers, they still had a responsibility to prepare students and condition them to be "test-ready". Willis et al. (2019) mentioned that teachers are at the forefront of imposed change in schools, and their actions will directly impact measurable student outcomes. However, as Clarke (2012) mentioned, internal assessment should accurately represent the taught content, while external assessment evaluates what needs to be taught. This loss of flexibility may affect the day-to-

day practices of Queensland teachers, thereby directly impacting students' learning experiences (Clarke, 2012). Therefore, this research needed to consider the increased accountability on teacher practice and the impact on their pedagogical approach.

The core practices promoting authentic pedagogy were the pride of the Queensland education system. The new ATAR system aimed to preserve these values while aligning with the systems overarching goals. According to the QCAA (2010), Queensland had successfully developed a range of authentic pedagogical practices which focused on enhancing teacher capacity, accommodating learning styles, preparing students for the future, fostering higher-order thinking skills, and ensuring fairness and reliability in the education system. The QCAA asserted that Queensland had achieved these goals through an integrated approach to learning and assessment, where teaching, assessing, and reporting were under school control. This literature review underscores the importance of these core values in understanding the impact of the new QCE system on teachers' pedagogical practice.

The agency of Queensland teachers and their commitment to authentic pedagogy is a key implication for this study. While the exact impact of high-stakes examinations on teacher practice cannot be determined, the literature suggests that it would be unrealistic to assume that there has been no consequence, whether positive or negative (Clarke, 2012; Matters & Masters, 2014a; Willis et al., 2019). The Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (2010) acknowledged that assessment has a dominant role in shaping curriculum; however, if the assessment model is restrictive, it limits students' learning experiences. QCAA (2010) discussed that, in Queensland, assessment is determined within the classroom, and teachers should not simply hand students over for external judgment, but rather be responsible for the "high stakes" judgments. Therefore, this definition posed a challenge for shifting to external assessment in Queensland senior education, as it inherently invites external judgment. The

key question remains as to how this definition of authentic pedagogy aligns with the guidelines of the ATAR system and impacts teacher practice.

2.3.5. *Summary*

The change to Queensland senior assessment system in 2019 was a significant milestone. The OP system, which had only experienced minor amendments over the last 50 years, resulted in a fundamental philosophy to ensure Queensland students had authentic learning experiences (Allen, 2012; QCAA, 2010). The development of the ATAR system raised questions about how it would impact teacher's pedagogical practice. Despite the Queensland Government's claim that they would minimise the impact on the school and the teacher's workload, there seemed to be a substantial amount of work needed for them to negotiate this change. Included was the potential loss of agency through the decision to tighten senior assessment parameters and the reintroduction of external examinations as a contrast to current practice (Queensland Government, 2016).

The literature suggests that the OP system, with its absence of external assessment anxiety, allowed for a deeper and more accurate representation of student learning experiences. Queensland teachers had the flexibility to approach their practice broadly, focusing on enabling students to demonstrate their knowledge rather than attempting to anticipate what external examiners might prioritise (QCAA, 2010). The idea of retaining integrity is a fundamental idea for the resulting impact on teachers' pedagogical practice. The following section explores the importance of school culture, teacher mindset, and school leadership in maintaining quality teaching and learning while negotiating imposed change in schools.

2.4. Imposed Change in Queensland Schools

Educational organisations are known for their operational complexities, and this is a vital consideration for the research study. The complex interactions between leaders, teachers, and students can lead to unpredictable situations that can make change management

difficult. This idea is not a new issue. Thirty years ago, Newmann (1993) highlighted the issues which a lack of thoughtfulness can bring when implementing structural change in educational systems. The author identified the complications involved in coordinating mass structural change. The study discussed that restructuring alone cannot provide enough substance to improve education when each organisation relies so heavily on member commitment to the change (Newmann, 1993). Further, Newmann (1993) showed that changing teachers' assumptions about education at a school level is difficult so across multiple schools is near impossible without a strategic plan. Research regarding the implementation of imposed change focuses on three sub-sections: school culture, teacher mindsets, and leadership theory.

2.4.1. *School Culture*

The diversity of organisational culture is an important consideration when implementing imposed change in schools. Almeida et al. (2014), Fenwick (2011), and Yeung et al. (2012) each suggested that continued evaluation and reflection of culture is an effective way to cope with the individual reactions by the change recipients. A study by Fenwick (2011) claimed that through continued reflection, the success and failures of the reform can be related directly to the culture of a school. Furthermore, Almeida et al. (2014) highlighted the power of using cultural evaluations as quality assurance tools. These studies inferred that the socio-cultural, socio-temporal, and socio-spatial complexities need constant supervision when initiating imposed change. The remainder of this sub-section discusses aspects of school culture which are conducive to negotiating imposed change at the school-level.

2.4.2. *Culture of Learning*

Exley's (2015) research showed that embedding a "culture of learning" will sometimes bring sustained improvement in schools through reflective practice. Earlier research by Butler et al. (2004) had argued that a culture of reflective practice can bring together formalised and practical knowledge, allowing teachers to collaborate and move

reforms forward in a natural way. Within this ideal, teachers are more likely to exhibit behaviours which bridge the gap between the implementers of the reform and the reality of schools (Butler et al., 2004). The outcome would enable groups of teachers to work collaboratively, experiment with new ways to teach, and have in-depth discussions about what has been successful (Butler et al., 2004).

Further, the notion of collective intelligences was a recurring theme regarding cultures of learning. Collective intelligence refers to a group's combined capability to perform a wide variety of tasks and solve diverse problems (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Collective intelligence theory assumes that humans have gone past the capability of the individual human brain.

Putnam and Borko (2000) gave an example using Navy ship navigation:

Within a U.S. Navy ship, the knowledge for successfully piloting the ship was distributed throughout the entire navigational system. Six people with three different job descriptions and using several sophisticated cognitive tools were involved in piloting the ship out of the harbor. The distribution of cognition across people and tools made it possible for the crew to accomplish cognitive tasks beyond the capabilities of any individual member. (p. 5)

This highlighted the need for people to collaborate, form ideas, and become more efficient.

Butler et al. (2004) showed that this is true for teachers and is the most effective way for them to improve their practice (Conway, 2009). In relation to this study, it is likely that Queensland teachers have conceptualised the imposed change in different ways and collaboration could be important as they create new meaning of their practice.

A recurring theme within the literature was the notion of a "Professional Learning Community" (PLC). Butler et al. (2004), Conway (2009), Eaker et al. (2020), Leat et al. (2006), Meirink et al. (2009), Putnam and Borko (2000), and Wallace and Priestley (2011) all agreed that an embedded PLC within schools is a key characteristic of a successful change

culture. The research suggested that promoting a PLC takes advantage of key human characteristics for effective learning (Putnam & Borko, 2000). In their study, Putnam and Borko (2000) suggested, “the sociocentric view of knowledge and learning holds that what we take as knowledge and how we think, and express ideas are the products of the interactions of groups of people over time” (p. 5). Moreover, the authors discussed the social aspects of learning that occur every day within different groups and explained that it is within these experiences that meaning-making occurs (Putnam & Borko, 2000). As this review has defined imposed change where organisation members need to create new meaning regarding their duties, the relevance of this concept is clear.

Further studies (Meirink et al., 2009; Putnam & Borko, 2000) emphasised the usefulness of PLCs in implementing reforms and improving education. Meirink et al. (2009) discussed that people learn most effectively when they are direct participants in the creation of knowledge and not just bystanders. The latter results in a disconnection between the recipients and the imposed change. Conversely, if they are part of the journey they can interpret, reflect, and move forward based on their existing beliefs and knowledge (Meirink et al., 2009; Putnam & Borko, 2000). This point further highlights the importance of consistency between Queensland teachers’ interpretation of the imposed change and the change agents.

The concept of a PLC is agreed upon by many studies. Wallace and Priestley (2011) described that a strong culture of improvement through teacher learning can enhance student outcomes through the development of more rigorous teaching strategies. Furthermore, Eaker et al. (2020) pointed out that a learning culture encourages teachers to take risks which is essential for transforming practice. Moreover, teachers will develop more confidence as the trust between peers increases with their willingness to try new strategies and discuss their strengths and weaknesses (Eaker et al., 2020; Leat et al., 2006). Collaborative practice within

a formal setting enhances the sustainability of new reforms and creates both energy and innovation (Eaker et al., 2020). An implication of this study could be whether Queensland teachers exhibit behaviours that align with these ideas.

Contrarily, there are some limitations to PLCs that need consideration. The study by Wallace and Priestley (2011) warned that shallow attempts at PLCs have focused purely on the sharing of ideas and experiences without a formal evaluation of classroom practice. To truly promote pedagogical change then teachers need to open themselves to scrutiny about their practice with deliberate experimentation and reflection (Eaker et al., 2020; Wallace & Priestley, 2011). If the culture is limited, then a supportive critical examination of pedagogy cannot flourish into improved practice (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Interestingly, Leat et al. (2006) discussed some differences in culture that can affect the outcomes of PLCs. One of these suggested that manager-driven imposed change, such as implementing a new curriculum, can experience limited success if not well strategised (Leat et al., 2006). For implementation to be successful, the authors suggested there must be high levels of trust between the leadership team and the teachers, so that teachers are empowered to draw on their knowledge and expertise (Leat et al., 2006).

2.4.3. The Parking Lot Meeting

Teacher interactions can influence the impact of imposed change in schools. Research by Hatch and Yanow (2009) described the complexities of internal interactions within an organisation. The authors explained that humans make meaning from their interpretations of events, conversations, and interactions on a daily basis and a human's reality is constructed very differently by each individual (Hatch & Yanow, 2009). The social world in which humans exist is a world of multiple realities and understandings constructed from prior knowledge based on education, training, family experiences, religion, and personality (Hatch & Yanow, 2009). Moreover, Putnam and Pacacnowsky (1983) outlined that the culture within a school is constructed through the subjective experience of its teachers, each being

unique to the individual. The way this culture cultivates interactions between leadership, teachers, and students is important.

The main roadblock to successful imposed change occurs through the social reality of the members. As Putnam and Pacacnowsky (1983) pointed out, “social reality is constituted through the words, symbols, and actions that members invoke” (p. 36). A study by Kendall and Kendall (2012) also showed that the stories, languages, and myths which are used between members not only give an indication of organisational meanings but also give an understanding of organisational life. Agreeing with this, Venables (2018) discussed “the Parking Lot Meeting” (p. 26). This is the meeting which occurs by teachers in informal settings that have harmful effects on even the most passive member of the organisation. If the psychological contract of certain individuals is severed, then the ramifications could be catastrophic towards the proposed reform (Venables, 2018). This aspect of organisational culture needs careful consideration when looking at the impact of the imposed change in Queensland.

2.4.4. De-privatisation

The defining factor in successful school reform is the de-privatisation of teaching and learning. For a learning culture to exist, then teachers have to be open to sharing their private expertise and advancing the collective group (Putnam & Borko, 2000). The key challenge is creating an environment where teachers take an active role in helping colleagues to learn. A study by Lambert (2007) suggested that education leadership is embedded into society and understanding this is essential for developing improved practice. In Lambert’s (2007) own words, “when our 9-year-old grandson, Dylan, completes his own work, he observes how other students are progressing. He voluntarily goes to the desks of other students and assists them” (p. 37). This example highlighted that everyone has the right, responsibility, and ability to lead learning (Lambert, 2002). Teachers lead their students to learn the content to readily better themselves when opportunities arise. Theoretically, if teachers are given the

opportunity to share this knowledge and escape the lonely, isolation of the classroom then their knowledge can be put to greater use (Lambert, 2007). Nevertheless, the correct culture needs to be in place to encourage teachers to merge the classroom boundaries.

Imposed change in schools can be impacted if teachers are not encouraged to de-privatise. A study by Schein and Schein (2017) gave examples of cultural traits that could affect progress in this area. The authors explained that if an organisation has members who believe it is solely the organisation's responsibility to develop their skills, then this may not encourage an environment for successful change (Limerick et al., 1993). Furthermore, Patricia (2007) outlined that this culture develops teachers who strive to keep their knowledge private to increase their own prospects within the organisation. Patricia (2007) succinctly described this type of culture as:

Some of the greatest challenges for organisations moving down the knowledge management path stem is the move from well-established practices of hoarding knowledge, practices which, in the past, were well rewarded. Employees were motivated to hoard knowledge because of the competitive advantage this gave them personally within their organisation. People reasoned that if knowledge provides the organisation's source of competitive edge, then it also provides the individual's competitive edge within the organisation. (p. 28)

For the impact of imposed change to be positive, teachers need to be significantly more open to sharing their knowledge of classroom strategies. A culture of learning cannot exist if teachers do not deprivatise their practice.

If a culture of change is not present, the isolation experienced by teachers could directly impact what imposed changes affect their practice. A study by Elmore (2000) on new structures of leadership gave an example of such a culture. Elmore (2000) described that within this system, teachers formulate their own teaching and learning philosophies in

isolation from their colleagues, never really coming together to specifically talk about what is effective. There are no opportunities for teachers to share or pursue knowledge or have any reason to work together for the collective good (Elmore, 2000; Priestley et al., 2011). Furthermore, a study by Louis et al. (2010) showed that, “successful reform may have its greatest impact by reducing teacher isolation and increasing commitment to the common good” (p. 317). Both Elmore’s (2000) and Louis et al.’s (2010) views aligned with teachers needing to be willing to engage in professional dialogue, share ideas, and learn from each other if there is going to be a change in teaching and learning practice. Of course, this requires not only a change in culture but a change in the way the individuals see themselves and behave. Relevant to this study was how the concept of de-privatisation has driven the impact of the imposed change on Queensland teachers’ practice.

2.4.5. The External Factors that Impact Culture

A worthy inclusion in this section is the consideration of uncontrollable external factors that can impact school culture. Corcoran and Goertz (1995) suggested that complex issues are often out of the school’s control and the external change agents should account for these when implementing imposed change. These researchers described that the main implications often arise from parental issues, government policies, and standardised testing (Corcoran & Goertz, 1995). In agreement, a paper by Eacott and Holmes (2010) used mathematics education as an example. They discussed that when there is a political movement towards standardised tests and public data, leaders at all levels will naturally make decisions that lead to favourable acknowledgments of results (Eacott & Holmes, 2010). These external influences on successful reform need consideration as they can influence school leader’s effectiveness at creating a culture conducive to implementing imposed change (Corcoran & Goertz, 1995; Eacott & Holmes, 2010). Highlighted are the many complexities involved in teacher practice that are beyond the implementation of the imposed change. When examining the impact of the imposed change in Queensland education on teacher

practice, it is important to acknowledge the many external pressures that are separate from the imposed change.

2.4.6. *Teacher Mindsets*

Individual teacher mindsets are a key consideration for implementing imposed change in schools. This literature review has already discussed the interaction types that can have a profound effect on school culture. It has been suggested that teachers bring their own beliefs, values, and stories to their work life and use these to create knowledge (Hatch & Yanow, 2009; Kendall & Kendall, 2012; Putnam & Pacacnowsky, 1983; Putnam & Borko, 2000; Venables, 2018). It was discussed that in a PLC, teachers are thrust together, and this culture challenges their belief systems about teaching and learning (Leat et al., 2006; Wallace & Priestley, 2011). Such concepts need examining to understand how they interact with imposed change and impact teacher practice.

2.4.7. *Individual Beliefs*

Beliefs about education are ingrained in every individual who goes through a school system, and as Priestley et al. (2011) found, teachers make judgements based on these beliefs without critical awareness of their actions. For example, teachers might make judgments about students being bright or immature based on past experience with a sibling or a student with a similar background (Wallace & Priestley, 2011). These authors explained that these beliefs can involve feelings, intentions, expectations, and attitudes which are used to make cognitive decisions in the classroom (Wallace & Priestley, 2011). Furthermore, Meirink et al. (2009) described two common assumptions about education among teachers, *subject-matter-orientated beliefs* and *learner-orientated beliefs*. The authors stated:

Subject-matter oriented beliefs place a strong emphasis on imparting subject matter and the reproduction of knowledge by students. Teachers are held responsible for the regulation of student learning processes. Also, learning is a primarily individual

process. In contrast, student-oriented beliefs about teaching and learning involve teaching students how to learn. (p. 89)

Both Meirink et al. (2009) and Wallace and Priestley (2011) highlighted two important complexities of individual mindsets. One is that the assumptions can be conversely different, and the second is that teachers are not aware of their beliefs, and so they are difficult to influence. In relation to the study, the different reactions at a teacher level were considered.

A common theme in literature was the challenge implementers of imposed change experience due to teacher mindsets. The study by Meirink et al. (2009) highlighted that challenging teachers' beliefs is not an easy process. The authors found that even if the imposed change is necessary, teachers will often resist and find ways to rebel (Meirink et al., 2009). Further, Meirink et al. (2009) suggested that values, goal orientation, and efficacy beliefs are fundamental for conceptual change to occur. Similarly, Priestley et al. (2011) described that without exploring the teachers' core beliefs then change to education will be implemented at a superficial level. The two studies emphasised the importance of belief systems in introducing reform initiatives. Due to their beliefs, convincing teachers that the improvement is necessary becomes an overarching challenge, but if done well, it can lead to lasting change (Meirink et al., 2009; Priestley et al., 2011). This was an important concept for the study. Understanding how teachers' beliefs have affected their conceptualisation of the ATAR system could be vital in understanding the impact on their pedagogical practice.

The issue of embedded beliefs is predominant within education. For instance, two studies (Benken et al., 2015; Lisciandro et al., 2018) regarding the mindsets of students commencing undergraduate mathematics courses, highlighted that there is a correlation between negative past experiences of learning mathematics and negative feelings towards future studies. Both research projects discovered that prospective students demonstrated

feelings of anxiety, fear, embarrassment, stress, and a fixed mindset about how successful they would be (Benken et al., 2015; Lisciandro et al., 2018). Lisciandro et al. (2018) concluded that past quality teaching positively affected a student's attitude towards mathematics. Furthermore, the studies indicated that most undergraduate students who were confident with mathematics believed it was because of their inherent ability (Benken et al., 2015; Lisciandro et al., 2018). These studies provided valuable insights into how teachers' mindsets can profoundly affect student achievement. If teachers come into the profession with an out-of-date fixed mindset, for instance, a person either is intelligent or unintelligent, then motivating them to change based on modern education themes will be a challenge. The concept of teacher mindsets towards education appears to be a fundamental element towards sustainable improvement. It has produced promising ideas about what may restrict teachers from changing their practice during imposed change.

2.4.8. *Conceptualisation*

Conceptualisation is a theme within the literature that reinforces the most effective way of changing teachers' approaches to their practice is to profoundly affect their beliefs and attitudes. The study by Priestley et al. (2011) found that teachers will only make sense of imposed change when they are reflective of their own growth and lived experiences. Teachers must have their subconscious beliefs challenged in such a way that they are deeply affected by the experience (Priestley et al., 2011). Furthermore, Leat et al. (2006) explained that professional development should provide conditions where teachers explore their assumptions about teaching and learning. The connection between successful change and challenging beliefs is vital, as teachers will likely accept the change if they are consciously part of the meaning-making process (Leat et al., 2006; Priestley et al., 2011). This is an interesting idea and a valuable insight for this study. The link between Queensland teacher beliefs and their opinions on the ATAR system could be an interesting discussion point.

A critical component of imposed change is the alignment of conceptualisation with teachers' beliefs. The study by Wallace and Priestley (2011) used the definition of "sense-making" to explain the cognitive processes a teacher must enact to construct the meaning of the reform. The authors claimed that this framework develops intentional positive responses to policy reform (Wallace & Priestley, 2011). Further, Wallace and Priestley (2011) explained that teachers can often feel powerless during imposed change as it usually affects their pedagogical practice. This misalignment between individual beliefs and reform, can have a major effect on the conceptualisation, or sense-making process (Wallace & Priestley, 2011). A study by Priestley et al. (2011) showed that if teachers fail to conceptualise the initiative, then teachers will tend to fit the reform into their traditional routines, rather than change their practice (Priestley et al., 2011). In summary, it would not make sense for them to do so. This definition of conceptualisation as sense-making may give a greater understanding of teacher perspectives in relation to the change to Queensland education.

The unpredictable nature of teachers' actions and the freedom they experience as practitioners can hinder the progress of conceptualisation. The study by Ingersoll (1994) discussed that curriculum can be implemented from the top level; however, teachers have discretion over the delivery and can choose what points of the curriculum they emphasise. Furthermore, Priestley et al. (2011) found that privatisation in the classroom can lead to imposed change being superficially successful, with teachers being accountable through paperwork but largely continuing to use their traditional practices. These studies highlighted the complexities involved in the conceptualisation of imposed change by teachers and suggested that leaders need to develop a deep connection between the reform and teachers' current practices to make positive change. This could be interesting for this study to see how teachers have evaluated their own practice in relation to the ATAR system.

2.4.9. *Growth Mindset*

The idea of a growth mindset versus a fixed mindset was a common theme within research regarding imposed change in schools. Essential studies by Dweck (2010) defined individuals as having either a fixed or growth mindset. For example, within a fixed mindset, individuals may feel that there is a level to individual intelligence, whereas an individual exhibiting a growth mindset approaches tasks with an openness to improve (Dweck, 2010). The authors discussed that this relates to teachers being willing to change their practice (Dweck, 2010). Studies by Heifetz and Laurie (2009) and Proffitt-White (2017) reinforced this idea, finding that for teachers to engage in positive approaches to their practice, then they need to opt-in to the change process. Early on, Heifetz and Laurie (2009) acknowledged that teachers with a mindset for improving their practice do not preoccupy themselves with excuses about lack of time or heavy workflow. They identify the problem and intervene to ensure students are successful (Heifetz & Laurie, 2009). Naturally, this idea comes with complexities as teachers themselves have developed assumptions regarding education through their experiences within the schooling system. Nevertheless, it was considered of interest to view the alignment between this concept and Queensland teachers' practice because of the imposed change to Queensland education.

2.4.10. *Leadership*

The ability of school leaders to bring alignment between culture and individual mindsets is a fundamental component for implementing imposed change in schools. This section discusses the literature regarding leadership theory and identifies the key concepts for leading imposed change in educational settings. These discussions generate insights concerning the level of impact school leadership structures have had on teachers' pedagogical practice due to the ATAR system.

2.4.11. Human Resource Management

Analysing the interactions between teachers and their environment can strengthen a leader's ability to manage school culture and individual mindsets during imposed changes in education. Putnam and Pacacnowsky (1983) explained that, "interpretation centres on the study of meanings, that is, the way individuals make sense of their world through communicative behaviours" (p. 31). Moreover, interpretivist theory studies sources, nature, and methodology when conceptualising organisations (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Another example was provided in Kendall & Kendall (2012) "interpretive researchers proceed with their work by focusing on the multiple perspectives of stories and who tells the stories" (p. 166). Furthermore, interpretivist research enables school leaders to conceptualise organisations by observing the social interactions between teachers and is useful for the implementation of imposed change. School leaders must be intentional in their attempts to understand the culture where imposed change exists.

Organisational typologies are useful for school leaders to understand the environment in which imposed change is occurring. Morgan (2006) described that leaders can view organisations like organisms, that is, "living systems, existing in a wider environment on which they depend for the satisfaction of various needs" (p. 33). This view assumes that organisational members need to be treated as individuals who have complex needs and expect satisfaction in order to perform effectively (Morgan, 2006). Furthermore, Hiatt-Michael (2001) pointed out that "connecting individuals and the organisation means that the organisation is only as strong as its members" (p. 117). The study implied that if the organisation does not meet the teachers' needs, then the chance of sustainability during imposed change decreases dramatically (Hiatt-Michael, 2001). Whether school leaders have been intentional in understanding Queensland teachers' reactions to the ATAR system was a key consideration for this study.

Another organisational typology considered teacher interactions with their external environment. Miles and Snow (1986) explained that leaders can use the Prospector-Defender-Analyser typology to understand human resource management. The Defender component is more closely aligned with a rigid view of organisations; however, the Prospector and Analyst components are linked closely to interpretivist theory (Miles & Snow, 1986). Particularly, organisations defined as Analyst can interact positively with their external environment to increase outcomes during imposed change. Furthermore, Adcroft and Lockwood (2010) discussed that “in the context of organisations which operate in complex and changing environments, the organic approach improves an organisation’s skills and knowledge and increases its ability to adapt to its environment” (p. 8). Therefore, these studies imply that Queensland school leaders needed to consider the complex nature of their schools to support teachers during the imposed change effectively.

Miles and Snow (1986) showed that the Prospector-Defender-Analyser typology existed across multiple paradigms, which brought additional considerations for school leaders. This belief is closely related to critical theory regarding organisations. Caza and Caza (2008) discussed that “critical theorists believe that all theories are systems of knowledge that are embedded in and reflect world views, and therefore no single absolute system of inquiry exists” (p. 24). Lewis and Grimes (2005) also suggested that the critical paradigm has a more reflective approach to organisational conceptualisation when compared to traditional perspectives. This viewpoint differed from interpretive theory where it accepted paradigm shifts and disruption within the status quo (Caza & Caza, 2008).

Researchers, Hoy and Miskel (2008) shared a similar view to Miles and Snow (1986); however, used a different typology to explain their theory. Hoy and Miskel (2008) used four definitions to understand the organisational culture useful for leaders implementing imposed change. They outlined these as rational, developmental, consensual, and hierarchical cultures.

Two of these definitions drew similarities with Miles and Snow (1986), where hierarchical culture is aligned with the Defenders component, and the developmental culture aligns with the Analysers component. Nevertheless, Hoy and Miskel (2008) developed this theory further explaining that the “two basic dimensions of an organisation’s human resource orientation are concern for people and concern for performance” (p. 256). They suggested that there are four different levels with one end having high levels of concern for members and low-level concern for performance and, the other end, vice-versa (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). This theory implies that schools may not align precisely with a particular level, and it is within this understanding that school leaders must negotiate the implementation of the imposed change.

The research on human resource management calls for school leaders to be flexible when implementing imposed change. They must be able to switch between multiple paradigms, implement strategies that are best suited to the current environment, and analyse individual members so they are utilised to produce sustainable results. Each study discussed gave insight into the complexities of leading imposed change in schools and raised key aspects for this study to observe. The complexities of human resource management theory imply that the outcomes of imposed change are unpredictable and not easily explained by theory alone.

2.4.12. Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership was a key discussion point regarding imposed change in schools. Bellibaş et al. (2021) identified four terms that equate to distributed leadership, namely shared, collaborative, dispersed, and delegated leadership. Raelin (2016) and Solansky (2008) showed that constructs such as *team leadership*, *leaderful organisations*, and *we the leaders* are not only suited to socio-cultural values associated with modern liberal democratic life but are justified for school application on the grounds of research into school effectiveness. Moreover, Elmore (2000) outlined that if school reform is left purely for one person, then the chance of them having learnt how to achieve this effectively is slim.

Furthermore, under a one-leader model often programs for improvement fade when that person leaves (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Elmore, 2000; Lambert, 2007). These studies theorised that due to the complexities and unpredictable nature of individuals, distributed leadership lends itself to natural school improvement (Elmore, 2000; Lambert, 2007; Raelin, 2016; Solansky, 2008). The authors claimed in varying ways that recognising teachers being the central core for improvement is a powerful step to fulfilling the goal of improving teaching and learning in educational organisations (Lambert, 2007). Since the imposed change in schools impacts the teacher level, distributed leadership had grounding for further exploration.

Boaler (2006) indicated that it is fundamental for organisational leaders to be intentional in creating opportunities for teachers to engage in the key characteristics of shared leadership. Furthermore, Frost (2000), Lambert (2007), and Solansky (2008) each showed that school culture and individual mindsets were increasingly positive when teachers were encouraged to lead and collaborate. The studies argued that leaders must change their own mindset and enable teachers to make decisions regarding school improvement. Therefore, it was realised that the mindset and structure of leadership are major implications for exploring imposed change in Queensland schools.

Shared leadership continued to be a common theme in researching imposed change in schools. Studies by Crowther (2010, 2011) and Crowther et al. (2009) used the term *parallel leadership* to describe a structure where leaders and teachers work parallel to achieve sustainable improvement goals defined as:

Parallel leadership is a process whereby teacher leaders and their principals engage in collective action to build and sustain enhanced school capacity. It embodies four distinct qualities – mutual trust, shared purpose, allowance for individual expression and a commitment to sustainable school success. (Crowther, 2010, p. 37)

This definition was built on by Conway and Andrews (2016) to explain that parallel leadership shifts from a one-person role to a shared view between administrators and teachers: “parallel leadership is used to capture the mutualistic relationship that is developed between the principal and teacher leaders” (p. 122). These studies (Conway & Andrews, 2016; Crowther, 2010, 2011; Crowther et al., 2009) claimed that if schools want sustainable improvements in teaching and learning then shared leadership is the most effective way. Teachers and school leaders must engage collectively to increase school capacity (Crowther et al., 2009). Furthermore, school leaders create an infrastructure that increases teacher interactions through professional dialogue and mutual trust (Crowther, 2009, 2010). Furthermore, the author discussed that a shared vision for student outcomes should be created to empower teachers and embrace their individuality (Crowther, 2009, 2010). The author’s suggestion for the subgroups of mutual trust, shared purpose and individual expression is an interesting component for leading imposed change in schools. These factors could create the desired cultural and mindset traits suitable for the implementation of imposed change in Queensland schools.

Research into mutual trust between school leaders and teachers suggested the need for careful leadership and, if implemented effectively, can yield high improvement returns. Developing such an environment may help teachers to feel less isolated and encourage the sharing and seeking of knowledge. Researchers such as Bryk and Schneider (2003) and Elmore (2000) found that both staff and students benefited from an environment where trust was nurtured, practiced, and valued. Other researchers, (King & Newmann, 2000; Newmann et al., 2000; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995) also found that mutual trust would help develop the culture of learning as discussed in previous sections. The studies discussed that teachers will feel less isolated, have higher degrees of motivation and be more willing to experiment. Furthermore, Crowther et al. (2009) noted that the main beneficiaries of an environment of

mutual trust are the students. The findings showed that there were higher levels of academic achievement across the schools when this environment existed (Crowther et al., 2009). The building of mutual trust by school leaders would appear to be an important idea for successfully implementing imposed change, and the study considered this as a key component in the ATAR system's impact on teacher practice.

Another area emphasised within distributed leadership theory was the allowance of teacher individuality by school leaders. The study by Crowther et al. (2009) suggested that the individualistic nature of teachers is an important consideration for leading imposed change in schools. The authors' study into shared leadership showed that schools that had successful distributed leadership structures made intentional allowances for individual expression (Crowther et al., 2009). Furthermore, teachers showed attributes and behaviours associated with successful reform, including having high relational and collaborative skills and being extremely autonomous in their work (Crowther et al., 2009). Individuality aligns itself with the previously discussed notion of desired culture by Limerick et al. (1993). Namely, an organisation operating from "Fourth Blueprint principles" with members who exhibit behaviours that act positively on the organisation (Limerick et al., 1993). The study by Crowther et al. (2009) implied that distributed leadership, with emphasis on individuality, may result in these very behaviours. In terms of the situation with Queensland education, the impact of the ATAR system on teachers' pedagogical practice and their allowance to display individuality could prove to be a key implication for this study.

Another potentially important aspect of distributed leadership, as pointed out by Crowther (2010) and Crowther et al. (2009) is the creation of a shared vision. If shared leadership is going to have a positive impact on imposed change, then school leaders must bring teachers' work together under a shared goal (Crowther, 2010; Crowther et al., 2009). The research implied that this sense of unity is an essential part of developing a culture

conducive to reform. A study by Lambert (2007) emphasised this point, that is, a shared vision is different to a vision orchestrated by the principal. The latter is a rigid vision with an unambiguous goal, whereas a shared vision should be broad and encourage experimentation (Lambert, 2007). This supported the viewpoint of the study, which involved teachers exploring their pedagogical practice to suit the ATAR system.

The findings of other studies, such as Crowther (2009) and Duignan (2006), also emphasised the importance of a shared vision for distributed leadership. The study by Crowther et al. (2009) explained that in schools where parallel leadership had flourished, there had been a sense of connection between the school's stated vision and a teacher's preferred pedagogical approaches. This research connected to the research on individual mindsets and the need for teachers to create links between their own assumptions and the imposed change. Furthermore, Duignan (2006) found that the vision cannot simply be generated from one source; it needs to grow from the individuals who control the most impactful environments. These areas are the classrooms where teachers dictate the terms and create positive outcomes (Duignan, 2006). The relationship between a shared vision, teacher mindsets, and pedagogical practice could be fundamental in understanding the impact of the ATAR system.

2.4.13. Situational Leadership

Situational leadership was another consideration within the literature on leading imposed change in schools. Chatalalsingh and Reeves (2014), Hersey et al. (1979), and Jansen (2008) each suggested that situational leadership is fundamental for creating trust between school leaders and teachers. The study by Chatalalsingh and Reeves (2014) outlined that no one leadership style is suitable for every situation. A leader must be able to assess contextual needs based on a range of factors and deal with them accordingly. Furthermore, Jansen (2008) found that leaders need to move freely between task-oriented leadership and relationship-oriented leadership. Within any educational organisation there are a range of

maturity levels in terms of skills and competencies in completing day-to-day tasks (Chatalalsingh & Reeves, 2014; Jansen, 2008). As Hersey et al. (1979) pointed out, if tasks are only given to members with high maturity then the lower levelled members may develop trust issues. This theory fits with the discussions of culture and distributed leadership. These studies imply that if Queensland teachers did not feel trusted during the implementation of the imposed change, the ATAR system is less likely to have had a positive impact on their practice.

2.4.14. Motivational Management

Research regarding intrinsic motivation was a regular occurrence when reading leadership theory regarding imposed change in schools. If individual motivations can be understood, then teachers are more likely to engage in the change process (Flannery, 2017; Patricia, 2007). The study by Patricia (2007) found that most organisations have a focus on extrinsic motivation where the members are encouraged to look out for themselves rather than improve their overall involvement in projects. The mindset of these individuals is conversely different to the mindsets discussed for successfully leading imposed change. Namely, continually interacting, learning, and adjusting independently within their environment (Patricia, 2007). Therefore, identifying intrinsic motivations and developing self-determination in the members could be vital in beginning any change process. This opinion is supported by studies by Flannery (2017) and Limerick et al. (1993), which suggested that when a person has their psychological needs of autonomy, competencies, and relatedness fulfilled, a person is more likely to participate in intrinsically motivated behaviours. The mindset aligned with the previously discussed research on shared leadership. If Queensland school leaders have employed strategies aimed at motivating teachers during the imposed change, then there could be a link between motivational management and the impact on the teacher's practice.

Intrinsically motivating teachers appeared in the research as an effective leadership approach for managing imposed change. Ng (2018) studied the neuroscience of growth mindset and intrinsic motivation. The author explained that intrinsic motivation is inherent because it regulates an individual's behaviour and self-determination. Ng (2018) demonstrated that intrinsic motivation is linked to the reward and pleasure centres of the brain. The neurotransmitter dopamine plays a crucial role in the feelings associated with unexpected rewards (Ng, 2018). Ng (2018) further stated that "dopamine is considered a key substrate of intrinsic motivation, promoting attentiveness and behavioural engagement. For instance, participants were more likely to voluntarily engage with the task during a free-choice period or a self-determined choice condition" (p. 3). Therefore, this links to the previously discussed research on leading imposed change. For imposed change to have positive effects, teachers need to be intrinsically motivated to take the lead. This may provide useful insights for the situation in Queensland.

Within change leadership research, there were key ideas about intrinsically motivating staff during imposed change. Gronn (1995) suggested that this approach takes a transformational leader who can use charisma, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration to transform the teacher's actions. One practical approach is through goal-setting theory (Gronn, 1995). If used correctly it can produce a foundation for self-determination (Gronn, 1995; Limerick et al., 1993). Agreeing with this, a study by Gagné and Deci (2005) discussed that:

People's goal representations are the efficient causes of behaviour and people's performance will be maximised when (1) they set specific, difficult goals that have high valence and (2) they understand what behaviours will lead to the goals and feel competent to do those behaviours. (p. 341)

The study implied that members who are aware of their individual goals will create energy for imposed change. The resulting effect would begin to shift mindsets (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Gronn, 1995; Limerick et al., 1993; Ryan & Deci, 2017). This theory supports the idea of creating the ideal culture and mindset for positive reform to exist. The ability of school leaders to understand teachers' needs and motivate them during imposed change appears fundamental. The imposed change to Queensland education had the potential to leave teachers disempowered, due to losing control of key aspects in their practice. Thus, school leaders motivating teachers during the reform appeared to be fundamental to its success.

2.4.15. Summary

This section highlighted key research into implementing imposed change in schools. Discussions regarding organisational culture, teacher mindsets, and leadership theory produced interesting implications for study into the imposed change to Queensland education. The considerations included that successful change was reliant on a culture that cultivated learning. Research into successful imposed change suggested that teachers will be more likely to learn from each other through open dialogue regarding best practice. A PLC culture may help teachers create new meaning, positively impact the organisation, and improve student outcomes. Underlying this idea was the theory around de-privatisation. The research implied that for teachers to engage in a change culture then they must be open to peer observation and feedback on their practice. If this does not occur, then change is more difficult to implement.

This section showed teacher mindsets as a powerful influencer on successful reform. The studies demonstrated that every member brings their own experiences to the organisation and understanding the way they perceive themselves and behave is vital to the success of imposed change. Furthermore, understanding teachers' psychological needs was a recurring theme. If imposed change is to be successful, then teachers must wholeheartedly agree to participate in the process. For this to occur, school leaders must challenge teachers to

confront their assumptions about education. If teacher mindsets are influenced effectively then it can yield positive results as teachers are more motivated for the cause.

The literature strongly indicated that school leaders were critical for implementing imposed change successfully. One important theme was the notion of distributed leadership. The studies agreed that for distributed leadership to be effective, there needs to be a shared vision across the organisation, allowances for the individualities of teachers, and a culture of mutual trust. The discussion highlighted a critical point: the need for teachers to shift their mindset from “we follow orders” to “we are leaders”. The research implied that the role in which teachers play, may not align with a distributed leadership approach, and this blockade could be devastating to the success of imposed change. Therefore, the development of teacher leaders became an essential factor. The research showed that leaders need to carefully analyse the individual strengths and weaknesses of teachers and coach them to the desired leadership behaviours. The coaching philosophy stressed the importance of leaders understanding situational leadership. If implemented effectively it can be used by school leaders to create teachers who are motivated, self-determined, and act positively on the organisation.

2.5. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework shown in Figure 2.2 is comprised of three components to examine the impact of imposed change on Queensland teachers’ pedagogical practice. Component 1 addresses the nature of imposed change and its effects on Queensland schools. Component 2 encompasses the core principles, values, and beliefs of Queensland education and their influence on schools. Component 3 captures the school-level impacts of Queensland teachers, leaders, and school culture. Together, these components represent the current understanding on the sources of impact during imposed change. This conceptual framework provided a lens through which to examine the imposed change in Queensland and support answering the primary research question. This framework was a critical development as it allowed a visualisation of the key anticipated challenges teachers faced when implementing

the imposed change in Queensland schools. Subsequent work such as the research methodology used this lens to develop the most contextually appropriate design for data collection.

Figure 2.2

Conceptual framework – Imposed Change on Queensland Teacher’s Pedagogical Practice

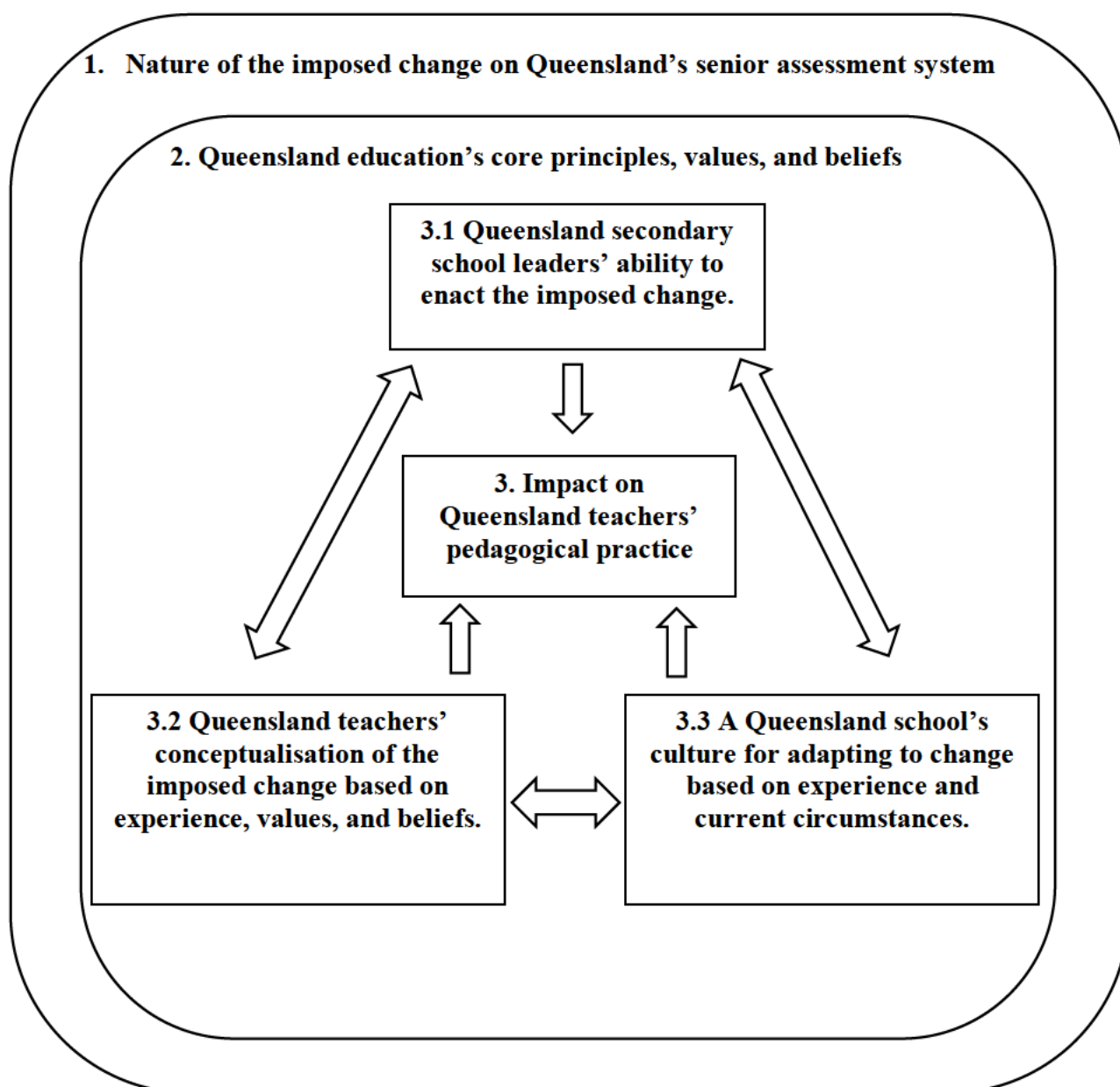


Table 2.3 gives a more detailed outline of each component. The table aims to provide a more contextualised and pragmatic explanation of each component as it relates to the research topic

Table 2.3*Description of the Components within the Conceptual Framework*

Component	Description
1	Changes to Queensland's senior assessment system are considered within this component. Including, the change from a teacher-led system to external examinations, that may have led to a loss of agency within teacher practice.
2	Due to a period of limited change, this component responds to the embedded core values, principles, and beliefs within the Queensland education system. Namely, the contextual and flexible approach to pedagogy was fundamental to Queensland education's historic success.
3	This component addresses the impacts within the educational organisation and comprises the three subcomponents described below.
3.1	This subcomponent considers the school leader's ability to understand individual teacher needs to create a change culture where imposed change can flourish and have a positive impact on teacher practice.
3.2	The acknowledgement of teacher's different experiences, assumptions, and beliefs is recognised in this subcomponent. Including how these factors impact school culture and school leaders' ability to lead imposed change.
3.3	This last subcomponent identifies the link between the intentional culture created by school leaders and the natural culture created by the interactions of teachers. It recognises how these occurrences can affect the impact of imposed change on teacher practice.

2.6. Chapter Summary

This chapter has contextualised research regarding imposed change into the area of education and discussed the complexities for Queensland schools as they transitioned from the OP to the ATAR system. The literature emphasises the importance of this research as

implementing imposed change in schools is often unpredictable and relies on a variety of key components that are distinctive to each situation. Furthermore, Queensland's unique situation, where a sustained period of limited change has influenced teachers' pedagogical practice, presents an opportunity to enrich prior research into how school leaders can manage imposed change effectively in schools.

A 50-year period of a teacher-led senior assessment system, where teachers were in control of subject-specific assessment, developed key values and beliefs regarding the benefits of a meaningful and contextual curriculum for students. The ATAR system has had the potential to limit teacher autonomy by putting stricter restrictions on the senior assessment system with the reintroduction of external examinations after a 50-year hiatus. This dramatic change presents an opportunity to view imposed change through Queensland teachers' stories and adds value to the complex and often uncertain research: uncertain, due to each study's findings being contextual to the distinctive circumstances where the research was conducted. In a constantly changing landscape, the intended research study is fundamental in helping to understand how imposed change in education can occur with maximum benefit to teaching and learning.

Chapter three discusses the details of the methodology for investigating the impact of the new QCE system on teacher's pedagogical practice. It outlines the approach adopted for the preparation, data collection, and analysis phase of the research topic. Furthermore, the ontological and epistemological beliefs are explored so as to understand the beliefs which shaped the chosen methodological approach for this study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The conceptual framework developed in Chapter two identified the prospective challenges which confronted schools and teachers during the implementation of the imposed change to secondary education in the Queensland education system. Teachers' conceptualisation of the new system was a key consideration as their understanding and adoption of the change potentially dictated how it would impact their daily practice. Furthermore, the school leadership structures, and applied implementation strategies, were discussed as key indicators for the impact of the imposed change on teacher duties. The conceptual framework created a lens to view the phenomenon and develop a methodology that would allow for a thorough investigation into the impact of imposed change on teachers' pedagogical practice, aligning with the ontological and epistemological assumptions guiding this study. This chapter outlines the methodology used to investigate the impact of the new QCE system on teachers' pedagogical practice. The approach was designed using key aspects of Yin's (2018) model for conducting case study research, and enabled a flexible approach to structuring the preparation, data collection, and analysis research phases.

The preliminary preparation was an essential aspect as it grounded the methodology in a paradigm suitable for the study of an education institution moving through a significant change (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Furthermore, the ontological and epistemological beliefs needed consideration due to the study's key focus being Queensland teachers' interactions, thoughts, and feelings as they conceptualised the mandated change. From these assumptions, the epistemological approach aimed to understand the research question in a holistic way. Moreover, the organisation in which the participants existed was noted as a living, working environment, where the culture was influenced by the individual mindsets, thus emphasising the importance of considering ontological and epistemological perspectives. This background enables a full and rich understanding of how I proceeded to address the research topic.

3.1. Beliefs and Paradigm

When approaching the research study, it was essential to define the ontological and epistemological assumptions, which directly influenced the characteristics of the study. These beliefs emphasised that individuals make sense of the world through personal experience, feelings, and values (Putnam & Pacacnowsky, 1983). In terms of ontology, the research assumed that people construct situational meaning and that no single truth exists or is more valid than another (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell et al., 2007). In context, individual Queensland secondary teachers had conceptualised the imposed change, based on experience and interactions, and this may not have aligned with the various key stakeholders such as Queensland school leaders, other Queensland teachers, and, importantly, me (Cohen et al., 2018). From these assumptions, the epistemological approach aimed to understand the research question in a holistic way. That is, I endeavoured to understand and explain the vast array and diverse interpretations of how the new QCE system had impacted teachers' pedagogical practice (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell et al., 2007). The study considered the many narratives from the participant's viewpoint, including the QCE system's developers, the Queensland school leaders, and the Queensland teachers. These assumptions enabled a research design which produced a whole picture regarding the impact of the new QCE system on teachers' pedagogical practice.

In summary, the beliefs acting on the study were:

1. People construct situational meaning and that no single truth exists or is more valid than another; and
2. I aimed to understand and explain the vast array and diverse interpretations of all participants.

Building on these assumptions, I needed to understand the paradigm which was best suited to the research topic (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). The broad notion of the discipline is

education, and the nature of this topic suggested that an interpretivist paradigm was the most suitable. The appropriateness was due to teachers' pedagogical beliefs being constructed based on individual experience and values (Meirink et al., 2009; Wallace & Priestley, 2011). The interpretivist paradigm is well suited to studies where the outcomes sought are based on relationships between elements in a whole system. This notion effectively aligned itself with the intended research where the elements described were Queensland schools and the whole system was Queensland senior education. Further, the highly complex interactions which occur in schools each day make teacher behaviour unpredictable and therefore, research in this area cannot set out to find one single truth as it is constructed differently for everyone (Putnam & Pacacnowsky, 1983). This idea aligns with the nature of the interpretivist paradigm, where researchers attempt to understand the social realities of the phenomenon (Cohen et al., 2018; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Putnam & Pacacnowsky, 1983). The nature of this study was clearly aligned to an interpretivist paradigm.

As the new senior assessment procedures moved from the highest school level of leadership through to the classroom level, they interacted with various individuals. Everyone had developed their world based on education, training, family experiences, religion, and personalities which had produced perspectives that acted accordingly on the implementation process (Creswell et al., 2007; Hatch & Yanow, 2009; Putnam & Pacacnowsky, 1983). To enable successful interpretation of the events, it was assumed that each perspective was independent of the meaning-making of governing systems, the school leaders, the teachers, and me. The conceptualisation of the externally imposed change would be mostly different for every individual experience. The various interpretations of the new QCE system by Queensland principals, deputy principals, Heads of Departments, and teachers interacted and influenced each other. Thus, the interpretivist paradigm was a valid way to view the situation in Queensland education.

3.2. Research Context

This study used the current Queensland senior education system as an example of an externally imposed change that could have had a significant impact on teacher practice. The system is referred to as the new Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) and was the most significant change to Queensland's senior assessment system for around 50 years (Willis et al., 2019). This phenomenon resulted in embedded values and beliefs, which guided Queensland teachers' practice. During this time, schools were responsible for setting, administering, and marking assessment of student learning. The results were submitted to the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) and a student's Overall Position (OP) was calculated for tertiary entrance purposes. The new system now consists of school-based and externally administered assessments to calculate an Australian Tertiary Admission Ranking (ATAR) for the same purpose.

There are other senior certificate pathways for students in Queensland; however, the focus of this study was an exploration of the newly imposed ATAR pathway, which results in Tertiary entrance, as it was anticipated that this example of an imposed change would create significant discussion around the research topic. The impact on teachers' pedagogical practice would vary based on their years of service, beliefs, experience with other education systems, or other unknown factors. Furthermore, this reality produced multiple implications for school leaders who implemented the new system in their organisation. It was anticipated that this context would provide insight into the different factors impacting teachers' pedagogical practice when confronted with externally imposed change to education.

3.3. Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide the subsequent development of the research study:

3.3.1. Primary Research Question:

What emerges as the impact of an externally imposed change on teachers' pedagogical practice in a Queensland secondary school?

3.3.2. Subsidiary Research Questions:

Subsidiary research questions have been used to shape the research process and support the achievement of research objectives by providing a structured framework for investigation and analysis.

SRQ1. How have teachers at a Queensland secondary school conceptualised the new QCE system concerning their pedagogical practice?

SRQ2. How have the school leaders of a Queensland secondary school conceptualised and prioritised the new QCE system concerning teachers' pedagogical practice?

SRQ3. What has contributed to the impact of the new QCE system on teachers' pedagogical practice in a Queensland secondary school?

The areas for research became apparent in Chapter two through the literature and the subsequent development of the conceptual framework. These areas allowed insight into the intricacies that the study would investigate to answer the primary research question. A study by Andrews (2003) discussed that a set of *subsidiary research questions* are a necessary complement to the main research question (pp. 33-44). These questions should be logical in their application and should articulate how and why they relate to the research topic (Andrews, 2003). For this study, the subsidiary research questions directly related to the areas uncovered in the literature review as these indicated elements that directly affect teachers' pedagogical practice. These also needed to be related chronologically so that a logical investigation design could proceed (Cohen et al., 2018).

3.4. Researcher Position in the Research

During the commencement of the study, I was employed at the research school and moved to a different place of employment during the data collection phase. I worked as a

senior mathematics teacher and was directly involved in teaching the new subjects. This position gave me an insider research position which produced a privileged situation where I was intimately connected to the community being researched (Elizabeth Aburn et al., 2021). The connection to the participants allowed for an advantageous environment where it created a relaxed atmosphere. Furthermore, it allowed me to participate in deep reflective practice based on first-hand observations.

3.5. Research Focus

The research design used a case study approach (Mabry, 2008) to study Queensland teachers in a regional secondary school involving an in-depth examination within its real-life context to gain a deeper understanding and generate insights into complex issues or phenomena. The adoption of this approach aligned with both Cohen et al.'s (2018) and Merriam's (2010) definitions of a case study research as a bounded system of investigation with contained variables, where a detailed examination is carried out on a real-life sample to catch its intricacy and distinctiveness. For this study, the Case was a coeducational Secondary school of 1949 students. The administrative structure consisted of a principal, four deputy principals, a team of Heads of Departments, and 100 teaching staff. The school was chosen for reasons of size, which was advantageous due to the possibility of a wider range of participants. It was also selected for convenience and accessibility as I had been on staff at the time and, therefore, had a shared experience with the teachers. Further, the school was in Queensland and the Queensland system is unique in that it had a long period of school based assessment unlike other systems.

The case study school enabled me to capture the experience at the very time and place the phenomenon occurred, which is a key feature of case study research (Mabry, 2008). Furthermore, Creswell et al. (2007) explained that there should be no doubts in the suitability of the case in defining the area of inquiry, as the case being investigated should be able to build a thorough understanding of the phenomenon through accessing multiple data sources.

Whether positive or negative, the externally imposed change was impacting Queensland schools and being able to access the different perspectives was invaluable. The research topic was a living, breathing reality for the individuals residing in the school. The real-time experiences, the conceptual framework, and my positional power gave justification to using a case study approach.

The qualitative research approach using Case study provided an opportunity to capture experiences from different perspectives. As outlined by Chatterji (2010), qualitative methodology gives educational researchers the tools to evaluate the why and how in program effectiveness, often in its natural setting. This approach seemed logical as I wanted to explore the new QCE system's impact through the many interpretations of the teachers. Qualitative research allowed an understanding of the naturalistic response (Chatterji, 2010) to the new senior assessment system. Furthermore, this approach allowed the analysis of community relationships such as within subject areas; thus, creating understanding around teacher conceptualisation of the new QCE system (Cohen et al., 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Forte, 2010). This methodology enabled a holistic view of the new senior system's impact on teachers' pedagogical practice.

Within the field of qualitative research, the case study approach is well suited to research projects where there is a need for a richly detailed interpretation of various perspectives. Researcher's such as Creswell et al. (2007) described qualitative case studies as an approach where conclusions are made based on observations, interviews, audiovisual material, documents, and reports. This definition aligned well with the intended study, where the focus was individual behaviour concerning school reactions to the new QCE system. In agreement, Merriam's (2010) example brings further clarity, through its discussion of why a qualitative approach was used to investigate university graduates' employment rates.

For example, rather than finding out what types of jobs college graduates get and if there is any correlation with their major, one could investigate the transition from fulltime study to full-time work – what was the process, how were obstacles negotiated, what are the changes in daily activities, how have the historical and economic contexts shaped the process, and so on. These questions are about understanding their experiences and would call for a qualitative design. (p. 65)

Understanding experiences resonated with the intended study into the new Queensland senior assessment system, where the conceptual framework developed in Chapter two was behaviour based. It was not a simple problem; it needed a variety of data sources to enable a rich and descriptive response to the research question.

Another strength of qualitative research is the allowance for my interpretations. As Merriam (2010) discussed, a key characteristic of qualitative methodology is that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Since the nature of this study was to seek understanding regarding the impact of the new QCE system on teachers, then my position enabled quick reflections during the data collection and analysis phases (Merriam, 2010). I was able to take advantage of observations to critically analyse the trustworthiness of other data sources (Yin, 2009).

3.6. Research Design

The purpose of this section is to identify the fundamental research design which guided the data collection and analysis phases. Table 3.1 outlines the research design in terms of phases, participants, and data collection tools as they relate to the subsidiary research questions. A study by each of Biklen (2010) defined evidence as data that is relatable to a specified context under investigation. Therefore, the study incorporated methods which would allow data to be effectively related to the subsidiary research questions. Data collection tools included: semi-structured interviews of school leaders and teachers; observations of staff meetings, collaborative planning sessions, and other relevant

Table 3.1

Research Design

<i>What is the impact of an externally imposed change on teachers' pedagogical practice in a Queensland secondary school?</i>						
Data collection phase	Subsidiary research question one: How have teachers at a Queensland secondary school conceptualised the new QCE system concerning their pedagogical practice?		Subsidiary research question two: How have the school leaders of a Queensland secondary school conceptualised and prioritised the new QCE system concerning teachers' pedagogical practice?		Subsidiary research question three: What factors have contributed to the impact of the new QCE system on teachers' pedagogical practice in a Queensland secondary school?	
	Data collection tool	Data analysis	Data collection tool	Data analysis	Data collection tool	Data analysis
Preliminary	Focus group Data collected from Heads of Departments to expand the set parameters of the study. 20-30 minutes	Participants inform teacher participant selection. Data inform teacher interview questions A thematic analysis applied.				
One	Teacher Interviews Semi-structured interviews. 20-30 minutes Initial thoughts on how the new QCE system has affected their pedagogical practice to define themes. Build on themes and invite interviewees to relate thoughts retrospectively to the OP system and the implementation phase of the new QCE system.	All interviews transcribed externally. Ongoing active exploration of data through a six-step procedure as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006): 1. Data read, and initial thoughts recorded. 2. Data coded to capture the interesting features of the data. 3. Data collated based on recurring patterns and placed in emerging themes. 4. Themes reviewed and checked for authenticity. 5. Themes broadly analysed, defined, and named. 6. Themes identified as related to the overall study. Nvivo qualitative software used to support analysis.				
Two			School leader interviews Semi-structured interviews. 20-30 minutes Initial thoughts on how the new QCE system has affected teachers' pedagogical practice to define themes. Thoughts regarding the prioritisation of school improvement strategies as they relate to the new QCE system.	Same methods described in subsidiary research question one data analysis.		
Three	Quality assurance Each participant presented with a summary of their response and being given the option to clarify any misrepresentations.		Quality assurance Each participant presented with a summary of their response and being given the option to clarify any misrepresentations.		School leader/teacher additional interviews Semi-structured interviews. 20-30 minutes Clarification of any emerging factors.	Same methods described in subsidiary research question one data analysis
All phases	Observations and document analysis Retrospective professional developments	Use of observational data to clarify and define critical themes will help the reliability of participant interview responses. Reflexive journal will be used. I will continually reflect on how their assumptions and values are affecting the analysis.				

Note: This table shows a summary of the research design and further details can be found later in this document

opportunities; focus groups; document analysis; and my reflective journal, all as indicated in Table 3.1 (Cohen et al., 2018; Merriam, 2010). By using a range of collection tools, the data can be triangulated to ensure the study's trustworthiness (Cohen et al., 2018). Furthermore, Merriam (2010), Yin (2009), and Yin (2018) each explained that it is essential the researcher has an ongoing analysis, or chain of evidence, as this adds to the credibility, reliability, and validity to the case study. An external party should then cross-check this to cleanse out singularities within the researcher's perspective (Cohen et al., 2018).

3.6.1. Timeframe for Data Collection

Data collection took place after the first student cohort completed the new system. Implemented in 2019, the system saw its first graduating cohort in 2020. Therefore, data was collected in 2021, allowing participants to reflect on the full implementation process.

3.6.2. Preliminary Phase: Focus Group

As outlined in Table 3.1, the preliminary data collection phase involved a focus group comprised of Heads of Departments. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) explained that taking such an approach allows the expansion of the initial study parameters set by the researcher. The focus group was used to gain insight into the priorities set within specific subject areas at the school. Focus groups entail creating dialogue opportunities between a group of people in the anticipation that they will interact in a more natural way (Thelwall & Nevill, 2021), thus, producing data that is more authentic and reliable than could otherwise be obtained.

The participants were presented with the relevant information for the study, including the conceptual framework, and they were asked to direct discussions relating to their work as teachers, to the research topic. The Heads of Departments were leading the change and were the experts in their fields. Therefore, I gained essential insights into specific subject area protocols, allowing for a more effective analysis of teacher data. The analysis, using the Braun and Clarke (2006) framework, produced themes that helped contextualise the research question and guided the core data collection. Further, the curriculum areas discussed allowed

the screening of teacher participants so that data could easily be related to the resulting themes (Cohen et al., 2018).

The use of a Heads of Departments focus group was to challenge my assumptions. As Denzin and Lincoln (2008) stated “the synergy and dynamism generated within homogenous collectives often reveal unarticulated norms and normative assumptions” (p. 397). This approach aligns with interpreting theory where the researcher alone cannot solve the problem; it needs a range of interpretation from diverse backgrounds to define the key areas. By using the Heads of Departments, I was able to observe the participants as they related their interpretations to each other and contrasted their opinions. I allowed the discussions to evolve naturally so that the participants interacted freely as they do in their daily work.

The gathered data were analysed and used to inform teacher discussions. The analysis produced commonalities and patterns which helped with defining the proceeding interview questions. Further, the curriculum areas discussed allowed the screening of teacher participants so that data could easily be related to the themes that emerged from the focus groups (Cohen et al., 2018).

3.6.3. *Phases 1, 2, 3: Interviews*

Individual Teacher and Deputy Principal interviews were used to gather evidence on how the new QCE system has impacted teachers’ pedagogical practice. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) and Yin (2009) each explained that interviews are one of the more effective tools for understanding human behaviour. They allow the collection of data which exhibit relative truth and potentially uncover factors for further exploration (Yin, 2009). The interviews were semi-structured by nature, following as Cohen et al. (2018) suggested that the conversational style will make the participant more relaxed in sharing their experiences. This enabled me to modify, explain, and relate answers to previous responses or issues identified within the initial focus group (Cohen et al., 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). This notion aligns with the exploratory case study within the interpretivist paradigm, based on an assumption that the

individual constructs knowledge. The interview technique allowed the participants to tell their story as it relates to teacher practice.

The interviews were constructed from open-ended questions with the wording and sequence flexible to consider the different participant perspectives. The questions were in-line with a semi-structured approach, where I ensured the acquisition of knowledge relevant to the research topic, but still allowed the participants to guide the conversation (Cohen et al., 2018). The open-ended questions had many benefits, including, allowing me to “prompt and probe” the respondents to seek more depth, or clear up any misunderstandings if required (Cohen et al., 2018).

Furthermore, open ended questioning allowed for unexpected responses adding a richness to the study. I continually asked respondents to extend, elaborate, add to, exemplify, provide detail for, or clarify responses (Cohen et al., 2018). A study by Wellington (2015) pointed out that this would address the characteristics of successful interviews such as richness, depth, and honesty. Prompts such as *why?*, *how?*, or *can you give me an example?* allowed me to gain a broader understanding of the thought process exhibited by the participant. The open-ended approach allowed participants to tell their story while allowing me to ensure valid and reliable information for the study.

3.6.4. *Phases 1, 2, 3: Observational and Document Referencing*

The use of observational data to clarify and define critical themes potentially increased the reliability of participant interview responses. This process entailed retrospective observations such as the analysis of documents created during implementation of the new system. Such documents allowed opportunities to define school priorities when developing staff in the operations of the new system. These opportunities included external and internal professional developments and situations where collaborative planning had taken place. Furthermore, current professional developments or staff meetings were observed, and reflections recorded in my professional journal. This procedure allowed me to immerse

myself in the school context and provided valuable details to triangulate with the interview data (Cohen et al., 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). During this aspect of the data collection, I was aware of the reflections to be potentially subjective and open to misinterpretations (Cohen et al., 2018). To counter this possibility, I aimed to reflect with participants and compare notes, thus ensuring the reliability of the observations.

3.7. Storing Data for Analysis

All evidence was stored in a database using NVivo software. Research by Brandão (2015) pointed out that software is a powerful way to ensure that evidence is stored in an organised fashion and easily accessible. NVivo allows the coding and visualisation of evidence offering a powerful and flexible way to analyse the data (Cohen et al., 2018). I was able to store all the evidence in one place, which allowed for effective correlation of the evidence from documents, observations, and interviews. This protocol resulted in the articulation of critical themes for analysis and the triangulation of data for validity and reliability purposes (Cohen et al., 2018).

A chain of evidence increased the reliability of the data collection by allowing any external observer to follow the study from start to finish. Yin (2009) pointed out that there should be clear links between the case study report and the study questions, so that it is clear how the researcher has arrived at the conclusions. The chain of evidence entailed the following steps:

- Actual evidence linked in the database to when and where it was collected
- Ensuring the evidence citations link to the data collections methods outlined
- Making clear that the data collection methods are valid in terms of the study questions

Keeping a chain of evidence helped ensure the construct validity of the case study, thus increasing data quality.

3.8. Participant Recruitment

Although the case selection was logical, the range of participants required a strategic approach. I took a purposive sampling approach as it was felt that certain individuals would yield results that were different and important to the study (Campbell et al., 2020). Table 3.2 shows the criteria used for participant selection for each data collection phase, after which an explanation of each area follows.

Table 3.2

Phase One - Participant selection for data collection

Phase	Participant group	Sample size	Criteria
One	1	4	All Heads of Departments offered the chance to participate in the initial focus group
	2	5-9 (1-3 from each subject area related to participant group 1)	All Teachers invited to participate and selected based on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Within the subject area of participant(s) 2. Experienced teacher, two years or more, of the OP system 3. Teacher of a general subject, during the QCE system's development, implementation, and current years (2018, 2019, 2020)
Two	3	1-2	All Deputy Principals invited to participate
Three	Previous participants as required		

The first aspect of recruitment entailed a meeting with the school principal to seek approval for the school's participation. The principal was informed of the purpose and methodology of the research. These details included the preferable key areas regarding participation, demands on the participants' time, and the extensiveness of their involvement.

Further, this meeting outlined any ethical issues and it was made clear how these issues would be addressed throughout the study (Cohen et al., 2018). I obtained signed

consent for the study to occur and requested that the principal did not debrief with any recruited staff members during the life of the study. Moreover, I made it clear that the principal would not be given any information regarding the participants' identities. With the principal's approval, the Heads of Departments were invited to participate and provided the relevant information. I explained the details to the Heads of Departments with emphasise on the precautionary measures to mitigate risk, the strategies to cater for any potential risks, and the benefits of the study (Cohen et al., 2018; Yin, 2009). The participants were required to give written consent and told they could withdraw from the study at any time, or request that specific parts of their contribution be withdrawn. Similarly, the teachers and deputies were invited using the same processes. Underlying the recruitment of participants was the steadfast adherence to consent, anonymity, and confidentiality as outlined by the National Health and Medical Research Council et al. (2018) and the University of Southern Queensland.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are a fundamental component of any research project. As Cohen et al. (2018) stated, “ethical research concerns what researchers ought and ought not to do in their research and research behaviour” (p. 111). Many legislative boundaries concerning ethics aim to ensure researchers follow strict guidelines to protect the participants; however, it is not a straightforward process. A review by Brooks et al. (2014) suggested that individuals conducting research must continuously reflect and take responsibility for decision making. For instance, informed consent cannot be assumed for the entirety of the study, when given for the first time. Instead, it should be considered by the researcher at every turn of the study and continuously negotiated (Wax, 1982). Ethical issues presented a range of complex problems which needed consideration as shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

Ethical Considerations

Component	Element	Ethical Issue	Details
Prepare	Ethics application	All areas	Detailed application dealt with all areas of potential ethical issues. These issues included consent, anonymity, and confidentiality as outlined by the National Health and Medical Research Council et al. (2018).
	Participants	Gaining access Informed consent Beneficence Duty of care	<p>I acknowledged the need to gain access early, with fully informed consent, and to move through the correct channels. Cohen et al. (2018) outlined the stages for gaining access which I followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gain official permission to undertake the research. This permission will include the schools governing body and the school principal. - Approaching key personnel who may be assisting the operational aspects of the study, for instance, the deputy and/or assistant principals - Approaching the teachers involved and developing amicable relations
		Non-maleficence Beneficence Duty of care	<p>The issue of harm was an inevitable factor for the research project. Non-maleficence dictates that I thought clearly about any areas which could harm the participants physical, psychological, emotional, professional, or personal wellbeing (Cohen et al., 2018). Potential concerns for this study were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any discomfort felt by the participants resulting from being challenged on their pedagogical beliefs. - The pressure to participate as I was a former colleague. - Participant anxiety regarding the potential judgement by me or the school leadership team. - School leaders behaving coercively towards teachers as they want the school portrayed positively. - Potential for civil unrest amongst staff as talking about the new QCE system could have potentially changed opinions regarding best practice. <p>Strategies used to cater for these issues were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continually reminded the participants about the risks of the study. - Informed participants about where they could seek help in the result of anxiety or other unexpected feelings during the research process. - Gave opportunities for participants to withdraw from the study.

Component	Element	Ethical Issue	Details
Collect		Confidentiality anonymity	<p>Participants identified were in no way traceable to ensure anonymity and confidentiality (Raffe et al., 1989). This notion was critical for the intended study as the participants could have felt under pressure to portray the school positively in fear of judgement by leadership. Therefore, in order to protect the participants from unknown stressors, I ensured that the evidence could not be pieced together and lead back to the individual (Cohen et al., 2018). Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1992) suggested three ways to ensure anonymity, all of which were adopted by me. The implemented strategies were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participant identities were not disclosed to the principal and school leaders. - Pseudonyms were used for identifying people. - All files were password-protected.
	Sampling and recruiting		Participant identities were not disclosed to the principal and/or school leaders.
	Data collection and evidence	Ownership control of data access to data	<p>All evidence obtained remained confidential and untraceable.</p> <p>Interview transcripts had a generic coding (pseudonym).</p> <p>All information which could have resulted in the potential identification of the school or participants was removed from the evidence.</p> <p>All data were kept on a password enabled secure server, and hardcopy evidence locked in a filing cabinet.</p> <p>All hard copies of the data were deleted or shredded at the completion of the study.</p>
Analyse	Interpreting evidence	Avoidance of selective, partisan, and skewed data analysis; value positions in data interpretation;	<p>All participants were given transcripts of their interviews so I could ensure the given information was fairly represented.</p> <p>Participants had access to me during all aspects of the study.</p>

Note 1: This table explains the various information associated with any potential ethical issues which could have surfaced during the study.

Note 2: Ethics approval for this study was gained from the University of Southern Queensland, ETH2020-0018 (see APPENDIX A).

3.10. Data Analysis

This study adopted a thematic analysis using Braun and Clarke (2006) approach, complemented by the utilisation of NVivo software for data organisation and management. Nvivo facilitated the systematic organisation and coding of qualitative data, allowing for efficient data analysis within an interpretivist paradigm. The flexibility of Nvivo aligns well with the structured yet adaptable nature of thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2017).

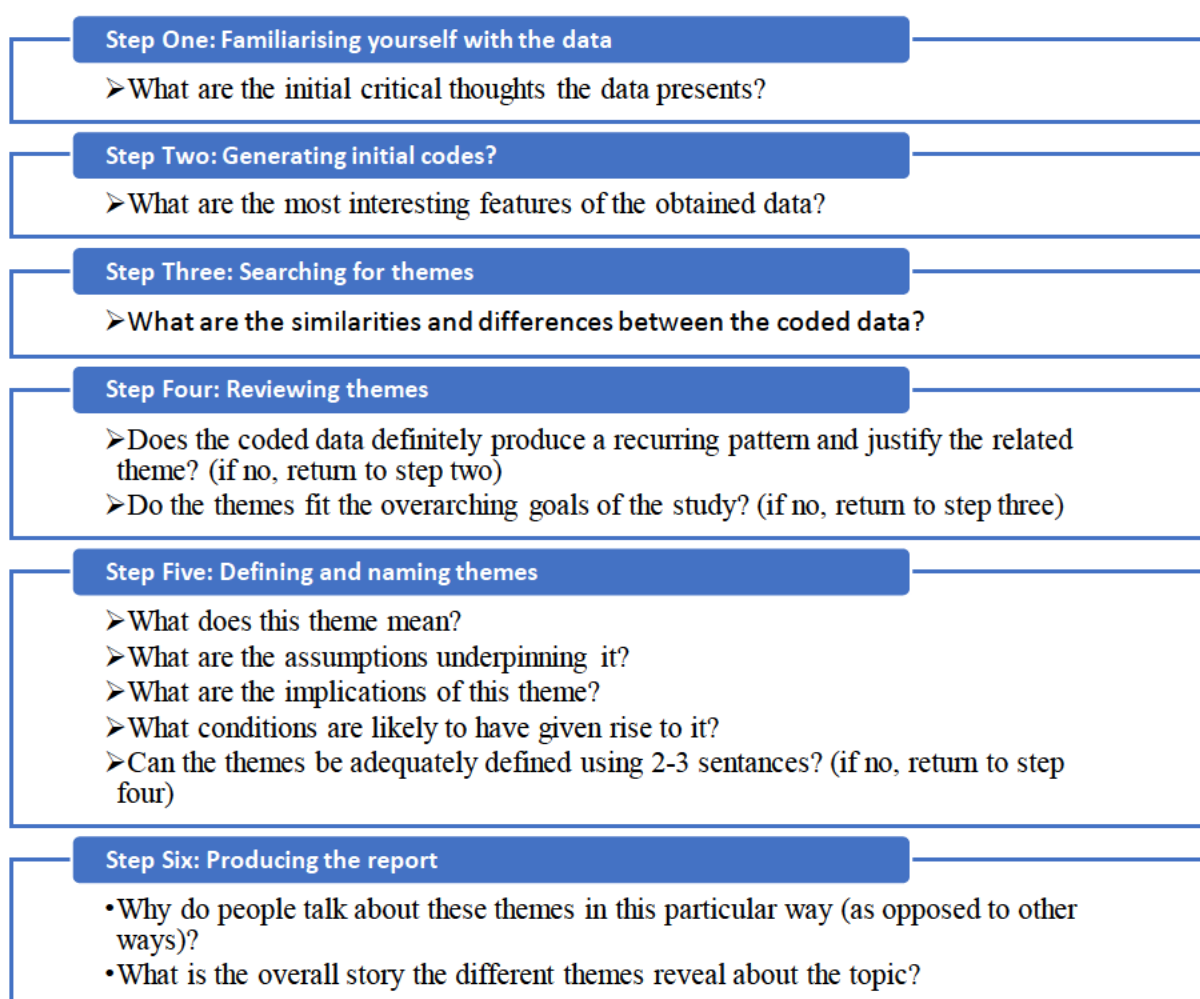
Thematic analysis proved suitable for this study's interpretivist paradigm as it allowed for the exploration of meaning and relationships within qualitative data (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Braun and Clarke (2006) highlighted the flexibility of thematic analysis, enabling me to systematically generate themes while immersing myself in the data. The inductive nature of thematic analysis facilitated the emergence of themes organically from the data, with me having the flexibility to decide the significance of each theme based on its relevance to the research question (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Using NVivo, I employed an inductive approach to thematic analysis, allowing themes to emerge directly from the data without preconceived categories. This approach enabled a detailed exploration of the data, focusing on specific aspects relevant to the research question and conceptual framework. By aligning data with subsidiary research questions, I managed the volume of data effectively, ensuring that thematic analysis remained theoretically sound and consistent with the study's objectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2017).

Furthermore, the thematic analysis delved into latent levels of analysis, aiming to uncover underlying assumptions, ideas, and conceptualisations inherent in the data. This approach was particularly relevant in a study characterised by diverse interpretations based on unique values, beliefs, and experiences. By analysing data at a latent level, I ensured depth and consistency across the methodology and conceptual framework, thereby enhancing the study's rigour and credibility (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The thematic analysis process, depicted in Figure 3.1, illustrates the systematic approach implemented based on the six phases of thematic analysis by Clarke and Braun (2017). This process involved iterative cycles of data coding, theme generation, and refinement, ultimately resulting in a comprehensive understanding of the data and its implications for teachers' pedagogical practices amidst the imposed change to the Queensland education system.

Figure 3.1

Analysis Flowchart



Note: adapted from “Using thematic analysis in psychology” by V. Braun, & V. Clarke (2006). *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
<https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>

3.11. Quality Assurance Phase: Validity

It was essential that I ensured the quality and validity of the study. In qualitative research, measures of validity include a range of theoretical constructs such as rigour, confirmability, credibility, and trustworthiness (Reynolds et al., 2011; Rose & Johnson, 2020). A meta-analysis by Reynolds et al. (2011) acknowledged that there was lack of agreement in approaches to quality assurance in qualitative research. The ongoing issues sit within the debates between the definition of quality and the definition of qualitative research (Reynolds et al., 2011). The important aspect is that I used process-oriented approaches to ensure the validity of the research, including reflexivity, transparency, comprehensiveness, and ethical practice (Jones & Donmoyer, 2021; Reynolds et al., 2011). Therefore, this allowed for the facilitation of the principles of quality throughout the research process.

One approach to quality assurance was adopted which is logical in these circumstances. Since I was a former employee within the school and was a teacher of a subject within the new system, I needed to be aware of any biases and ensure I did not impact the study (Jones & Donmoyer, 2021). Yin (2009) outlined four critical areas for research quality: construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability.

3.11.1. Construct Validity

Construct validity is the most fundamental type of validity for qualitative research. An early study by Loevinger (1957) claimed that construct validity is more potent than other types due to its concerns with explanations rather than operational aspects. Concurring, Cohen et al. (2018) explained that this validity ensures researchers question their understanding of the research topic to make sure it is an acceptable and ethical perspective. Furthermore, the categories used for data collection must be meaningful to the participants; that is, the research accurately portrays the view of the participant (Eisenhart & Howe, 1992). To cater for construct validity, I allowed key participants to access a draft of the case study to review the information.

The use of a wide range of participants to represent the population accurately also helped with construct validity. The study into the new QCE system relied heavily on individual perspective; therefore, the study needed to accurately represent all points of view. The implemented data collection tools allowed a wide range of evidence to be collected and ensured the convergence of the evidence (Yin, 2009). Another strategy, outlined by Yin (2009) was for me to keep a chain of evidence which allowed the reader to move backward or forward through the evidence collecting phase and be confident that it was what had occurred.

3.11.2. Internal Validity

Internal validity concerns itself with the accuracy by which the findings represent the research topic. Cohen et al. (2018) explained that it “seeks to demonstrate that the explanation of a particular event, issue or set of data which a piece of research provides can be sustained by the data and the research” (p. 251). The study by Yin (2009) discussed that the awareness of internal validity deals with the widespread problem of inference caused through unobservable events. Qualitative research breeds inferences due to interviewees given information based on past events and leaving the researcher to conclude something that has already occurred (Cohen et al., 2018; Yin, 2009). Concerning the study, I asked questions regarding the inferences and used strategies to converge the evidence (Cohen et al., 2018). The data collection tools as previously outlined helped to ensure this aspect of validity. The evidence was triangulated from a range of sources which ensured the validity held and that all inferences were indisputable.

Furthermore, the study incorporated multiple ways to ensure internal validity throughout the life of the inquiry. I was consistently conscious of their biases and assumptions which could have potentially influenced their interpretations of the data. These were reflected on and intervened throughout the data collection and analysis phase through the use of a research journal (Yin, 2009). Moreover, the analysis incorporated techniques

which allowed for the cross-checking of findings to ensure internal coherence (Yin, 2009). For this study, it entailed pattern matching between the theory represented through the conceptual framework and what occurred within the study (Yin, 2009). The comparison concluded the extent to what occurred correlated with the theoretical explanations, and if the patterns coincided then the studies internal validity was strengthened (Cohen et al., 2018; Yin, 2009).

3.11.3. External Validity

Cohen et al. (2018) defined external validity as the extent to which the findings can be applied to a wider population, different cases, various settings, periods, or situations. I needed to provide detailed descriptions of the methodology, context, and findings so that external parties could determine how effectively the study could be transferred to other contexts (Schofield, 1996). I enabled external validity through richly detailed descriptions of how the new QCE system had impacted the teacher's pedagogical practice. This process provided opportunity for other Queensland and local institutions to infer the usefulness of the results concerning their context. Further, due to the extensive nature of the literature review, findings were generalised and related to the overall nature of how externally imposed change can impact teacher's pedagogical practice. Conclusions were made by relating the literature to the evidence to build the broader knowledge base beyond the scope of the research question.

3.11.4. Reliability

Reliability is the most logical form of quality assurance. Quite simply, if a researcher was to conduct the case study, again, under the same conditions, then they should arrive at the same conclusions (Cohen et al., 2018; Yin, 2009). The study by Yin (2009) emphasised that this is not a transferability issue, with the application of findings to a different context, but rather concerns itself with conducting precisely the same case study again in another context. Thus, it emphasises the need to eliminate all bias and errors from the research (Cohen et al., 2018; Yin, 2009). Studies by Bogdan and Biklen (1992) and Kvale (1996) each

highlighted the complexities that reliability brings with qualitative research. The authors suggested that the subjective nature of qualitative case studies will inevitably yield different interpretations depending on the researcher. Therefore, I needed to focus on reliability as the fit between what had occurred in the case study and my records (Cohen et al., 2018). Therefore, along with a transparent methodology, this case study aimed to keep detailed records of natural occurrences as they happened within the Queensland school. Table 3.4 provides a summary of the key components used for quality assurance.

Table 3.4

Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance Areas	Tests
Construct validity	<p>Wide range of participants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Senior leadership - Heads of Departments - Teachers <p>Multiple data collection tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviews - Observations - Document analysis <p>Chain of evidence</p> <p>Review of study by participants</p>
Internal validity	<p>Triangulation of evidence involving comparing and cross-referencing findings from different data sources to validate and strengthen the overall conclusions of the research.</p> <p>Cyclic nature of subsidiary research questions refers to the process in which these questions were revisited throughout the research process.</p> <p>Researchers reflective journal</p> <p>Pattern matching analysis following Braun & Clarke (2006)</p>
External validity	<p>Continued review of assumptions and biases</p> <p>Richly detailed analysis allowing transferability to other Queensland institutions</p> <p>Comparisons and generalisations made to the broader literature</p>
Reliability	<p>Clear and justified methodology</p> <p>Detailed records of events</p> <p>Database of evidence including transcribed interviews</p>

Note: This table presents a summary of the protocols used for quality assurance purposes.

3.12. Study Limitations

The reliability of the intended study needed due consideration. The most obvious limitation was that the study would be regarding one school experiencing the phenomenon. The literature review suggested that the different mindsets and subsequent organisational culture would be fundamental in answering the research question; therefore, there is potential for varied findings across contexts, if other organisations were explored. The case had individuals operating within their unique values and beliefs, and this component potentially created parameters that would be difficult to replicate in a different environment. This was at the forefront of my mind when interpreting the findings.

Furthermore, I was a former employee at the school and had been heavily involved in the design, implementation, and teaching of the new QCE system. Within my role, I had developed opinions and values which may have influenced my interpretation of the evidence. As with any qualitative research, readers should be aware that this study relies heavily on my interpretation of the data, and that preconceptions may be present. While there was every attempt to ensure the validity and reliability of the study, the potential for bias is prominent, and this was acknowledged by the research during all aspects of the study.

Another limitation is that the study is a cross-sectional study design where it analyses a set of variables at a single point in time, providing a snapshot of the phenomenon under investigation (Levin, 2006). Although limited to a moment in time, this approach is useful for descriptive purposes and hypothesis generation, particularly when my time and resource constraints were limited (Levin, 2006). Further, the study was limited to the personnel who chose to participate within the study. Although the participant selection criteria aimed to mitigate this limitation, it should still be acknowledged that the final demographics of leaders and teachers produced unique results.

3.13. Chapter Summary

Chapter three created the structure to examine externally imposed change through the perspective of teachers and to view the impacts on their pedagogical practice. Designed to use a case study approach, it gave me key considerations when conducting research aimed at exploring individuals' beliefs and values. Furthermore, this approach enabled access to practitioners who were living a significant change to their education system, thus, enabling a descriptive account of the factors causing impact. The use of qualitative data was justified through the nature of the study. Qualitative research gave the best chance for interpreting meaning and ensuring diverse responses. Moreover, identifying the appropriate paradigm and belief was essential for my mindset. The logical adoption of an interpretivist paradigm aligned with the characteristics of the study which was that every participant would bring their own perspectives and experiences to the discussions. The solidification of a qualitative case study under an interpretivist paradigm was essential in aligning the literature review, the conceptual framework, and the research question.

The research design was a fundamental aspect during this phase of the study. This was where the research selected practical strategies that would complement my abstract thinking behind the research topic. For instance, choosing focus groups, semi-structured interviews, and document referencing enabled me to ensure that they were operating under the interpretivist paradigm. The nature of the evidence produced by using these data collection tools forced me to understand the perspectives, values, and beliefs that engulfed each participant. Furthermore, this notion guided the recruitment process to ensure a range of perspectives were included through the development of strict criteria. Moreover, it enabled a critical view of the ethical considerations, quality assurance process, and the limitations of the study. These were essential for ensuring any interpretations of the data were considered reliable, valid, and fair to all participants.

Chapter four presents the enactment of the methodology. The evidence is presented by relating participant responses, in the separate research phases, to the subsidiary research questions. Each section uses a thematic discussion to bring the data together leading to Chapter five and the answering of the primary research question.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION

The purpose of this study was to view a case study of externally imposed change from the viewpoint of teachers as well as to explore the impact on their pedagogical practice. The research study used the recent modifications to Queensland senior education as a real-life example of an externally imposed change that could have a significant impact on teachers' practice. The system is referred to as the new Queensland Certificate of Education system (QCE) and is the most significant change to the senior assessment system in Queensland for around 50 years (Willis et al., 2019).

Chapter four illustrates how the participants' perspectives were captured using the identified data collection tools. Firstly, the preliminary phase used a focus group to gain insights from the Heads of Departments and their perspectives to challenge the parameters of the study. It shows how the participants responded to each focus group topic in a natural, free-flowing conversation and how this data were taken and analysed to inform the next phases of data collection. Secondly, it demonstrates how the teacher participants in phase one responded to the semi-structured interview questions. It combines their response to produce a powerful montage of the key feelings and ideas regarding their experience of the imposed change. Thirdly, the perspectives of the deputies in phase two of the data collection capture similarly. The resulting stories from all three phases are intertwined with my reflections and analysis of key documents, identified in text boxes, which helped reinforce and triangulate the collected evidence.

The study has used a prominent institution in the government sector known for the purposes of this study as Happy-Valley Secondary School. This secondary school spans year levels 7 through 12, catering to the educational needs of an inner regional community. With a dedicated team of 140 teaching staff, the school emphasises academic excellence and holistic

development. The school has become a well-regarded school, serving a diverse student body with a total enrolment of 1949.

The school is proud to use the values of Safety, Respect, and Learning as the manner in which “business is done”, meaning these values guide all aspects of teaching and learning within the school. They state that they treat all learners differently and offer a range of different learning programs through to all areas of post-school study. These include striving for consistent outcomes in both Academic and Traineeship pathways. As outlined in their Annual Report (2020), the trends in data point toward a consistent and high percentage of ATAR students who achieve in the 90+ range, a consistently high number of students who complete a school-based traineeship, and an increasing percentage of students who alternate timetables designed to incorporate Technical and Further Education Training (TAFE), work experience, or professional development programs. They also state that their staff access significant professional development opportunities so they can deliver the most relevant programs for their students.

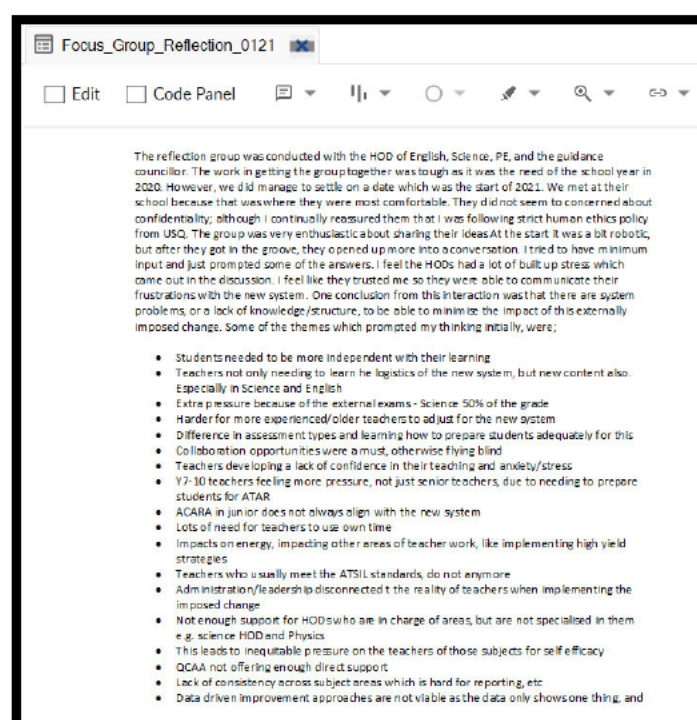
The leadership team comprises an executive principal, four deputy principals, and various Heads of Departments in key learning areas and pastoral care. The principal oversees major school projects and delegates operational responsibilities to the four deputy principals. The research methodology had previously included the school’s principal, but upon further investigation, it seemed that the data collection would produce enough rich data from the deputy principal leadership level. This was due to how the administration duties were structured at the school. The deputies were delegated responsibility within the school, so they were the substantive leaders of teaching and learning. The principal would check in periodically with the deputy principals; however, they would work directly with the Heads of Departments and, therefore, were the people living the experience which was essential for the research topic. This study aimed to view imposed change from the ground-level perspective,

so it focused on the individuals being directly impacted. Given this organisational structure, I found it appropriate to focus on the deputy principals and the Heads of Departments positions while examining the leadership perspective concerning the impact of the new QCE system.

Chapter Three gave an in-depth description of the research methodological approach, the research design, and data analysis. This chapter presents the data collected, incorporating the first step of the data analysis model, *Familiarising yourself with the data* as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). It provides descriptions of the participants' accounts, captured using the indicated data collection tools, and linked to my own initial reflections and observations. My reflections and observations were made during two distinct phases. The first was directly after the interview to assess my own facilitation of the interview and the overall feel of the participant response. The second was during the first revisit of the interview, using the recording and the transcript concurrently. An example of this reflection is shown in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1

Reflection Notes Example



Furthermore, I selected key school documents (see Table 4.1) and used them during the initial analysis and reflection to triangulate the evidence and enable a greater understanding of the underlying cultural influences acting on the organisation. This analysis allowed me to draw connections between the raw data and the research questions and challenge my assumptions about what I was hearing from the participants. Also, as an insider researcher, I easily identified the importance and relevance of each document. The documents are shown in Table 4.1 with a description of their content. Reflections, observations, and documents were referenced during this data presentation to enhance the participants' stories.

Table 4.1

Key School Documents Referenced During the Data Analysis

Key school documents	Synopsis
Annual implementation plan 2021	A document created by Happy-Valley in 2020 regarding the key agenda items for the proceeding academic year. It includes key improvement strategies, necessary actions, and timelines and provides insight into the teaching and learning priorities in place after the implementation of the new QCE system.
Annual report 2020	A full report on all the key areas within Happy-Valley for the indicated academic year. This includes reflections on progress in teaching and learning and gave insight into how the school viewed their progress during the implementation phase of the new QCE system.
Pedagogical framework (written 2015, still current)	A key document showing all the strategies in place for enabling effective teaching and learning. It had been developed in 2015, it gave an understanding about the culture of teaching and learning which was present as the new system was implemented.
Strategic plan 2021-2024	Happy-Valley's plan enabled a view of how the school was reflecting on the new system and impacting the long-term priorities.
School calendars 2018-2020	Used to verify the implementation of any key initiatives indicated by the participants during the interviews.

Note: Documents used to verify the evidence collected from interviews

4.1. Preliminary Phase Presentation (The Focus Group)

The initial phase of data collection involved organising a focus group consisting of Heads of Departments. The purpose of this focus group was to gather insights into the priorities set by Happy-Valley Secondary School and within some key learning areas. Participants were given relevant information for the study, including the conceptual framework, and guiding questions were provided related to their roles and the research topic. As leaders initiating change and experts in their respective fields, the Heads of Departments offered crucial insights into their subject area practices. I observed the participants sharing interpretations and expressing differing opinions, allowing discussions to naturally unfold, mirroring their daily work interactions.

This data underwent an initial analysis which challenged my assumptions regarding the study and informed subsequent teacher discussions. This played a crucial role in refining the research question and guiding the core data collection during the proceeding research phases. Additionally, the focus on curriculum areas during discussions facilitated the screening of teacher participants, ensuring seamless alignment with the themes identified in the focus group (Cohen et al., 2018).

To aid the Preliminary Phase explanation, Table 4.2 shows the key aspects of this phase, which informed the explanation's structure and indicated the contextual importance of each aspect.

Table 4.2*Preliminary Phase Structure and Contextual Importance*

Preliminary phase structure	Contextual Importance
Principal approval	Gain approval and enthusiasm for conducting the study Outline the ethical and logistical aspects of the study
Focus group recruitment	Recruitment through clear and transparent information to ensure participants felt safe
Focus group session	Used to gain insight into the priorities set within specific subject areas at Happy-Valley Focus group participants informed subject areas to be investigated
Challenging assumptions	Used to expand the parameters of the study
Preliminary Phase – Initial coding	Implementation of Braun and Clarke (2006) step two applied to the Focus group data informed the questions for the semi-structured interviews in phases 1 and 2 Used as a point of reference for Phases 1 and 2 analysis

Note: This table identifies the structure of the preliminary phase of the data collection which guides this section for later discussion purposes.

4.1.1. Principal Approval

In the first instance, I met with Happy-Valley's principal to seek approval for the school's involvement in the research. I explained the purpose of the study, including what I would need from participants, how much time it might take, and the ethical considerations. I made sure the principal knew that I would be managing any ethical issues through the duration of the study and be adhering to formal protocols (Cohen et al., 2018). The principal was very supportive of this research, seeing it as an opportunity to have the teachers reflect on the implementation of the new system. This attitude ensured the teachers' perceptions of the study were positive from the outset, which allowed for a more trusting environment to begin researching.

4.1.2. Focus Group Recruitment

Once the principal signed the formal documents, I reached out, via email, to the Heads of Departments, giving them both the Information Sheet and the Consent Form (see

APPENDIX B and C). Table 4.3 identifies the participants recruited for the focus group. The one surprise participant was the Guidance Counselor as I had not factored this into my planning, but I reflected on the diverse point-of-view this would permit and predicted that this would bring a richness to the data.

Table 4.3

Focus Group Participants

Phase	Mode of data collection	Participant identification
Preliminary	Focus Group	Head of English - Jessie Head of Science – Gretel Head of Health and Physical Education (HPE) - Theresa Guidance Counselor – Natalie

Note: This table presents the participants of the preliminary stage.

4.1.3. Focus Group Session

The atmosphere was relaxed, and I had the impression that the participants were responding honestly to the interview questions, as read in my reflective journal. When they began to speak about the new system some of their language came across as negative with a degree of overwhelm. I interpreted this as evidence that they felt comfortable to express their authentic viewpoints within the constraints of the focus group setting. I felt that if they did not feel comfortable then they may not have been as open about how they were feeling. This was further evidenced through the fact that I did not have to prompt the conversation as the group kept the discussion moving forward. I recorded the entire discussion and listened to the recording multiple times to immerse myself in the data.

The group sat around a table in a meeting room at the school where I presented them with three open-ended questions to prompt their thinking and direct discussions. The meeting was conversational, and each question was presented one at a time. By using an open-ended

question, I was able to observe the Heads of Departments as they related their interpretations to each other, and I could easily compare and contrast their responses. The questions and a snapshot of responses are presented in this section. Each question is presented in sequence with the responses for each question. Further, the discussion topic is identified by the use of sub-headings to easily identify the flow of ideas by the participants.

4.2. Focus Group Question 1

The focus group were asked to reflect on Subsidiary Research Question 1 – How have teachers at a Queensland secondary school conceptualised the new QCE system concerning their pedagogical practice? by using the following prompts: How do you feel about the importance of this question in your context? What sparks your interest? What do you feel could be an area of focus for your context?

4.2.1. Discussion on the Demands of the New System.

It was clear from the participant responses that the new mandated change had brought a pedagogical shift in the way teaching and learning should occur. Theresa, the Head of HPE, described that “it was very contentious and for a lot of reasons we had to explore what would our pedagogy be and what was driving our decisions around how we were teaching things”. Members of the focus group confirmed that early in the implementation phase, the current pedagogical model was identified as being inadequate for the new system. Theresa commented:

We were looking at objectives, cognitive processes, enquiry-based learning, and the content with the new dynamic systems approach which doesn't come anywhere near, I do, we do, you do. It's very, very different to what our current structure is with our pedagogy, which is a conflict that we must address. (Theresa)

Document Reference: The reflective nature of the Heads of Departments aligned with the encouraged culture. In a document outlining their pedagogical framework it states that the school will “encourage staff to maintain up-to-date pedagogies” and “identify needs and respond”. This culture already existed so this early analysis was a natural occurrence

Note: Document reference from *Happy-Valley Pedagogical Framework, 2015-current*.

An example given by Jessie, the Head of English, emphasised the greater focus on student independence and the need for teachers to be conscious when scaffolding tasks. They stated that:

I think teachers have a greater awareness of what are students doing in the classroom as opposed to us. Are they doing the learning or are we feeding it to them? So, I would say there's been a focus on greater independence in learning, giving them the scaffolding but pulling it away. (Jessie)

Document Reference: This aligns with the design of the QCAA syllabus design which is underpinned by Marzano and Kendall's (2007) taxonomy. The 6th level within this framework indicates the “Metacognitive System” as a key part of the learning process. This aspect challenges students to set goals, design self-directed learning strategies, and regulate their own learning. The teachers were striving to ensure their pedagogy catered for the key principles of the new syllabus and that their students were correctly prepared.

Note: Document reference from the *Sciences senior subjects* by QCAA. (2023).

<https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/senior-subjects/sciences>

Another noteworthy aspect of the discussion focused on the changes in syllabus requirements, as highlighted by Gretel, the Head of Science. She pointed out that the science syllabus had undergone significant alterations, and this was causing teachers to stress.

Teachers that have just taught in this system are now going, gee I've never taught that before, I haven't taught that before, I haven't taught it to that depth before, so there is a lot of learning on their behalf. (Gretel)

This comment suggests that the content has become more challenging for teachers. Gretel underscored that educators who were solely familiar with the previous system now express sentiments such as "I've never taught that before". My thoughts were that this highlights the increased complexity and depth of the new content. Consequently, teachers find it necessary to acquaint themselves with the content before presenting it in the classroom. The change in content extended its impact to student experiments. Gretel stated:

Where there are extended experimental investigations, just do a little bit of teaching and then the kids guided themselves through that. Now the content and the depth and breadth are so significant that that's had a huge impact on teachers. (Gretel)

In Gretel's previous comment it was noted that under the old system, teachers could incorporate more student-guided learning after initial instruction; however, due to the increased depth and breadth of the current requirements, teachers find it necessary to meticulously structure the learning process. It was implied that the new content had put pressure on teachers to ensure their knowledge of the Science curriculum was up to date. Gretel stated:

There is a lot of new and current science, green chemistry, the physics, the modern fundamentals of physics. So, teachers in their older stages like we've had on staff, have had to do new learning, do new research themselves to keep themselves up to date. So, you've got the core concepts that are far broader and far deeper than they've ever been before. Because it's a 50 per cent exam there's all that content you've got to teach. (Gretel)

The participants elaborated by emphasising the need to draw on individuals with science degrees to instil confidence in content delivery. Specifically, they expressed a preference for teachers with previous careers in science rather than those who had majored in science as part of their teaching degree. Gretel noted, "We need the people that have science

degrees". Additionally, they conveyed the perception that this preference underscored shortcomings in preservice teaching programs. The consensus among participants was that these programs require refinement, as new graduates are entering teaching without a solid foundation in key concepts and content. In their words, "The level of understanding in a pre-service program needs to be significant, not just about the education system but about the content and the concepts".

Document Reference: The pedagogical framework refers to having teachers in subject areas where they are experts. This affirms the views expressed by Heads of Departments and teachers regarding the need for specialised teachers and that it is better to have a teacher who has trained in the content through a qualification, verses someone who is self-taught and may have gaps in their knowledge.

Note: Document reference from Happy-Valley Pedagogical Framework, 2015-current.

The impact of the syllabus content on Happy-Valley's structures was evident. Gretel alluded to timetable issues due to the uncertainty of teacher capability. She stated:

There are 15 classes in Year 10, well just put someone in there. I can't just put someone in there, we're going to tasters. I can't teach a physics taster, and I would say that I'm academic, I could try and learn, but it's – I can't teach a specialist maths taster [Y10 senior subject preparation class]. (Gretel)

The nature of the new syllabus meant that students could be disadvantaged by not having a specialist teacher in that area. Furthermore, Gretel explained their concern that students will remain disadvantaged by this new system because "this teacher shortage that we're seeing, is going to see more and more, we lack the subject masters across all the areas because they're just not going into teaching".

Natalie, the Guidance Councillor, agreed that the amount of learning required for the new system has been challenging for all staff. She made an interesting point about the new syllabus demands impacting student subject selection and a greater need to understand where

the new content leads. She explained, “I feel a lot of my colleagues have no understanding of the rigour, of the new syllabus. That's something which I think will have an impact across schools, in terms of student subject selection and that side of things”.

Even as a guidance counsellor, she must understand the new demands of each syllabus and ensure students are selecting subjects of which they are capable and are going to give them the correct pathway. She relies on the expertise of teachers to give information about the difficulty of the new system and ATAR knowledge, but this is putting extra stress on teachers because they still do not understand the demands of the new system.

4.2.2. Discussion on the new Assessment Processes.

During the focus group, the Heads of Departments unanimously acknowledged a considerable amount of stress associated with the new assessment process. Theresa, the Head of HPE, voiced concerns about the new Confirmation process. She expressed frustration over the lack of clear guidance, leading to stress regarding the standards that the QCAA would be expecting when evaluating student assessments.

For me to have to decide about A to E on a student, where I don't have a cut-off, like in Maths, they knew what the cut-off point for A, B, C and D was in the syllabus. But for PE or Health, there was no cut-off. So, we were making decisions about what was an A and what was a B, we weren't confident about what we were making the decisions on. (Theresa)

Despite her apparent stress, the Head of Department also highlighted the positive aspects of the Endorsement and Confirmation process. Theresa noted that the Confirmation process was perceived as fairer compared to the old system. She explained that this fairness stemmed from the fact that assessments are now reviewed individually, and students are selected randomly for scrutiny.

Equity because you are looking at four pieces, because every piece is scrutinised, and again it might only be a range of students, that is sampled when it comes to

Confirmation but at least each piece is given feedback in real-time. . . . And [in the old system] I have got twenty kids on that rung, I can choose whoever, so I think there's greater perhaps accountability, equity in the system [due to the QCAA selecting students at random]. (Theresa)

4.2.3. Summary

The Heads of Departments gave some great insight into how the teachers in this secondary school conceptualise the new system in relation to their practice. The new system had challenged them significantly and forced them to explore pedagogical practice at a deeper level than had been expected before. It was interesting to hear the way they problem-solved the demands of the new system and how they collaborated to ensure the best results for the students. The response to the second interview question is discussed in the following section.

4.3. Focus Group Question 2

The Focus group was asked to reflect on Subsidiary Research Question 2: How have the school leaders of a Queensland secondary school conceptualised and prioritised the new QCE system concerning teachers' pedagogical practice? by using the following prompts: How do you feel about the importance of this question in your context? What sparks your interest? What do you feel could be an area of focus for your context?

4.3.1. Discussion on the Leadership Structure. In discussions about the implementation of the new system, Theresa, the Head of HPE, expressed her view that the leadership structures at Happy-Valley were not adequately equipped to handle significant change. She pointed out that many miscommunications occurred because "there's no one person who sits over the top, who's got a view of every subject. So that makes it difficult for us at times".

Researcher Reflection. The study noted that the four deputy principals were assigned to oversee specific year levels, with rotations occurring each term. Notably, Happy-Valley lacked a hierarchical leadership structure where an individual was exclusively responsible for curriculum oversight. The absence of a designated leader with sole responsibility for curriculum management posed challenges to implementing cohesive school-wide approaches to timelines and structures.

Jessie, the Head of English, also alluded to this experience and explained that the leadership team were more concerned with the compliance aspects of the curriculum. She described:

Well probably I think - at our school we don't have someone in charge of curriculum. So, we rely on each other as Heads of Departments rather than being able to go to someone who knows. I think at the admin level it's more a compliance thing, you need to meet these dates and they manage the portal, our stuff coming in and our feedback coming back. (Jessie)

Further, Jessie implied that there is a certain amount of accountability that falls on the Heads of Departments due to the gap in the structural system at Happy-Valley. The structural issues within the school reinforce the perceived disconnection of leadership from staff.

Researcher Reflection: In terms of implementing the new system, there seemed to have been a lot of pressure on the Heads of Departments to lead the change and find the information.

Jessie elaborated, expressing that Happy-Valley's leadership did not grasp her timelines, and the root issue lay in the absence of an overarching figure with a comprehensive view of every subject. She emphasised, "So that makes it difficult for us at times". The interviews conducted suggested that this situation has resulted in a disconnect between leadership and the rest of the staff.

4.3.2. Discussion on the new QCAA Timelines

Theresa, the Head of HPE, highlighted that the QCAA's flexible, contextual approach posed challenges for leadership in making decisions about the most effective way to implement the new system in their specific context. She explained:

So, the QCAA direction there, if they had said, every school has to do this Internal Assessment 1 by this time, and similar for Internal Assessment 2, Internal Assessment 3, and Internal Assessment 4 that would've made it much easier. Because it would be in black and white, and we'd have a clear direction there. But when it's not that way and becomes a school-based decision, that's when your admin really does need to understand. (Theresa)

Researcher Reflection: The leaders at this school were clearly operating within the constraints of the external change. The comment made about the QCAA needing to use hardline assessment timelines would have made it easier for leadership to give direction. Instead, they needed to learn the needs of every department, without fully understanding any of them, and come up with school-wide processes and procedures. This seemed to have resulted in a chaotic approach and staff feeling uncertain about the imposed change.

Theresa made an extremely interesting comment about her feeling that she had to spend a lot of time “teaching” her direct supervisor. She stated:

I guess from my perspective, and this is not personal – when you have a supervisor that has no idea about your subject, where Jessie was saying, I've been spending most of my time trying to educate my direct supervisor who doesn't necessarily still understand, what it is that's impacting my department. (Theresa)

This observation appeared to be underscored by the fact that the leadership team does not have a teaching load. Consequently, they lack first-hand experience, which in turn affects their ability to provide genuine and empathetic responses to the impact of the new system on teacher practice. Theresa explained:

That's another challenge that I've been trying to get over. But unless the admin is actually in the thick of it, like you were talking about before, the teaching of it. They'll get a certain amount and I do believe that they do, but to actually really appreciate it, that's what it takes....we all learn so much when we're teaching it. (Theresa)

Gretel, the Head of Science, described her preconceptions about what will occur after the results of the first Year 12 cohort are released. She explained:

What's going to happen now, the next move forward is we're going to be analysing the data from the 2020 cohort. We're going to be sitting around and we're going to be going, okay so your internal assessment matched or didn't match your external assessment, and I'll be going, that's chalk and cheese, (Gretel)

The Head of Department continued:

These are these objectives, learning objective one is never even covered in any of the internal assessments [in Science]. We'll be sitting and you'll go, yes maybe, and I'll go, hang on. English does a couple of learning objectives in the internal assessment that is the same as in the external. Same as maths, whereas science doesn't. The only time you ever see objective one is in the external, so how are you getting me to analyse my internal, versus my external, in this nice scatter plot graph the QCAA has sent us. (Gretel)

Researcher Reflection: This may have resulted in leadership misinterpreting QCAA communications and the Heads of Departments not entirely understanding leadership's agendas.

The perceived mistrust seems to extend to other facets of the new system, notably the Endorsement and Confirmation process, which has a significant impact on teachers. The Heads of Departments implied that they experienced an unfair sense of accountability, notably heightened due to the inflexibility in the learning process for the new system. Gretel,

the Head of Science, in particular, emphasised her sentiments regarding the leadership's lack of understanding of her situation. Gretel discussed the Endorsement process:

When small things happen, you get small errors and that sort of thing, and at that level [leadership], it's like, how come your not managing that?... Well, I'm managing five different Endorsement pieces...or six different Endorsement pieces, in areas that may not be my expertise. So, my expertise might be in chemistry and biology, but I look at the physics paper and I go, well I think that seems right. I know it's gone to this person, and this person, and then it came back with a simple cut and paste error, that had gone through and had been missed. The question [from leadership] to me was, how did that happen? I went, well you know, we did this, we did this, we're tired, it's the end of the term [laughs]. This is the sixth task – we are doing our very best, amidst everything else that we do and I'm not writing all the tasks, because I don't teach all of the subjects. (Gretel)

Gretel bore a substantial part of the impact. Teachers, feeling uncertain, turn to her for answers; however, overseeing multiple Science subjects while being trained in only one leaves her essentially blind in some areas. Although she can monitor assessment types and structures, she lacks the authority to determine their correctness in terms of content or difficulty. A point of contention arises when the Deputy Principals challenge her on minor errors of Endorsement, seemingly unaware of or unwilling to acknowledge this issue.

4.3.3. Discussion on Staff Development

A recurring theme in the discussion was the role of staff development as a strategy for implementing the new system. My thinking was that while capacity-building strategies are deemed necessary for the implementation process, they can impact teachers in various ways. The externally imposed change has placed demands on the most valued commodity for teachers, that is time. The evidence suggests that leaders have attempted to create opportunities for teachers to have planning time. Theresa, the Head of HPE, acknowledged

this effort, stating, "I think at our level, our school, we get a lot of planning time. They've been very generous with the planning time".

While this was acknowledged positively, Jessie, the Head of English, stated that it is difficult to quantify the amount of time needed for developing assessment tasks in the new system. She explained:

In terms of planning time, it means you've got to use your internal relief for that.

However, I still don't think in terms of those processes of Confirmation and Endorsement, unless you're doing it and sitting there with staff – staff can spend all day on a task to get it ready for Endorsement. It's one day on the task and it's still not finalised, because there's so much that goes into that. I think sometimes at a systems-level or at a school level, they say, oh we give you the time, you should be right with that. (Jessie)

Researcher Reflection: This concern about meeting the needs of teachers, could have been due to a lack of situational leadership where some teachers need emotional support whereas some need more skill-based support. It was implied that morale dropped because the leadership team showed a lack of concern by not negotiating and acknowledging the individual needs of the teachers. Furthermore, it was interesting to reflect on the monumental task faced by Queensland teachers when they implemented the new QCAA system. They adapted to the demands of the new syllabus while trying to manage the normal demands of teaching which are still active. The evidence indicates that allocating time is a starting point and, when released for a day's planning, it takes teachers away from their classes and they have to catch up on that work later.

There appeared to be a genuine concern for the development of teachers and whether it aligned with their needs. Jessie pointed out that while the planning time provided is appreciated, "it is only the starting point; there is more than triple that, that goes outside of a person's timetable". The Heads of Departments acknowledged that planning time was given

and that leadership considered it a priority. However, there was a concern that the leadership team did not engage in negotiations regarding time or other needs with the teachers.

Another facet of staff development encouraged was the use of cross-school networking. While evidence suggested that this was endorsed at a system level, complications arose due to uncontrollable external factors, hindering its success. Gretel, the Head of Science explained:

We have had some support at the regional level. That will probably change, I think this year. But we've definitely had some support there, but I suppose, last year in particular some of those things fell away because of the COVID restrictions. We were supposed to have the moderation for the region here for the first IA, which was something that we were really looking forward to. Being able to pass the papers around and that sort of thing. (Gretel)

Although seen as a valuable opportunity for Happy-Valley's teachers to engage, the inability to make time for this seemed to cause stress on the Heads of Departments. Gretel continued:

There was the suggestion of, well maybe then you'll email this person, and that just doesn't become the same sort of thing. So, I did pass some work on to some other colleagues from different schools, just by email.... it was on your own time. So, I was emailing and saying in your own time, could you please have a look at these couple for me, yes, I've confirmed within my school. I've got three other people to mark it, but I'd like it confirmed outside the school. But I was imposing on them and their times, and when are you doing that? (Gretel)

Networking had been encouraged by leadership and utilised as a collaborative model for implementing the new system. However, due to the absence of face-to-face networking, it had to be conducted over email, based on the teacher's schedule, with no designated time

provided by the school. Additionally, being a larger school, they were approached by smaller schools where one teacher might be responsible for a specific subject, requiring more extensive support with QCAA processes.

Document Reference: Happy-Valley's Annual Report 2020, and the Annual Implementation Plan 2021, confirmed that a key strategy for the school was to "continue the relationships with rural and remote schools within their sector".

Note: Document reference from Happy-Valley's Annual Report 2020 and Annual Implementation Plan 2021.

Natalie, the guidance councillor, explained how the new system impacted her role, in terms of networking:

Smaller schools are finding that even more challenging in that, I've had a couple of people contact me, from my previous subject area. Because I'm not in that space, I have sat down and helped with Endorsement and Confirmation timelines and stuff, with other people in other schools, for the sake of the subject matter that I come from, which means that I have that capacity. (Natalie)

This reflects the values and culture promoted within Happy-Valley educational community, where members are willing to dedicate their time to assist other schools. This commitment is underscored by the fact that the guidance counsellor, with no classes and thus no direct obligations, is confident that the leadership team considers collaboration a crucial strategy for school improvement. The guidance counsellor noted that these values do not seem to be universally evident in all schools.

I obviously don't know their particular situation in their school or why they can't contact the school next door or what the situation is. But it's obviously a challenge that they don't feel they can reach out to other colleagues nearby, to do that. (Natalie)

This point further highlights the cultural aspects of Happy-Valley that assist teachers in navigating through the changes in the system. The fact that organisational members feel

unrestrained and are encouraged to collaborate across the broader system emphasises the essence of a professional learning community, which is fundamental to staff development.

Additional discussions by the guidance counsellor further highlighted this culture:

Our region tends to talk compared to other regions. I've got friends who are in [close large capital city] and they might be a kilometre from the school down the road, but they don't do any sharing or any talking at all. Whereas I think part of that is the history of panels in our region. We're quite collegial because we are quite a broad region, in terms of how much of the state we cover in this space. As a result of that, there are a lot of people who are willing to communicate, a lot of people who are willing to share, and talk, it's a different culture. (Natalie)

Researcher Reflection: When I first heard this, it resonated with me because, as a teacher in the new system, the culture encouraged by the leadership team and wider regional system would give me the confidence to reach outside of my immediate environment for support.

Another important feature regarding staff development in relation to the implementation of the new system at this school was the quality and frequency of professional development. Theresa, the Head of HPE, concluded that there was not enough PD offered and they had to go looking for it themselves. She stated:

Across the state, people were saying, how do we do this? That's what forced QCAA to then come up with some PD sessions to teach the teachers. That was too late because we were already in the thick of teaching it and we were always in catch-up mode.

That was a bit unfair to be able to roll a new syllabus out like that. (Theresa)

The Head of Department made it clear they were not given enough information to make an effective start on the new programs.

Research Reflection: I thought this was interesting in that the people that truly suffer in this change are the students for who the new system is supposed to be benefiting.

As a result of not having enough information, Jessie, the Head of English, sought professional development through local universities, which she found to be very strategic in their approach. She explained that they had "the University of Queensland run quite a few workshops, and the University of Southern Queensland, and a lot of that were around biology and psychology in particular". This was partly because, in their opinion, the QCAA's developed exemplars of unit plans and assessments were not quality assured. She explained:

Our problem was that the teachers that went to that got really bad feedback from the staff presenting about how poor our exemplars were from QCAA and how poor some of the stuff that was in the syllabus was, that teachers than in their own discussion boards started to fuel up then. You say, oh the exemplar for biology's got confidence intervals that don't even apply to that concept. So, teachers were already feeling overwhelmed a bit by the step-up and then to hear from experts in the field that the exemplars weren't using the correct statistics, for the correct practical requirement.

That was probably one that – but QCAA didn't run a statistic session for us. (Jessie)

Research Reflection: It was obvious there was a lot of stress around what the mechanics of the new system looked like in Science. It raises questions about the QCAA and the implementation of the new system, especially around teacher support.

4.3.4. Summary

The response by the Heads of Departments to the second interview question was significant for several reasons. It allowed for insight into the leadership structures at Happy-Valley and its effectiveness, and it allowed for a candid discussion about how the Heads of Departments and Senior Leadership Team work together during periods of change. These discussion points captured the dealings between the key stakeholders during the

implementation of the new system. The focus groups responses to the third question are discussed in the following section.

4.4. Focus Group Question 3

The focus group were asked to reflect on Subsidiary Research Question 3: What factors have contributed to the impact of the new QCE system on teachers' pedagogical practice in a Queensland secondary school? by using the following prompts: How do you feel about the importance of this question in your context? What sparks your interest? What do you feel could be an area of focus for your context?

4.4.1. Discussion on Unforeseen Impacts

It appeared that the nature of the new system ensured that the pressure of changing practice was felt by all teachers at Happy-Valley not just those of Senior subjects. Natalie, the guidance councillor, offered some observations:

I've gone around and talking to staff, that's been interesting to hear them just reflecting on how they need to modify or shape what they're doing. Meeting those Australian curriculum standards, but also preparing for the senior, that also while it is based on the content on the Australian curriculum the skills and the assessment is not always matching up. (Natalie)

Jessie, the Head of English, further emphasised the pressure to adjust teaching within the junior school. She explained:

The pedagogy you think to yourself, we should be doing this in junior, however, we've just only finished first two-year cycle with senior. The time that it takes to actually review, reorganise, regenerate and then there is another review of the junior Australian curriculum which is to be finalised at the end of this year. So, you don't want to get ahead of yourself and do something that has to be undone. (Jessie)

Theresa, the Head of HPE, explained that after quality assuring the ACARA syllabus in relation to preparing students for senior, they discovered that it could not achieve this effectively.

We've been working very hard to bring into place the HPE curriculum and the senior curriculum all at the same time. The shared school units that they produced for the Australian curriculum came nowhere near supporting what the kids needed to know for the senior curriculum. (Theresa)

Document Reference. On the Happy-Valley's Annual Implementation Plan, 2021, it states "Continuing HOD and teaching staff awareness of and compliance with the delivery of the Australian Curriculum and its link into the year 11/12 Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE)". Clearly, within this priority there is a stressor relating to what would be required to properly prepare the students in the junior school for the new system. The new system has clearly indirectly impacted the entire school not just the immediate implementers.

Note: Document reference from Happy-Valley's Annual Implementation Plan 2021.

Then Theresa went on to explain that this was mostly due to the "Australian curriculum being written before the senior curriculum". Jessie, the Head of English, agreed:

The QCAA subjects are actually based on the senior Australian curriculum. But there is a mismatch between what is in the junior curriculum and then what's in the senior. So, for example what's in the junior curriculum for English, they use the word, evaluate, we don't use it in senior. So, I just think, analyse, is the big one in the senior QCAA curriculum, however the junior goes, evaluate, which is a step further I think than analyse, so I think there's a real mismatch. (Theresa)

4.4.2. Discussion on Communication Issues

The focus group members highlighted that one of the major external impacts on teachers' practice has been the lack of communication between the QCAA and this education system. Jessie emphasised this point:

I think the other thing is too, the system talking to each other – I've been involved in a panel where the department has contacted our principal to ask if we'd have people on a panel, they'd like to find out the impact of the new system on staff. It's sort of like there's a – in our system, there's a separateness between the QCAA and the department. (Jessie)

Given the significant and infrequent nature of the system change, effective communication emerges as a crucial strategy for successful implementation. The Head of Department further explained that the lack of communication resulted in insufficient groundwork in the lead-up to implementation. Jessie stated:

To me that's not appropriate, they need to actually – the department will quickly say that's a QCAA thing, and I think some of the systems that they have in place, it's been exceptional the amount of work done and the systems – to have it online and yes there are problems with it. But the amount of work they've done in that period of time, but when you look at it too, with every other syllabus change, we've had graduation of change. There was a trial and then, we'd go back – well there might've been, well, here's the syllabus we'll trial it, we'll go back, we'll have a look at it, we'll try it again and then it'll be released. So, schools could then nominate which stage they did it. So, all subjects and subject areas didn't have just one syllabus at one time, but three, four, five, or six depending on what you're looking after. (Jessie)

Researcher Reflection. It seems that this Head of Department was connecting to prior experiences with system changes in Queensland. Based on the historical data, these changes were minor compared to the current change; however, it appears as if the QCAA has not been as strategic in its processes.

Highlighting this communication breakdown further, was the structure of the new system and it not fitting into the traditional school year. Gretel, the Head of Science, explained:

I remember you saying that your timelines didn't fit in. Then I remembered, we were trying to start an experiment at the end of term 4 and talking to other schools, they don't even start unit 3 at the end of term 4. So, you're going, how does this all work in and then how do the applied subjects sit in there and then where do the VET subjects sit in there? (Gretel)

There was an obvious complexity of thinking by the focus group regarding changing Happy Valley's structures to ensure the new QCE system is working effectively. Jessie, the Head of English, pointed out:

There are 52 per cent of kids who got an ATAR out of Year 12, but the focus is driven towards that and the high-performing schools that have 100 per cent of their cohort going for an ATAR. So, I think that is always frustrating as well. We have put in a lot of time, for perhaps the smallest number of our students in terms of the subjects.

(Jessie)

Document Reference. Happy-Valley's Annual Report 2020 confirmed the number of students who typically follow a pathway to university and validates these comments.

Note: Document reference from Happy-Valley's Annual Report 2021.

It became evident that the members of the focus group perceived the system lacks a structure thus minimising the impact on students not following the ATAR pathway. Natalie, the Guidance counsellor, articulated that "the lack of directive from QCAA, for schools, as to how to operate this curriculum has been frustrating for staff". Moreover, Theresa, the Head of HPE, explained:

The QCAA's response is always, it's a school-based decision. But when it's a school-based decision, when your school administration has not got a handle on how it

impacts every single subject area, or every department, then that's what makes it very difficult. Because I keep on saying it was a square peg in a round hole. They were still working with the old syllabus structures and the old reporting structures, which I don't believe matches the new syllabus by any stretch of the imagination. (Theresa)

She elaborated, stating that schools were given considerable freedom regarding when assessments were due, as long as they aligned with the relevant procedures. The participants noted that this approach led to complications and expressed a preference for more rigid, predefined dates.

4.4.3. Summary

The third subsidiary research question allowed the gathering of some key information pertaining to the implementation of the new system. This included any issuing which related to communication and how the new curriculum was situated within the broader curriculum map, that is, within the junior school.

4.5. Expanding the Parameters of the Study

The expansion of the studies parameters involved reading the focus group interview transcriptions and organising data chunks into categories of either “agreeing with” or “challenging” my thoughts. Table 4.4 provides some examples of this strategy, which allowed for a clear identification of my assumptions before progressing to the next phase of the research. This step was crucial, as the interview participants would be teachers, necessitating a solid knowledge base to ensure that the time spent with them was valuable and yielded rich and descriptive data. Additionally, this process guided the development of the individual semi-structured interview questions for Phase 1.

Table 4.4

Grouping Focus Group Data into Agreeing with and Challenging my Thoughts

	Quote	Reflection
Agreeing with my thoughts (examples)	It was very contentious and for a lot of reasons we had to explore what would our pedagogy be and what was driving our decisions around how we were teaching things. So, we were looking at objectives, cognitive processes, enquiry-based learning, the content with the new dynamic systems approach which doesn't come anywhere near, I do, we do, you do. It's very, very different to what our current structure is with our pedagogy (Head of Health and PE)	This confirmed my thinking regarding imposed change enabling teachers to have conversation regarding the effectiveness of their pedagogical practice.
	I still don't think in terms of those processes of Confirmation and Endorsement, unless you're actually doing it and sitting there with staff – staff can spend all day on a task to get it ready for Endorsement. It's one day on the task and it's still not finalised, because there's so much that goes into that. I think sometimes at a systems level or at school level, they say, oh we give you the time, you should be right with that... It's only the starting point, there is more than triple that, that goes outside of a person's time (Head of English)	The workload involved in implementing an imposed change in schools was part of my initial thinking. It will be interesting to see what strategies were put in place to limit the impact of teacher's workload.
Challenging my thoughts (examples)	Now the content and the depth and breadth are so significant that that's had a huge impact on teachers. So, teachers that have just taught in this system are now going, gee I've never taught that before, I haven't taught that before. (Head of Science)	I had considered the pressure on teachers needing to change their pedagogy, but I had not considered the standard of the syllabus content becoming more difficult. This clearly added more stress and pressure to the Heads of Departments and potentially the teachers.
	How it's affecting junior teachers as well. How are they conceptualising the new system, and do they see it as a way – a thing that they need to change their practice in order to prepare the kids (Head of English)	This was a good point as not all teachers teach senior classes. Some teach only in the junior school and the impact on these teachers' pedagogical practice is a good avenue to explore.
	I would agree with that whole-heartedly. There are times where I have to suggest to people, hang on, reflect on this idea or yeah. They're trying very hard to understand and be with their staff, but the reality is they're not currently teaching a class, that sort of thing (Guidance councillor)	The implications of the deputy principals not having a teaching role is an interesting avenue. What are the impacts when leading a significant imposed change when you are not experiencing the change on the teacher's level? How does this impact the teachers' perceptions of the change?

4.6. Phase 1 Presentation (Teacher semi-structured interviews)

Phase 1 marked an exciting phase in the research design, presenting the initial opportunity to collect information from the Happy-Valley teachers who were the primary focus of this study. I reached out to teachers via email, giving them both the Information Sheet and the Consent Form (see APPENDIX D and E). Table 4.5 outlines the key aspects of this Preliminary Phase presentation, offering insights that shaped the structure of the explanation and highlighted each aspect's contextual significance. The process of participant recruitment is presented, followed by the responses to the semi-structured interviews. Each interview question is presented one after the other, with the participants' responses interwoven to produce a complete understanding of each interview question. Each question response is broken into sections using subheadings relating to the flow of ideas from the respondents.

Table 4.5

Phases 1 Interview Structure and Contextual Importance

Phase 1 Explanation Structure	Contextual Importance
<i>Participant recruitment</i>	Teachers invited to participate. teachers were selected based on: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Within the subject area of focus group participant. Namely, English, Science, and Health and Physical Education2. Experienced teacher, two years or more, of the OP system3. Teacher of a general subject, during the QCE system's development, implementation, and current years (2018, 2019, 2020)
<i>The Interviews</i>	Gathering the evidence and summary of responses

4.6.1. Participant Recruitment

Table 4.6 identifies the recruited participants, their position in Happy Valley, and the mode of data collection to which they were exposed during each phase.

Table 4.6*Participant Identification and Mode of Data Collection, by Phase*

Phase	Mode of data collection	Participant identification
1	Semi-structured Interview	English teacher A – Emma
	Semi-structured Interview	Science teacher A – Charlie
	Semi-structured Interview	Health teacher A – Carley
	Semi-structured Interview	Health teacher B – Ned

Note: For details regarding the implemented data-collection tools, please refer to Chapter Three.

4.6.2. The Interview Structure

All participants displayed a sense of relaxation during the interviews, a factor I attributed to their ability to choose the time and location of the interview. Some interviews took place on the school grounds, while others occurred in a local coffee shop.

The nature of the questions were shaped by the data generated in the Preliminary Phase, and my aim was to keep them open-ended, allowing participants to share their stories. This approach facilitated the collection of unexpected responses, adding depth to the study, while still maintaining focus to ensure efficiency. I utilised prompting techniques, such as "give me an example" or "why do you think?" strategically to gain a broader understanding of the participants' thought processes. Following are the question sets, each accompanied by a summary of the teacher responses.

4.7. Question Set One – Related to Subsidiary Research Question 1

The teachers were asked, how does the new system compare to the prior QCE system in terms of pedagogical practice and what do you see as a significant change in a teacher's mindset concerning their practice?

4.7.1. Discussion on exploring their pedagogical practice

The teachers conveyed a considerable amount of stress concerning the shift in systems. Carley, a teacher of Health Education, articulated this stress, stating, "just knowing that the whole system has changed and not knowing how it was going to work was the biggest concern for teachers and their teaching". Additionally, this teacher expressed feeling initially "on their own" during the change.

Reflection: The sudden implementation of the imposed change meant that teachers had limited human resources where they could draw on experience to support them with their practice. In the initial stage, the teachers were presented with an unprecedented challenge, with experienced teachers experiencing a sense of being akin to early career teachers.

Further, Carley stated:

No one had anyone to go to, to say, well, how are you doing this? That, I think, potentially was a stressor for most teachers who took on that first round of kids through ATAR.... Because in the past if you hadn't taught a subject area before or taught it for a while you had people you could go to that knew what it was that you had to do. Could give you the ideas about how to teach it to the kids. (Carley)

She also confirmed that the first round of students who came through the new system, did not obtain the most efficient teaching:

I know now teaching the Year 11s the second time and Unit One the second time, we're doing it so much differently. Still using what we need of the syllabus but at least being able to make it a little bit more relevant for the kids so that they get it. (Carley)

Carley also highlighted the complexity of the Queensland system, emphasising that this was the first major change. She stated, "the biggest thing is how we were going to implement this new system into our teaching when you'd been teaching the old syllabus for years". Carley went on to elaborate on this change.

I know for myself I looked a bit at – really trying to get the kids understanding what the task was asking them to do. Having a look at their marking guide. I know we've always done it but it was really refining it. (Carley)

Especially in Health, the teacher explained that learning had to be made more visible for the students, enabling them to map their own learning and take more responsibility for the outcomes. Carley described how she had evolved and adopted new strategies, such as continuum visual maps, allowing students to assess their progress with a concept and self-regulate their learning. The teacher said:

What is it we're looking for? What is this asking us? It's just being that visible with their – having lesson objectives there. What do we want to get out of the end of this lesson? This is what we're working towards.....we had a continuum on their desks which is the river of life which is our whole focus for health. They had a little emoji so they placed the emoji – when you asked a question or gave them what the task was, had to put their understanding. (Carley)

Emma, a teacher of English described that she felt the need to introduce more diagnostic and formative assessment into her teaching. She stated:

The way we provide feedback to students I think has changed as well. Probably greater reliance on things like diagnostic tasks at the beginning of the unit and formative tasks along the way, giving feedback for those, so not just on those summative tasks. (Emma)

The teacher explained that this was a necessary evolution due to the restrictive nature of the new summative assessment tasks when giving feedback. Due to the QCAA limiting feedback to “general class feedback”, they had to look for new ways for this to occur.

Document Reference: The concept of feedback is highlighted on Happy-Valley’s pedagogical framework with strategies to improve “quality feedback to students”. This was already an agenda before the new system and would have helped teachers when defining where their pedagogy could improve considering the changes.

Note: Document reference from Happy-Valley’s Pedagogical Framework 2015-current.

Emma explained:

So that was, even just a very different way of drafting in English than I’d experienced previously in prior systems. Certainly, the greater limits based on the amount of feedback you can give and the way in which that is phrased. (Emma)

All these strategies were described as ensuring students are ready for the external examinations.

Agreeing with this, Carley, a teacher of Health, acknowledged that the cognitive verbs really started to drive their teaching practice. She instructed students to practice the skills in writing the assignments and used teaching strategies like collaborative learning to help students understand these skills. The teacher explained:

We did lots of – in health, lots of practice writing skills related to it. Then they’d swap with their partner, and we’d have a look at the cognitive verbs, and we’d be highlighting the recognise and understand. We’d highlight those as we did their peer feedback and then I’d have a look at it. (Carley)

She explained that this was more productive because, like English, they were not allowed to give individual feedback on the assessment as the QCAA syllabus instructs general feedback only.

Furthermore, Ned, a teacher of Health, explained how the cognitive verbs were impacting his practice:

In terms of those three internal assessments, they're big pieces, particularly the project folios because they've got to get a video together, they've got to understand these cognitive verbs, they've got to analyse, they've got to evaluate and justify. It's hard for the kids to get their heads around what that means. Yeah, so that's been a big hard thing for the kids. (Ned)

The teacher went on to explain that Happy-Valley had pitched the cognitive verbs as fundamental for student success in the new system. This has resulted in school-wide learning about what they are and how to implement them into teaching and learning.

We've had people talk at staff meetings about the cognitive verbs. So clearly cognitive verbs are something that were new to me and so now I've had to learn that quite quickly. The kids at all age levels across the subjects are being made to become familiar with cognitive verbs. (Ned)

I remember thinking that, even at this early stage, the comment around “all age levels” being impacted was a common theme across all participants.

Document reference: Happy-Valley’s Annual Action plan in 2020 indicates that they will continue implementing training sessions on the cognitive verbs. This correlates with teacher’s comments that the cognitive verbs were seen as a key consideration for teacher’s pedagogical practice.

Note: Document reference taken from *Happy-Valley’s Annual Action Plan 2020*.

4.7.2. Discussion on the New Syllabus

Concurring with this, Charlie, a teacher of Science, reflected on the increase in difficulty of the new content. He stated, “the skills are a lot closer to what I would’ve expected into a first year, second year, university course, particularly in things like statistical analysis and use of data”. Charlie explained that this change to the syllabus demand directly impacts his practice.

Three of their four assessment pieces in Science that have to do with being able to interpret and analyse data. So, data tests, student experiment in a research

investigation, all is looking at data. So, skills – very different skillset, students leaving the ATAR system in the past – this year and last year, compared to the students prior to that. So, skill's very different, content very different, because the fact that it's 50 per cent on the exam and they have a guideline of what's being tested. We no longer shape exactly what it is that we teach, and what we focus on as a relevant interpretation of a syllabus. (Charlie)

Reflection: The statement regarding no longer being able to shape what is taught is interesting and agrees directly with Gretel's observation. The general agreeance was that teachers need to be competent within the boundaries being set by the QCAA.

Carley, a teacher of Health, also confirmed that the new syllabus for Health has more demanding content than the past syllabus as they have included more theories.

I think they have made it a little bit harder particularly in health because the old system concentrated on a couple of theories whereas this one – the new syllabus brings in – there's at least four new theories on top of the old theories. (Carley)

Document reference: The pedagogical framework refers to having teachers in subjects areas where they are experts which affirms the Heads of Departments and teachers view that they need specialised teachers and the fact that it is better to have a teacher who has trained in the content through a qualification, versus someone who is self-taught and may have gaps in their knowledge.

Note: Document reference taken from Happy-Valley's Pedagogical Framework 2015-current.

Furthermore, Carley, described the stress felt by teachers wanting to shield students as they navigated the first cycle of the new system. She explained that they invested time in convincing students not to stress, saying, "I'd just go, it's all good. We're right. It's the first time through. We're following everything the way it is. As far as we know, we're going okay.

It's all good. Don't stress about it yourselves, kids". The emphasis was on maintaining a calm demeanour while negotiating the change to the syllabus.

In Health, one challenging aspect was the assessment and how the learning dynamic presented a challenge, given they had been teaching the old syllabus throughout their entire career. Carley described:

The assessment tasks are different so –never having done an action research report in HPE for – over – like 20 odd years’ teaching experience to then come in and must do an action research report. So, I’m teaching myself what an action research report is then to be able to go and teach that to the kids. So that for me was a little bit of a – not a – yeah, well, I suppose a struggle and a stressor again. (Carley)

Reflection: The extended period Queensland has experienced without notable change appears to have impacted the teacher’s ability to react to change and be exposed to a variety of syllabus contexts.

This was further emphasised by Ned, a teacher of Health, who reflected that there was content that they had never heard of before, so after thirty years of teaching, teachers were needing to learn new content which put demands on their time. He stated:

Well, the big thing for me, the big - it's such a huge learning curve the first couple of years, particularly the first time through. I found that the content was new. After thirty-something years, a lot of the content I had never taught before. I didn’t even know the content. So, I had to learn the content before teaching it to the kids. I had to sort of become familiar with all the cognitive verbs, ISMGs, all that sort of stuff. The language of the subject has changed in terms of the assessment items, in terms of our subject-specific language. I found it very hard to try to get my head around the content which was unusual because I've been so used to teaching the OP subject for so long. (Ned)

4.7.3. Discussion About the New Assessment Processes

Ned also experienced stress and a sense of incompetence in staying ahead of the students, particularly with the new assessment structures. Ned once again highlighted how the lack of change to education in Queensland had left them underprepared for this mandated shift in their teaching practices. The teacher reflected:

It was a huge learning curve and overwhelming. Along with that, we had to write the assessment items and that was a new thing as well. So, it was quite difficult and the same - at the same time, we didn't have very good texts as a guide. So, I was sort of struggling to find information for the kids. So then - and then so my focus once we started, we designed the assessment items, and my focus was directed to address the assessment items with the kids. So, I was teaching probably less content and then just assessing a tiny fraction of it at the end. I was saying here is the assessment item, how do we do this? (Ned)

Reflection: The issue of preparation was a common theme in the discussions and the teachers and Heads of Departments felt quite underprepared for the mandated change in syllabus content.

Further, Carley commented on the new process being fairer to students, particularly praising the random approach to checking students' work. Agreeing, Emma, a teacher of English, expressed mistrust for the prior system's assessment processes. She stressed concerns about the potential identification of the school and teacher by those moderating other schools, which might limit their ability to maintain objectivity.

In the old system and people are on the panel and the work would go in and you'd know that you're - I don't know, you're looking at a particular school's work and there's already a preconceived idea that this is probably going to be good because this

school has got this, this, this. So, you go in with a preconceived idea about what this work is going to be. (Emma)

Carley, a teacher of Health, confirmed that the new system made them feel more comfortable sending work away to be moderated. She explained:

I think in the new system when it's a number and that goes to an assessor and they assess this number and they haven't got time to be worrying about where the kid comes from or whatever, they're looking just at the work.... You are giving it this mark. Done. Let us bring the next one through. (Carley)

For this teacher, this change seemed to have enabled them to trust the process and be able to accept external decisions regarding results.

Reflection: The Confirmation process evoked mixed feelings and thoughts among these teachers. While they acknowledged its fairness compared to the older system, a perceived lack of communication from the QCAA induced stress and uncertainty about its implementation.

In alignment with the Heads of Departments, Ned, a teacher of Health, used words such as "nerve-racking" and "puzzling" when discussing the Endorsement process. He explained that the new process is so different from the old system that they do not feel entirely comfortable. Ned stated, "You want your kids to do well, and you want to feel that you've done the right thing for them. So yeah, so that process of moderation is also quite new and quite a bit nerve-racking".

Ned further elaborated that there is some confusion among health teachers regarding the Endorsement process because it appears that one assessment piece can be endorsed for one school, but the same piece may not receive endorsement for another school. He clarified:

There's a PE teachers' sort of networking email group or whatever and the consensus seems to be that you write assessment items, IA1 or IA2, you submit them, and some

people will get theirs through and some people won't, and we don't know why... it's almost the same word for word but it's not approved. So that seems to be a little bit puzzling as far as I'm concerned. (Ned)

4.7.4. Discussion Around the External Examinations

Another recurring theme impacting teacher practice was the introduction of external examinations, particularly emphasised by the Science teachers as these examinations account for 50% of all available marks. The teachers tended to agree that the primary impact is the heightened demand for students to recall a year's worth of content, placing additional responsibility on both students and teachers. Charlie, a teacher of Science, discussed an interesting observation regarding the resulting shift in the relationship between teacher and student:

The conversation about preparing for 50 per cent exam, is you're trying as best you can, to figure out every single question that's going to be on the external exam, with your students. You're sitting on the same side. So, it's very unique in that sense, that the students get to [borrow] the teachers' brain and how they're thinking, the trends which will grow year upon year as we continue with this system of what we think the external exam's going to be like. So, that's definitely created a different change in terms of the relationship with the students as well, but also the teaching practice. (Charlie)

The reason given was:

When we've gone to an ATAR system where 50 per cent of their mark is essentially out of our hands, and it's out of someone else's interpretation of syllabus, and interpretation of how they should be assessed on those achievement standards essentially, it changes our daily practice. (Charlie)

The teacher acknowledged that there is some guesswork in trying to prepare students for the best-case scenario for their external assessment without being entirely sure of the

content or that the teacher's interpretation is the same as the QCAA. There are stricter boundaries about what needs to be taught and how it is supposed to be taught.

Reflection: This changing relationship between teachers and students is an interesting conundrum. The teachers felt like the expectations had changed in terms of pedagogical practice. Teaching must be directed by someone else's interpretation of the syllabus and interpretation of how students should be assessed.

Emma, an English teacher, also alluded to the external examination for English as causing a lot of stress among teachers and students for not much gain.

The 25 per cent external assessment is a big change. I think students are quite stressed about that. My perception from Year 11 this year, having done tasters in Year 10, is they're potentially handling it a little bit better, but it's hard to gauge that at this point in time. (Emma)

In alignment with this sentiment, Carley, a health teacher, expressed feeling stressed about the external exams and the challenge of anticipating the exam content. She mentioned, "internally it was a little bit of, oh gosh, I hope we're doing this right because ultimately when an external assessment comes, and they get a mark that shows whether we've done the right thing or not". Carley also commented on the perceived unfairness in the weighting of examinations and its impact on students' efforts. Using the comparison between a 25% exam in Health and a 50% exam in Science she noted, "from the kids' point of view a few concentrated more on their 50 per cent subjects that were some of the feedback we got". This was further emphasised by the statement, "So, they're going in [to the external examination] – and some of them could probably go in and afford to bomb out". The overall goal of the external examinations in some subjects appeared a discussion point among the teachers.

Reflection: The teachers hinted at the scenario in Health where a student could potentially pass the subject before undertaking the external examination, given that 75% of the assessment is already covered through internal assessments. The implications of this observation prompt consideration, raising questions about the balance in the system's design and consistency across syllabuses.

4.8. Question Set Two – Related to Subsidiary Research Question 2

The teachers were asked to reflect on the question, how would you describe the leadership team's conceptualisation of the new system? And, what areas have the leadership team prioritised during the implementation of the new system?

4.8.1. Discussion on Strategies Used by Leadership

The overall feeling from the interviews indicated that leadership faced challenges in conceptualising the new system in its initial stages. Carley, a teacher of Health, emphasised this point, underscoring the impact of deputy principals not having a teaching load and how it affected practical decision-making. She described:

I suppose that's the thing too because the deputy principals, they're not teaching so – and some of them haven't taught for a while and that's again not a negative on them but it's that every day – you're the face that's delivering. But yeah, I do sometimes think that, yeah, they forget that it takes a lot of time [to understand] – well, I know myself – like school, we get a lot of planning time. They've been very generous with the planning time. (Carley)

Reflection: There seems to be a lack of confidence in the leadership team's ability to implement the change in a way that minimises the impact on teachers. This scepticism may stem from a broader perception of leadership teams as "disconnected" from the daily work of teachers. The situation appears to be accentuated in this context as the deputy principals do not teach any classes, possibly resulting in a perceived deskilling and a potential hindrance to their empathetic understanding of teachers' needs. The lack of practical experience might contribute to the Heads of Departments questioning the priorities set by the leadership team.

Carley, a teacher of Health, explained that Happy-Valley had to prioritise who was sent to certain professional development workshops and teachers had to rely on those individuals to be upskilled.

The teacher said that this was not always quality assured. She explained this could have been due to the QCAA only being able to offer a certain number of PDs per region.

I think that could even have come down to QCAA being able to provide the PD opportunities for all of us to do. So, you really had one health PD provided by QCAA that – they came to [the regional city] and all the health ones went there. From that – you know what it's like. You go in and you're sitting at a seminar and you're going, oh god, I must think here. In the end, you go away and go, okay, I took bits of it but what did they say back there. (Carley)

Reflection: This situation could be seen as an accountability issue with the teachers who attended these professional development sessions. If it wasn't explicitly communicated to them that they were expected to upskill their colleagues or if sufficient time was not allocated for this purpose, it might have impacted the extent to which details were shared and disseminated.

Emma, a teacher of English, commented on the encouragement by the leadership team to become an assessor, confirmer, or endorser within the new system. She stated:

I worked as a confirmer for English. Considered doing the EA marking but decided not to, just because of workload really”. The teacher went on to explain that although leadership pushed the point, it ended up being a little counterproductive. “What was interesting was the student-free days that are set aside for that confirmation, I wasn’t there those days. I’d be off confirming but was expected to also catch up on the PD that was happening at school when I got back. I thought that was an odd decision and was quite stressful. (Emma)

Reflection: I acknowledge that participating in these panels can be considered among the most valuable professional development opportunities for teachers, providing insights into the functioning of the systems. I understand the rationale behind the leadership team's desire for teachers to engage in such experiences. However, it does strike me as unusual that these teachers were not compensated, even with a symbolic gesture such as being exempted from catching up on other professional development commitments.

The interviews underscored the difficulties leadership encountered in navigating the new system, impacting decision-making processes and professional development opportunities. The experiences shared by teachers reflected broader implications for effective implementation and highlighted the need for thoughtful consideration of the practical aspects of educational reforms.

4.9. Question Set Three – Related to Subsidiary Research Question 3

The teachers were asked to reflect on the following two questions: What would you consider as some of the significant challenges for teachers while implementing the new system; and What have been some of your organisation’s strengths when moving through the change?

4.9.1. Discussion About the Impact on all Teachers

The teachers were very clear on a range of significant challenges when implementing the new system. Ned, a teacher of Health, explained how they have been changing what they do in the junior school due to the misalignment between the junior and senior curriculum.

The ATAR subject to a certain extent is almost sort of driving our junior curriculum. So, we now, in the same way that the ATAR system is more theory and less practical, we're sort of doing more theory than we ever have before, less practical which the kids aren't happy about. But it's in attempt to prepare the kids. We're doing activities which are similar to what they do in senior in PE and health. (Ned)

Emphasising this further, Emma, a teacher of English, explained:

We've gone back and we've looked at - revised our entire planning for Year 10. So, ensuring that we're still trying to keep those Australian Curriculum goals but how can they be manipulated in a way that they're going to set kids up properly and appropriately for Year 11. Even things like that feedback, we're finding those feedback processes that has definitely filtered down. It's had an impact on our assessment policy. It's had an impact on the way I communicate to students as a librarian about academic integrity across all year levels. (Emma)

The impact on the junior teacher's practice is an interesting occurrence and highlights how imposed change can have a wide-reaching impact on the people involved.

4.9.2. Discussion About the School Calendar

Further frustrations around the yearly structures were highlighted by Carley, a teacher of Health. She explained:

The only issue I had was – if – they have tried to make the system one system fits all and all the subjects are the same and should all fit into these neat little units. But we found with health that it didn't quite match the school's reporting system. (Carley)

This appears to have caused unknown stress on the teachers who are trying to do the best for the students. This teacher had to have difficult conversations around the reporting timelines, due to Happy-Valley's decision regarding Unit 3's commencement in Term 4 of Year 11.

So, because of that, we had to then go and fight for these poor kids to have this extra time because it didn't – health didn't fit. It must have been some other one. I think a maths one because I think the Head of Mathematics had a bit of an issue with timing as well. Then they wanted an assessment task in term 4. Well, we didn't have one because of the timeframes but the first assessment task was due like term 1 of Year 12. (Carley)

This appears to be a recurring theme across schools (as indicated by the participants), with efforts focused on problem-solving to find the best approach for students while minimising the impact on the rest of the school. Carley acknowledged that some of the solutions devised were quite absurd. They explained that the first piece of assessment was not scheduled until Term 1 of Year 12, despite the unit commencing in Term 4, which subsequently affected reporting.

We had to make up an assessment task just so that we could report to the parents where the kids were at the end of term 4, Year 11. Whereas – then we're just making assessment tasks for the kids where they've already got enough to do. We didn't make it a big task but then it wasn't really a guide of where they were at, at the end of term 4 because it was all just on knowledge and understanding because that's all you'd taught up to that point. (Carley)

The teachers' insights shed light on the intricate challenges arising from the implementation of the new system. The misalignment between junior and senior curricula, driven in part by the influence of the ATAR subject, has prompted significant adjustments in teaching methods. I got the feeling that the emphasis on theory over practical aspects, though

aimed at better preparing students, has resulted in discontent among students. The impact on practices extends beyond the classroom, affecting assessment policies, communication strategies, and overall teaching approaches.

Frustrations around the attempt to create a “one-size-fits-all system” were evident, particularly in subjects like Health where discrepancies with Happy-Valley’s reporting structure created additional stress. In essence, the teachers' experiences highlighted the importance of carefully considering and addressing the complexities that arise when implementing educational reforms, emphasising the need for flexibility, effective communication, and a nuanced understanding of the diverse impacts on teaching practices and student experiences.

4.10. Phase 2 Presentation (Deputy Principals Semi-Structured Interviews)

This next phase of the research methodology provided a perspective on the impact of a teacher’s practice from people who view the imposed change through a different lens. A chance to view the imposed change from the highest level of school leadership whose broader role enables a completely different understanding of the imposed change. This section offers insights into how the leadership team led the implementation of the imposed changes. To support Phase 2’s explanation, Table 4.7 outlines the key aspects of this phase, contributing to the explanation's structure and highlighting each aspect's contextual importance.

Table 4.7

Phases 2 Explanation Structure and Contextual Importance

Phase 2’s structure	Contextual Importance
Participant recruitment	Deputy principals invited to participate.
Interviews	Gathering the evidence and summary of responses

Note: Phase 2 key areas

4.10.1. Participant Recruitment

The process of participant recruitment is presented, followed by the responses to the semi-structured interviews. Each interview question is presented one after the other, with the participants' responses interwoven to produce a complete understanding of each interview question. The response to each question is broken into sections using subheadings relating to the flow of ideas from the respondents.

Table 4.8 identifies the recruited participants, their position at Happy-Valley, and the mode of data collection to which they were exposed during each phase.

Table 4.8

Participant Identification and Mode of Data Collection, by Phase

Phase	Mode of data collection	Participant identification
2	Semi-structured Interview	Deputy principal A - Charlotte
	Semi-structured Interview	Deputy principal B - James

Note: For details regarding the implemented data-collection tools, please refer to Chapter Three.

4.10.2. The Interview Structure

Influenced by the data generated in the Preliminary Phase and Phase 1, the questions for the Deputy principals were carefully crafted to be open-ended, allowing participants to share their stories freely. This approach aimed to elicit unexpected responses, contributing depth to the study; however, the questions were also structured to be targeted, ensuring that the time spent during the interviews was used efficiently and effectively.

To gain a broader understanding of participants' thought processes, I employed only minimal prompting (see questions), and then asked for examples or reasons behind their opinions. The following section presents each question set along with a summary of the responses provided by the Deputy principals.

4.11. Question Set 1 Based on Subsidiary Research Question 1

The Deputy principals were asked to reflect on three questions: What do you feel has been the biggest impact on teacher practice?; How do you feel teachers have responded to the new system?; and, Do you think the new system has impacted every curriculum area and/or teachers consistently?

4.11.1. Discussion on the Exploration of Pedagogical Practice

The impacts on teachers' practice were further explored with the leadership team. Charlotte commented on how the emphasis on cognitive verbs had forced teachers to move from focusing purely on teaching content to a more skill-based pedagogy. She explained, "the cognitions – they've really shifted us away from content, as in having to teach things to assess the cognitive verbs. That's probably been a significant shift". The cognitions have been seen as bringing consistency to pedagogical practice in schools. Charlotte explained that before the inception of the new system, there was no consistency within the meaning of certain cognitive verbs between department areas, but now, analyse for example, is defined the same way for all learning areas; therefore, you can spend time teaching the students one understanding of the verb rather than students getting a different explanation in all their classes. The deputy principal stated:

To me it was about teachers' preparation and that we didn't have a consistency of pedagogical practice I think the QCAA improved this when they shifted those cognitions. There's no analysing science and analysing humanities, it's analysing. They've invested a bit of work there – a bit of clarity. I know that has been a significant shift. How do we teach a child to analyse, evaluate, synthesise, and how do we be explicit about that? What are the key features? That's been a significant shift I think in terms of pedagogical practice. (Charlotte)

Document reference: As mentioned earlier, this was a clear priority for Happy-Valley, as referenced to in the Annual Action plan. The leadership must have felt that this was a clear improvement strategy to ensure teachers pedagogical practice was aligned with the new system.

Note: Document reference from Happy-Valley's Annual Action plan 2021.

An important theme that was presented by Charlotte explored the notion of teacher renewal. She explained that there was a fear that Queensland teachers had become complacent with their teaching due to the system not having many major changes for a significant period of time. Charlotte explained that teachers were thinking “we’ve been doing this for 40 years. We’re really good at it. We’re aligned, but no you don’t need to check. [Laughs]”. This links to some of the teachers’ observations explored during the data collection of Phase 1. Teachers were seemingly teaching their subjects without looking at a syllabus or rewriting an assessment. To quote Charlotte, they were “just picking up the assessment that they’ve used for the last five years”.

4.11.2. Discussion on the New Assessment System

Charlotte described the changes to assessment as the greatest change for teachers who now needed to develop new assessment pieces and renew their understanding of what effective assessment looks like. Charlotte commented that in the old system teachers did most of the work early on and, as earlier mentioned, never really revised or changed the assessment. She told me:

I think also coming out of the old system that some people probably hadn’t been to their syllabus in a long time and so a lot of the key work early on was that validity in alignment, assessment writing and aligning them. I think those are probably the greatest shifts. (Charlotte)

Researcher Reflection: The Deputy Principals sensed the necessity for a renewal of practices, particularly in the initial stages of realising the new system. There was a shared concern about certain teachers possibly becoming complacent due to their over-familiarity with the previous processes and procedures. This resonates with my perspective on the potential strengths of implementing changes in an education system, as it compels teachers to rejuvenate their practices.

The notion of drafting has changed significantly in the new system, with stricter protocols. The teachers noted that things like general class feedback are given rather than individual feedback. The deputy principals said that in the old system teachers would mark whole drafts and give feedback to the point of not being the student's work anymore, whereas now they are more inclined to spend more time giving the students the knowledge before the assessment piece. Charlotte explained:

I think the lack - or limitation on drafting feedback impacts pedagogical practice as well, so that teachers in that teaching and learning sequence need to spend more time prior to the draft, rather than providing a whole lot of feedback [laughs] on a draft, which was never really feedback. It was marking. (Charlotte)

The deputy principals implied that teachers are really trying to give students an exemplar task that is broken down and scaffolded in a way that students understand what is expected.

Researcher Reflection: This connects back to the shift in assessment practices. Teachers are dedicating more time before assessments to prepare students, rather than relying on students submitting drafts and addressing misunderstandings at that later stage.

Charlotte commented on the need to ponder how students retain knowledge for a year in light of external examinations, especially in Mathematics and Science where the external exams are worth 50% of all marks available. She stated:

I think that has significantly changed in – we’ve spoken – in some subjects, the Maths and Sciences is at 50 per cent. What is the cumulative or distributive factors and how do kids store and keep and maintain knowledge? To counter this, the school has introduced a study skills program in both Y11 and Y12. (Charlotte)

Interestingly, the deputy principal noted that this pressure on the school (to ensure external exam readiness) is impacting the Pastoral Care system also. She explained:

As a school we have afternoon sessions now for two terms, so Year 11s, two and four, 12s one and three, around really preparation towards externals as well as a whole range of other aspects. I think the study skills program and the pastoral care also has changed because that’s a significant one for kids. (Charlotte)

Document reference: The pedagogical framework states that there are timetabled study skills classes for seniors, which I further observed.

Note: Happy-Valley Pedagogical Framework 2016-2020

4.11.3. Discussion Regarding the Syllabus Content

In addition, Charlotte raised the same concerns as the Heads of Departments about courses needing more specialised teachers because the content requires a depth where students know the content well enough for external examinations.

Charlotte explained:

It’s building capacity and depth, saying, oh we’ve got two people who are on a cycle. You’ve got them this year and I’ve got the next. [Laughs]. We need ... just more people. How do you do that? It’s probably a little bit more of the shift. How do you bring in more specialist teachers or methods teachers, rather than cycling everybody constantly? [Laughs]. (Charlotte)

Researcher Reflection: The previous system evolved organically, with Junior Science and Mathematics teachers often transitioning to become Senior Mathematics and Science educators out of necessity, rather than due to expertise in the specific knowledge base. While not ideal, these teachers had control over assessments, which were not externally checked. This allowed them to dictate what students learned and how they prepared, as they were familiar with the assessment content. However, the concern raised by teachers and deputy principals was that these educators might lack the necessary knowledge to teach the new syllabus content at the required depth.

4.12. Question Set 2 Based on Subsidiary Research Question 2

The deputy principals were asked to reflect on the following three questions: What have been the major challenges in implementing the new system at your school?; What have been the key strategies used for implementing the new system?; and, Are there any areas which are still in the infancy stage and, if so, what is the plan going forward?

4.12.1. Discussion Regarding Implemented Strategies

Throughout the implementation process, the leadership team used a range of current leadership strategies to try and limit the impact on teachers. Charlotte explained that:

Teachers are just like students, create their own anxiety because we like to be in control. I always think you provide the opportunity in time and space, so if I need something here [indicates with hand gesture], I give the HoD time to here [hand gesture]. They give the teacher time to here [gesture], and then you give them what they need. (Charlotte)

She went on to explain:

You have to allow for things to go wrong. You must allow for, yeah, whether it's on a personal basis or a professional basis. If somebody struggles with something to have contingency time within that to minimise anxiety. I haven't got it done, that's okay. We actually have a bit of a buffer. We can work through that. (Charlotte)

Concurring, James the other Deputy Principal, also demonstrated this awareness. He explained:

Managing the stress of the Heads of Departments and teachers around making sure that as a senior leadership team we're supporting them, supporting our line Heads of Departments, listening to their challenges and concerns, and their challenges and concerns of teachers, but also making them understand that we are doing this, and we need to continue to move forward. So, essentially, how are we going to do that? So, I think initially, it was, some people were nearly at the point where this is too hard, we can't do it, and we, as a group, listened to that.... how do we progress through this? ... definitely, we hear what you're saying, this is not going away though, so what are we going to do to move forward? Yes, we'll give feedback to QCAA around your concerns, but we have to give the best service that we possibly can for students.

(James)

Researcher Reflection: The leadership strategy employed here resonates with the principles of situational leadership, aiming to address the diverse needs of individuals, recognising that some may require more emotional support than others. This approach allows leaders to allocate time and support to those teachers who genuinely need it. While it demonstrates a key acknowledgment of the potential pressures teachers may be experiencing during the implementation process, the effectiveness of this concern is brought into question by the teachers' responses. The leadership team's perpetual challenge lies in navigating the question of how to effectively bring teachers along in the process. While awareness is a crucial starting point, establishing mutual trust and confidence is equally vital for successful implementation.

The leadership team gave some practical examples of how they tried to manage teacher stress and develop their confidence. Charlotte commented on the opportunities teachers had to work collaboratively.

I think teams have been critical - working collaboratively and collegially has been critical in that. We've got a number of people on the second cycle so for us – Geography, we've got somebody taking that up – not a geography teacher, and so releasing [during] planning days and allowing people to work together. We sent the Year 11 teacher to the Year 12 geography camp because they had to lead that themselves the next year, and so where possible that intentional collaboration and putting them together to give them that space for the following year. (Charlotte)

She explained that most of these strategies were implemented and funded at a school level and emphasised that the education system did not provide additional funding. Charlotte also highlighted the complexity of teacher stress discussed above, and the need to use flexible strategies.

We have provided a lot of release time and that's been internally funded. Our Department of Education really hasn't provided anything. If you say, what are your actions? What did you do? I'm sure [laughs] I would struggle to identify – if I thought about external exams and how much work that was last year. It took two deputy principals nearly [unclear] working really hard across almost a month. You're thinking, none of our other jobs went away. No additional resources were provided for the school to work through that. School models, funding models in particular have allowed us to release staff to work together. If that – if we didn't do that and if we didn't fund it, I'm not sure – well, it wouldn't happen. (Charlotte)

Charlotte also confirmed that they made it mandatory for all staff to complete the QCAA online training modules. This extended to staff who did not teach senior classes as the leadership team thought it would be of benefit.

We made it mandatory. [Laughs]. Everyone's got to do modules one, two and three.

We checked them off and that's everyone across the school rather than, I teach senior

because I think obviously it was good practice and takes us back. We probably haven't done that stuff for a long time. What is validity? [Laughs]. (Charlotte)

She clearly felt that this was an ideal opportunity to increase the standard of assessment and the procedures within Happy-Valley. Charlotte continued explaining that the teacher training modules on the QCAA website, developed for the implementation process, has forced teachers to renew their understanding of best assessment practices. That is reliability, validity, alignment, and bias. She stated, "I think teachers have been probably somewhat renewed. All those Learning Hub modules around alignment, validity, reliability, bias. I think that's renewed the profession a lot". She further confirmed that while "it has been a little bit anxious raising for teachers" they think the impact has been important for Queensland education.

Researcher Reflection. It appears that the QCAA has been successful in enhancing teachers' understanding of what constitutes best assessment practices.

4.13. Question Set 3 Based on Subsidiary Research Question 3

The deputy Principals were asked to reflect on the following two questions: What have been your schools' strengths in negotiating the impact of the imposed change?; and, Do you feel there has been enough support from the QCAA?

4.13.1. Discussion on Teacher Workload

Aligning with the teacher's perspective, the initial workload was acknowledged by leadership as causing teachers stress and anxiety when the new system was first introduced. They identified this as being mainly due to the overlap between the old system and the new system. Charlotte explained:

I think ushering out an old system and ushering in one had its challenges. As I said, if you're writing and delivering units one and two and preparing for three and four, or

you had a Year 11 class in the new system and a 12 in the old system, time would probably have been the greatest challenge. (Charlotte)

Charlotte also commented on the workload often being inconsistent depending on which subject you taught. For example, you might have multiple teachers on Mathematical Methods which means they can support each other, but only one legal studies teacher which magnifies the pressure. Furthermore, you may be the only teacher for a specialised area such as music, which means you must complete planning for junior and senior, without having the opportunity to share the workload. Charlotte discussed:

I think the new system has taken and expected a lot from people and they've had to give a lot, but it wasn't across every subject. I think the general subjects are enormous and if you're a faculty area that's got a lot of those subjects, or it's your core business then yeah, it's taken a lot from teachers. (Charlotte)

Researcher Reflection. The leadership team have a broad perspective across Happy-Valley and their comments made me realise that they seem to have a solid understanding of the different pressures everyone is feeling.

4.13.2. Discussion on the Impact on all Teachers

Like the teachers in Phase One, the Deputy principals made note of the impact on junior teachers, not just the teachers of senior classes. The natural and unintended impact on junior school means that all students and teachers, whether you teach seniors or not, have been impacted by the new senior system. The high-stakes nature of the new system has forced the deputy principals to ensure the cognitions are mapped back through the school year-levels. Charlotte explained:

I think there has been an alignment around the new QCE linking seven to 12, so I think what we've said now is, this is the assessment modal type in senior. Let's replicate that where best into junior, so kids are starting with the problem solving and

will link task in Year 7 now. There's an alignment to the cognitions. Where do they appear in Year 7 to Year 8 to Year 9 to Year 10 to Year 11 and 12, rather than being introduced? I think that's the significant shift across the whole school regardless of whether you've got a senior class or not. (Charlotte)

Confirming this, James explained that the thinking by the leadership team has been to prepare students as early as possible. They explained:

I think that will go way back into Year 9 in terms of us preparing students to do external exams. What I mean by that, is not doing external exams necessarily then, but preparing students around the learning that need to be able to achieve in external exams. (James)

Researcher Reflection. Upon considering this point, it occurred to me that the impact extends beyond just the teachers of junior subjects; it affects every student. The intriguing aspect is that while most schools may have a 50% spread of students on an ATAR pathway or an alternate pathway, all students are being prepared as if they are on an ATAR pathway. This raised questions in my mind about the fairness of such an approach.

Document reference. Happy-Valley's Annual Report 2020 refers to the Year 10 Taster Program. It explains that in the Year 10 Taster program – Junior school work as such is completed at the end of Semester 1 Year 10 and students are invited to choose from a range of Senior-type subjects for the next 6 months. My initial thought on this was that the junior curriculum is been pushed back, but to what extent? My question is to what degree has QCAA timelines impacted this decision or is it solely a result of the reduced error margin for Y11 students?

Note: Document reference from Happy-Valley's Annual Report 2020

Further to this, Charlotte discussed that the Year 10 assessment types have changed significantly because of the new system. Happy-Valley has introduced Year 11 preparatory courses in Semester Two where students have an opportunity to try senior subjects and see if they are capable. This is mainly due to the high stakes nature of Year 11 within the new

system and that students start to acquire QCE points from the first unit. She stated: “Yeah, and that’s changed our set planning as well when we do set planning. What are we expecting kids to be able to demonstrate? We’ve brought in pre-requisites across junior now to get into senior subjects” (Charlotte).

4.13.3. Discussion on the logistics of the new system

James gave an interesting perspective on how the system design has impacted the teachers in a more general way, rather than subject specific. He discussed that the syllabus design does not seem to align well with the other aspects of the system such as the QCAA timelines and the way QCE points are now calculated. They described in detail:

I think the biggest impact on teacher practice is around the actual – now how QCE is calculated, Michael. So, in the past, where students could essentially pass at the end of Semester 2 Year 12, and get their QCE, they now must, as you know, accrue the points as they go along. (James)

Researcher Reflection. Upon initial consideration, I couldn't help but think about the high-stakes nature of Year 11 and the resulting pressure on teachers. The allocation of QCE points for each unit doesn't afford them much time to learn how to navigate the new system. Additionally, I drew connections to the potential impact on the junior school and the unforeseen stress on both teachers and younger students.

James confirmed:

I think in terms of teacher practice, it has changed that to the point where there’s pressure from the school and the department, I suppose, around attaining QCE, so the pressure comes back to the teachers around making sure that they’re passing every unit. To make sure that they get those four [QCE] points per unit. Also, the banding of Units 3 and 4, to make sure that they’re passing both of those to get those two points. (James)

Teacher pressure was definitely a concern for James, he described:

I think there is a bit of pressure on teachers as we move forward. So, we've moved in – we've done Units 1 and 2. They might have got a C in Unit 1, a D in Unit 2. The pressure then is placed on the teachers to say, what's going to happen with this student. Are they going to pass at the end of Unit 3? So, the pressure is, I don't know, but I really have to make a decision then around whether they will or not, and I also need to put some things in place to make sure that they do. (James)

Researcher Reflection. Upon reflection, it seems that teachers no longer enjoy the freedom to tailor their approach to individual student needs. The current system appears to enforce a standardised approach for all students, regardless of their maturity or independence levels at the commencement of Year 11.

James went on to explain that teachers feel more responsibility towards the students once they enter Unit 3 as it is combined with Unit 4. For example, if a student is struggling at the end of Unit 3 then teachers must figure out ways for this student to generate enough marks to pass Unit 4 and ultimately their external exam. He described:

At the end of Unit 3, what are you going to change into? There's nothing. So, once you're in that for Unit 3, you have to make sure that – you have to – teachers then have to try and make sure that they get success for those students. What I mean by that is – is not by them saying, oh, no worries, you're a D, I'll push you up to a C, but I think the work is greater for them to try and work with those students to get them across the line, and I think that's difficult. Because sometimes, as you know, the students aren't particularly engaged. But I think that's the challenge for the teachers in the new QCE system. (James)

James continued:

The old QCE system was quite easy to navigate for parents and students. There wasn't a lot of – you just need to know, essentially, if I pass at the end of Year 12, I

get my full points. Whereas, students and parents don't really understand the nuances of the new system, and therefore the fact that they may not get points, or whatever it might be, and I think that's one of the challenges as well for teachers is around parents and students understanding what they need to do. (James)

Researcher Reflection. This is an interesting point and could suggest a lack of flexibility in the new system when compared to the old QCE system. Moreover, the navigation of the new system is a lot more complex for students, parents, and teachers.

4.14. Chapter Summary

Chapter four plays a pivotal role in the overall significance of the study, serving as a foundational source that has yielded a wealth of rich and descriptive accounts from the participant group. The data collected in this chapter have proven to be invaluable, offering profound insights into the intricate thoughts, emotions, and perspectives of the educators as they grappled with the unpredictable nature of imposed change. The participant responses, meticulously gathered and analysed, stand as a compelling window into the nuanced experiences of these educators. Chapter four not only contributes to the study's robustness but also provides a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted challenges and adaptations faced by educators in response to the dynamics of imposed change. This chapter, therefore, stands as a cornerstone in unravelling the complex narratives of the participants, enriching the overall research inquiry.

Chapter five shows how the participant responses were brought together into common themes and a thematic interpretation of the evidence is offered, specifically addressing the subsidiary research questions. The process of data collection and analysis has laid the groundwork for synthesising a range of factors, enabling the construction of a robust and comprehensive discussion. Through this analysis, the chapter explains the multifaceted nature of imposed change within educational organisations. It highlights the potential for positive

outcomes, the complexity involved, and the frequent frustrations experienced by teachers.

This exploration will delve into how educators strive to refine their pedagogical practices, aiming to create an environment that fosters the thriving of students amid the uncertainties of the educational landscape.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The previous chapter presented the focus group and semi-structured interview data which explored the experiences of participating Heads of Departments and teachers working within one secondary educational institution in regional Queensland. This provided the foundation for a substantial answer to the research question.

What emerges as the impact of an externally imposed change on teachers' pedagogical practice in a Queensland secondary school?

As discussed in Chapter three, data from the interviews and focus groups were stored and analysed using software called Nvivo. Adhering to the stages of Braun and Clarke (2006) framework, this chapter begins with an overview of how Nvivo and the adopted framework were used to analyse the data. The chosen framework proved fitting for this research as my earlier experiences with the research context in implementing the new system closely aligned with the participants. The reflective nature of the framework was effective for this data analysis and limited my possible bias. It allowed ample space for subjective interpretation and reflective consideration of potential results, while also transparently delineating the influence of my own background as an educator within the new education system.

5.1. Overview of the Data Analysis Process

In the following section, I explain with examples how I adopted the six steps of Braun and Clarke (2006)'s framework alongside Nvivo software to guide my analysis. The general procedure and how it specifically led my data analysis is presented in Figure 5.1. This process used the subsidiary research questions, as the “big organisers” of the data, with titles that capture the essence of each question (see Table 5.1). I chose to use these as the “big organisers” because the interview questions were loosely based on these.

Table 5.1*The Big Organisers of the Data*

Subsidiary research questions	Big organisers (Nodes)
SRQ1: How have teachers at a Queensland secondary school conceptualised the new QCE system concerning their pedagogical practice?	Teachers' conceptualisation
SRQ2: How have the school leaders of a Queensland secondary school conceptualised and prioritised the new QCE system concerning teachers' pedagogical practice?	School leaders' conceptualisation
SRQ3: What factors have contributed to the impact of the new QCE system on teachers' pedagogical practice in a Queensland secondary school?	Contributing factors

Figure 5.1 is a map of how the data were collected and coded into the Nodes (based on the subsidiary research questions - the Big Organisers called Nodes). For tracking purposes, each final theme can be traced back through the steps to where it started. This has given the analysis a clear process which never lost track of the main purpose of the study, as the subsidiary research questions were created to help understand the main research problem.

The following Six Steps from Braun and Clarke (2006)'s framework in the data analysis outlined in Figure 5.1 were:

Step 1: I familiarised myself with the data and imported data transcripts into Nvivo.

Step 2: there were two parts in this step: 2a. I used Nvivo to organise the data into the big organisers - *Nodes* related to the SRQs for ease of interrogating the data sets, Teachers' conceptualisation, School leaders' conceptualisation, and Contributing factors. Note that *Nodes* are a functionality in NVivo which allows for grouping related data together in one place and looking for patterns or themes; and step 2b. I coded the data within each *Node* into *Sub-nodes* using Nvivo based on more refined emerging commonalities.

Step 3: I identified possible *Initial Themes* based on the commonalities and alignment within each group. In this analysis, *Initial Themes* refer to the preliminary patterns or concepts identified during the initial coding phase. These are early insights that emerge from the data before any further refinement.

Step 4 and 5: I then refined the *Initial Themes* into overarching *Themes*. The grouping of the *Initial Themes* together under a single overarching *Theme* enabled the research question to be answered. The *Themes* are the more developed and refined patterns that result from a thorough review and consolidation of the *Initial Themes*. These final *Themes* represent the key findings of the analysis and directly address the primary research question.

Step 6: The *Themes* were then reported through a thematic discussion which analysed each *Theme* in response to the primary research question.

Figure 5.1

Data Analysis Process Map using Braun and Clarke (2006)'s framework

Data sets	Step 1	Step 2 Generating Nodes		Step 3 Initial themes established through researcher reviewing data	Step 4 Refining themes	Step 5 Naming and defining themes
		a. Initial Nodes used to code data chunks using Nvivo	b. Sub-nodes were developed to sort the data chunks further			
Head of Department Focus group data	Data transcripts were imported into Nvivo, content was read, and initial notes and observations recorded into software	Teachers' conceptualisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Independent learners – Syllabus demands – Syllabus rigour – Syllabus content – Metacognitive thinking – Assessment types – Assessment conditions – Assessment processes – External assessment – High-stakes examination – Cognitive verbs – Teacher workload – Reporting – Increased standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional learning community • Situational leadership • Stress levels • Removal of key design principles • Higher standards • Staffing • Change in procedures • External assessment 	Pedagogical shift	
Teacher interview data		School leaders' conceptualisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Implementation – School Calendar – Individuality – Timelines – Mistrust – Teacher time – Uncertainty – Situational leadership – Transactional leadership – Impact on Junior School – Teacher stress levels – Pressure on teachers – Pressure on students – Lack of shared vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed leadership • Trustful relationships • Lack of vision • Human resource management 	Syllabus demands	
Deputy principal interview data		Contributing factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Communication – Planning time – Cross-school Networking – Cross-system Networking – Disconnection – Priorities – Accountability – Collaboration – Professional development – Communication – Professional dialogue – Answerability – Association – Interruption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing reactions to change • The time dilemma • Culture of learning • Professional development 	Assessment processes	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on the global community • Indirect impact • Disconnection and mistrust • Suitable implementation plan • Communication • Mismatch of timelines 	Leadership structures	
					Staff development	
					Teacher workload	
					External pressures	

Note: Adapted from Braun & Clarke (2006), Using thematic analysis in psychology,

Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2), 77-101.

The detail of each step is now explained.

5.2. Step One – Data Familiarisation Using Notes, Memos, and Folders in NVivo.

The transcripts from the focus group and the semi-structured interviews were uploaded into NVivo where they were grouped into three folders, along with the recordings, named by the three distinct phases of the research method. These folders were: *Heads of Departments Focus group data set* which consisted of the Heads of Departments focus group transcript and the recording; *Teacher interview data* which consisted of the four teacher interview transcripts and the recordings; and *Deputy principal interview data* which consisted of the two deputy principal transcripts and the recordings. By storing them in three distinct groups it allowed me to interrogate them separately. The three groups used different perspectives (Head of Department, Teacher, and Deputy Principal) through which they viewed the imposed change, and it was important that I became familiar with each experience as they offered vastly unique, rich, and descriptive data. This immersion was key for challenging my own assumptions regarding the change, as I too had experienced it within my own employment.

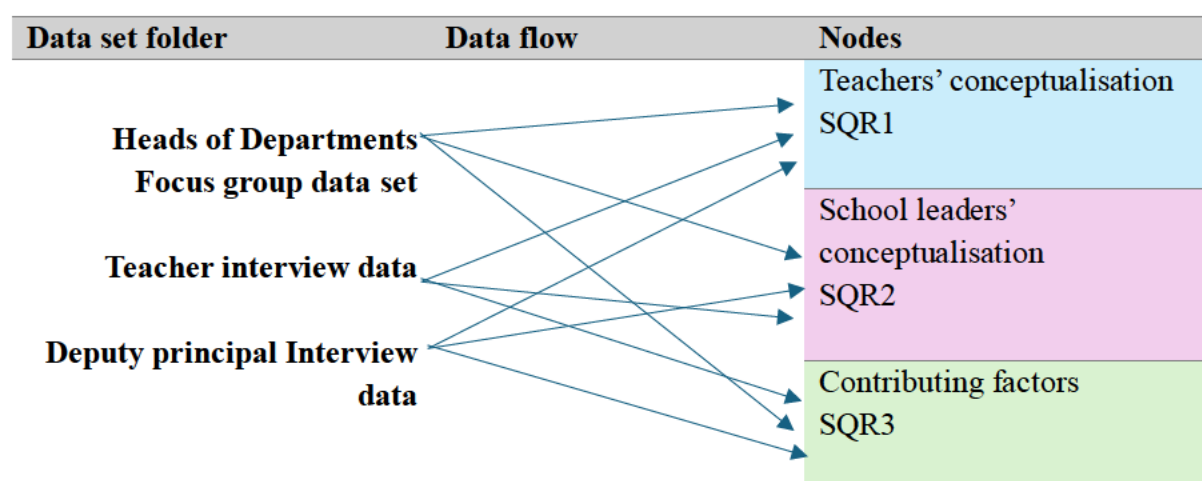
Initially I read the conversations with the participants and wrote reflective notes, which are called memos in NVivo. Memos in NVivo are word processor documents that can be stored as separate files. This functionality allowed me to link them directly to the data sets for easy access. By making reflective memos, it helped me to clarify my own thoughts and assumptions about the new education system. I continually asked myself “what would my experience as a teacher within the new system say about this part?”, or “is this surprising based on my experiences?”. Furthermore, as I read the transcripts I listened to the recordings and identified any non-verbal cues such as emotion in the participants’ voices. Such indicators might have been recorded in a memo as “stressed” or “passionate”. This helped me to obtain a more thorough understanding of the participant’s response to the questions.

5.3. Step Two – Generating Nodes

Once satisfied with the reflective aspect of familiarisation, I proceeded to organise the data. Before starting data coding, it was important to clarify three key terms: themes, codes, and nodes. In this study, a theme represents significant patterns or insights within the data that emerge in relation to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The term “code” refers to the process of systematically identifying and categorising data, whether through an inductive or deductive approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Finally, the term “node” is utilised to identify a collection of references or “data chunks” pertaining to a specific emerging topic. With this established, I began by rereading the data and copying chunks of data from the interview transcripts and placing them into one of three Nodes that had been established (see Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2

Step 2a - Figure Showing the New Groups Created to Help Organise the Data.



As I read each transcript, I reflected on each participant response, and asked myself two questions:

1. Does the nature of the response answer SRQ1 (Teachers' conceptualisation), SRQ2 (School leaders' conceptualisation), and/or SRQ3 (Contributing factors)?

2. Are there any memos from the first read that can help me to organise the data?

I used these reflective questions to assist in organising the data chunks into the various nodes. I also used annotations to comment on parts of the text where I thought there could be meaning beyond the surface level of understanding. Annotations are different to memos in NVivo where I could write short sentences that linked directly to individual words or phrases that the participants made. Memos are longer, more generalised comments on the overall data.

Table 5.2 provides an example of how I read the transcript, extracted the key passage within the response, and used the NVivo functionality to code the relevant data chunk into each respective *Node*.

Table 5.2

Step 2a - Examples of Coding Data Chunks into Nodes

Focus group data (Heads of Departments)	Extracted data chunk	Researcher's note	Node
We had to look at our scaffolding practices, and what we do in the classroom and making sure. It sort of teaches pulling back a bit. There's only four pieces of assessment now, as opposed to say six or seven or even more in other subjects.	We had to look at our scaffolding practices, and what we do in the classroom	This was about teachers looking at their pedagogical practice.	Teachers' conceptualisation
Well probably I think - at our school we don't have someone in charge of curriculum. So, we rely on each other as Head of Department rather than being able to go to someone who knows. I think at the admin level it's more a compliance thing, you need to meet these dates and they manage the portal, our stuff coming in and our feedback coming back	at our school we don't have someone in charge of curriculum. So, we rely on each other as Head of Department	This was about the leadership structure at the school.	School leaders' conceptualisation
Preparing junior students with those skills they need, as well as then having them successful as they move into these senior programs, as being something. I've gone around and talking to staff, that's been interesting to hear them just reflecting on how they need to modify or shape what they're doing.	Preparing junior students with those skills they need,	This was about the factor of unintended impacts on the junior school.	Contributing factors

I was careful when reflecting on where to place each data chunk as there could be multiple interpretations. I used my reflective memos and annotations to ensure the data chunks were placed within the correct node and sometimes were placed in more than one depending on whether it could be interpreted in diverse ways. For instance, one excerpt from the Head of Department focus group said:

We looked at the pedagogical practice and how those shape then the conversations of Year Seven to Ten as well. (Emma)

This data chunk was placed in both *School leaders' conceptualisation node* and *Contributing factors node* as the surface level understanding discussed the impact on the junior school so could be regarded as answering *Contributing factors*, whereas my memo reflection highlighted the underlying ability of Heads of Departments to draw on their experience and backward map the new system into the junior school. This showed their strategic ability which links to the *School leaders' conceptualisation node*. This thorough approach enabled the data sets to be suitably placed within each *Node*. Table 5.3 shows the number of data chunks from the data sets placed within each *Node*.

Table 5.3

Number of Data Chunks Placed Within Each Node.

Data set folder	Nodes	Number of data chunks
Head of Department Focus group data	Teachers' conceptualisation	103
	School leaders' conceptualisation	62
	Contributing factors	51
Teacher interview data	Teachers' conceptualisation	75
	School leaders' conceptualisation	43
	Contributing factors	47
Deputy principal interview data	Teachers' conceptualisation	35
	School leaders' conceptualisation	15
	Contributing factors	7

I further coded the data from each of the three initial Nodes through inductive reasoning by creating more specific sub-nodes containing multiple data chunks (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.4

Step 2b: Generated Sub-nodes

Nodes	Sub-nodes (containing multiple data chunks)
Teachers' conceptualisation	Independent learners Syllabus demands Syllabus rigour Syllabus content Metacognitive thinking Assessment types Assessment conditions Assessment processes External assessment High stakes examination Cognitive verbs Teacher workload Reporting Increased standard
School leaders' conceptualisation	Implementation School Calendar Individuality Timelines Mistrust Teacher time Uncertainty Situational leadership Transactional leadership Impact on Junior School Teacher stress levels Pressure on teachers Pressure on students Lack of shared vision
Contributing factors	Communication Planning time Cross-school Networking Cross-system Networking Disconnection Priorities Accountability Collaboration Professional development Communication Professional dialogue Answerability Association Interruption

5.4. Step Three- Searching for Initial Themes from Sub-nodes

After the data had been thoroughly coded into the various sub-nodes, I reviewed these coded data chunks to find patterns and themes. Firstly, the word cloud visualisation tool within Nvivo was used to find the most frequently used words within the interview transcripts (see Table 5.5).

Table 5.5

Visualisation Word Cloud Tool to Identify High Frequency Terms

Frequency	Words
Very high	System, teachers, new, pedagogical, impacting
High	Learning, Head of Department, stress, pressure, impact

In addition, the sub-nodes were exported to a Word document and next to each data chunk, a reflection was made by drawing connections to my previous annotations and memos, the key understanding was identified and summarised in one sentence and then one word which became an initial theme.

For instance, one data chunk within the sub-node – External Assessment read:

I think that has significantly changed in – we’ve spoken – in some subjects, the maths and sciences is at 50 per cent. What is the cumulative or distributive factors and how do kids store and keep and maintain knowledge across a long period?

My reflection on this data chunk was:

The deputy commented on the need to ponder how students retain knowledge for a year especially in mathematics and science where the external exams are 50%. To counter this, they have introduced study skills program in both Y11 and Y12.

Interestingly, the Deputy noted that this pressure on the school (to ensure external exam readiness) is impacting the Pastoral Care system also.

The concern was raised about needing more specialised teacher because the content needs to be taught to a depth where students know the content well enough for external examinations. The old system naturally evolved where teachers of junior science and maths became senior maths and science teachers out of necessity. This was not perfect, but they controlled the assessment, and the assessment was not checked; therefore, they could control what the students learnt and the preparation because they knew what was on the assessment. There was no differential. The fear now is that these teachers do not have the required knowledge to be able to teach ALL content of the syllabus and ensure students have a deep transfer of knowledge. Where do these specialised teachers come from?

This key understanding from the data chunk was summarised into the following one sentence:

The deputies were commenting on the how the change to external examinations was impacting the teacher's pedagogical practice.

This one sentence was then identified as the potential theme, *External Assessment*. This process was repeated for every sub-node with each one arriving at initial themes (See table 5.6). These *Initial Themes* emerged as preliminary patterns or insights within each sub-node. Through further analysis and refinement, these *Initial Themes* were either combined, adjusted, or expanded into more cohesive and overarching *Themes*. The *Themes* are the final, refined patterns that align closely with the research questions and provide a deeper understanding of the data. Table 5.6 shows the analysis for a select number of coded data chunks and the resulting *Initial Themes*. ‘

Table 5.6*Step 3 - Refining Sub-node Data Examples*

Data chunks from sub-nodes	Summary	Single words (<i>Initial Themes</i>)
We were given plenty of opportunities for professional development sort of thing in the early days and basically, yeah, I have, no matter what I ask for.	This extract is about professional development being provided for the teachers at the beginning of the implementation phase.	Professional development
There is a lot of new and current science, green chemistry, the physics, the modern fundamentals of physics. So, teachers in their older stages like we've had on staff, have had to do new learning, do new research themselves to keep themselves up to date. So, you've got the core concepts that are far broader and far deeper than they've ever been before. Because it's a 50 per cent exam there's all that content you've got to teach.	This excerpt explains the new content in the Science syllabus and how the content has changed and is now at a deeper level of understanding. The new syllabus has increased the standard of content which students need to be exposed.	Higher standards
The time that it takes to actually review, reorganise, regenerate and then there is another review of the junior Australian curriculum which is to be finalised at the end of this year. So, you don't want to get ahead of yourself and do something that has to be undone.	This teacher discussed how much time they must put into implementing the new system.	The time dilemma
We've basically come up with our own program for the Junior PE to try and give all students their correct knowledge and skills and abilities and learnings or whatever you want to call them that's going to take them onto their pathway. Not necessarily just the general pathway. But it's been insufficient because the Australian curriculum got written before the senior curriculum.	This teacher highlighted the impact on the junior school which could be seen as an unforeseen consequence of the new senior system.	Indirect impact

These singular words (from Table 5.6) were reviewed alongside the patterns found through the Nvivo word cloud function to identify an initial list of *Themes*. Table 5.7 shows all *Initial Themes* that were generated within this phase as they relate to the category.

Table 5.7

Sub-nodes Inform the Creation of Initial Themes

Sub-nodes (Step 2b)	Initial Theme (Step 3)
Independent learners	Professional learning community
Syllabus demands	Situational leadership
Syllabus rigour	Stress levels
Syllabus content	Removal of key design principles
Metacognitive thinking	Higher standards
Assessment types	Staffing
Assessment conditions	Change in procedures
Assessment processes	External assessment
External assessment	
High stakes examination	
Cognitive verbs	
Teacher workload	
Reporting	
Increased standards	
Implementation	Distributed leadership
School Calendar	Trustful relationships
Individuality	Lack of vision
Timelines	Human resource management
Mistrust	Managing reactions to change
Teacher time	The time dilemma
Uncertainty	Culture of learning
Situational leadership	Professional development
Transactional leadership	
Impact on Junior School	
Teacher stress levels	
Pressure on teachers	
Pressure on students	
Lack of shared vision	
Communication	Impact on the global community
Planning time	Indirect impact
Cross-school Networking	Disconnection and mistrust
Cross-system Networking	Suitable implementation plan
Disconnection	Communication
Priorities	Mismatch of timelines
Accountability	
Collaboration	
Professional development	
Communication	
Professional dialogue	
Answerability	
Association	
Interruption	

5.5. Steps Four and Five - Reviewing, Defining and Naming Themes

The *Initial Themes* were collated where there were similarities and checked for alignment and outliers. In this phase, the *Initial Themes* identified in the earlier steps were reviewed for consistency and alignment with the overall data set. This review process involved consolidating similar initial themes into more comprehensive final *Themes*. These final *Themes* encapsulate the core findings of the study and are named to succinctly capture their essence. The collection of data chunks from Step 3 that represented important Codes within the data were reviewed to ensure that they supported the identified pattern. For instance, the evidence within the *Initial Themes* of Professional Learning Community, Situational leadership, and Stress levels were all due to a shift in the pedagogical approach needed for the new system so they were grouped under the overarching theme, Pedagogical Shift. Table 5.8 shows the grouping of *Initial Themes* into the final *Themes* which is presented in the following section.

Table 5.8

Finalised Themes Refined from Initial Themes

Initial Theme (Step 3)	Similarities and Patterns	Final Theme (Steps 4/5)
Professional learning community	These factors related to the theme of pedagogical shift by highlighting the evolving nature of teaching and learning environments and the resulting challenges which impacted the staff (both teachers and leaders at the school).	Pedagogical shift
Situational leadership		
Stress levels		
Removal of key design principles	These factors highlighted how changes in syllabus demands presented challenges which compelled teachers to adapt swiftly to new curricular expectations. They also necessitated innovative instructional strategies and greater resourcefulness, as teachers and leaders strived to meet elevated	Syllabus demands
Higher standards		
Staffing		

Initial Theme (Step 3)	Similarities and Patterns	Final Theme (Steps 4/5)
	benchmarks while navigating the complexities of an evolving educational landscape amid potential staffing challenges.	
Change in procedures External assessment	These initial themes highlighted the necessity for alignment between the schools' instructional strategies and the new systems assessment methods. They emphasised the importance of thorough evaluation and adjustment to teaching and learning to ensure that student learning outcomes were aligned with the assessment framework of the new senior system.	Assessment processes
Distributed leadership Trustful relationships Lack of vision Human resource management Managing reactions to change	Distributed leadership and trustful relationships facilitated a collaborative environment where teachers could effectively engage with and adapt to the new system, leveraging diverse strengths and fostering a supportive atmosphere. Conversely, a lack of vision, challenges in human resource management, and managing reactions to change created barriers within the leadership structures, hindering teachers' ability to respond adaptively and undermined the overall success of the new systems implementation.	Leadership structures
The time dilemma Culture of learning Professional development	These intertwined aspects highlighted the challenges and necessities of fostering an environment where educators are supported with enough time, a strong culture of continuous learning, and ample professional development opportunities to effectively respond and grow during an imposed change.	Staff development

Initial Theme (Step 3)	Similarities and Patterns	Final Theme (Steps 4/5)
Impact on the global community	The impact of the school community on teacher workload encompassed not only direct tasks and responsibilities but also indirect influences, particularly on the junior school. When the teachers responded to the new system, the strength of the school community and its indirect support system significantly, influenced teacher effectiveness and well-being amidst the imposed change.	Teacher workload
Indirect impact		
Disconnection and mistrust	These factors highlighted how external expectations and poorly aligned resources strained the school's adaptation to the new system. Inadequate communication and planning, alongside a misalignment between the senior systems rollout and realistic timelines, worsened these pressures, and challenged teachers' ability to effectively integrate new content and methods into their teaching practices.	External pressures
Suitable implementation plan		
Communication		
Mismatch of timelines		

When I was satisfied with the organisation of the themes and the data they contained, I conducted a final review of each theme. I did this by reading through all the extracts associated with each theme and checking for consistency. The themes were named to capture the essence of the theme in a few words to give an immediate sense of the topic (see description in Table 5.9). These themes were then confirmed by checking them against the dataset, to ensure they accurately represented the data. I used the matrix coding query within Nvivo as a final check for this.

Table 5.9*Defining Themes with Descriptions and Quotes*

Final Theme	Description	Quotes
Pedagogical shift	Key changes from the old system to the new system, such as more focus on cognitions to assess students learning, produced a significant pedagogical shift. (Heads of Departments)	<p>The cognitions – they’ve really shifted us away from content, as in having to teach things to assess the cognitive verbs. That’s probably been a significant shift.</p> <p>There’s no analysing science and analysing humanities, it’s analysing. They’ve invested a bit of work there – a bit of clarity. I know that has been a significant shift.</p>
Syllabus demands	The school faced challenges due to staffing classes with educators lacking specialised content knowledge, leading to gaps in knowledge and the need to learn new concepts for the updated syllabus.	<p>[In the old system teachers were] just picking up the assessment that they’ve used for the last five years.</p> <p>Now, coming out of the old system that some people probably hadn’t been to their syllabus in a long time and so a lot of the key work early on was that validity in alignment, assessment writing and aligning them together</p>
Assessment processes	The changes in assessment processes initially led to teacher apprehension due to perceived lack of transparency by QCAA, resulting in mistrust and negative commentary. These changes conflicted with the participants' pedagogical practices, revealing challenges in preserving Queensland education's traditional approach and reducing teacher agency.	<p>I think the lack - or limitation on drafting feedback impacts pedagogical practice as well, so that teachers in that teaching and learning sequence need to spend more time prior to the draft, rather than providing a whole lot of feedback.</p> <p>I think that has significantly changed in – we’ve spoken – in some subjects, the maths and sciences external exams is at 50 per cent. What is the cumulative</p>

Final Theme	Description	Quotes
		or distributive factors and how do kids store and keep and maintain knowledge.
Leadership structures	The research highlighted that distributed leadership effectively empowered teachers and fostered trust with Heads of Departments, which supported successful research and adaptation to the new system. However, a key limitation was the lack of trust between Heads of Departments and deputy principals, due to perceived knowledge gaps and a lack of shared vision, complicating support efforts despite the deputies' earnest attempts to manage complexities and role ambiguity.	At our school we don't have someone in charge of curriculum. So, we rely on each other as Head of Department. Making sure that as a senior leadership team we're supporting them, supporting our line Heads of Departments, listening to their challenges and concerns.
Staff development	The evidence underscores the importance of professional development in easing the impact of imposed change on teachers. Leadership prioritized staff well-being but faced challenges with planning time due to conflicting commitments, revealing the need for more tailored support. Despite these obstacles, ongoing learning and collaboration were encouraged, which successfully improved teacher confidence and practices through external feedback and better assessments	We've got a number of people on the second cycle so for us – Geography, we've got somebody taking that up – not a geography teacher, and so releasing [during] planning days and allowing people to work together. We made [the online modules] mandatory. [Laughs]. Everyone's got to do modules one, two and three. We checked them off and that's everyone across the school, including junior teachers.
Teacher workload	The analysis revealed that the increased teaching workload, including new tasks and managing assessments, disrupted teachers' routines. Although the new system fostered professional dialogue, teachers felt stressed by the dual demands of senior and junior systems, indicating a need for better preparation and insight.	If you're writing and delivering units one and two and preparing for three and four, or you had a Year 11 class in the new system and a 12 in the old system, time would probably have been the greatest challenge. I think the new system has taken and expected a lot from people and they've had to give a lot, but it wasn't across every subject.

Final Theme	Description	Quotes
External pressures	Teachers' pedagogical practices were impacted by external factors, notably the disconnect between the education department, parents, and students, leading to communication issues and preconceived notions about the imposed change.	<p>I think in terms of teacher practice, it has changed that to the point where there's pressure from the school and the department, I suppose, around attaining QCE, so the pressure comes back to the teachers around making sure that they're passing every unit.</p> <p>The old QCE system was quite easy to navigate for parents and students. There wasn't a lot of – you just need to know, essentially, if I pass at the end of Year 12, I get my full points. Whereas, students and parents don't really understand the nuances of the new system,</p>

5.6. Step Six- Thematic Analysis

This step presents an accumulation of the analysis which shows the impact of an imposed change on teachers' pedagogical practice. The analysis of the seven overarching *Themes* that emerged, that is, Pedagogical shift, Syllabus demands, Assessment processes, Leadership structures, Staff development, Teacher workload, External pressures, is presented (see Table 5.10).

Table 5.10

Structure of Thematic Discussion

Initial Theme	Final Theme
Professional learning community	Theme1: Pedagogical shift
Situational leadership	
Stress levels	
Removal of key design principles	Theme 2: Syllabus demands
Higher standards	

Initial Theme	Final Theme
Staffing	
Change in procedures	Theme 3: Assessment processes
External assessment	
Distributed leadership	
Trustful relationships	Theme 4: Leadership structures
Lack of vision	
Human resource management	
Managing reactions to change	
The time dilemma	
Culture of learning	Theme 5: Staff development
Professional development	
Impact on the global community	Theme 6: Teacher workload
Indirect impact	
Disconnection and mistrust	Theme 7: External pressures
Suitable implementation plan	
Communication	
Mismatch of timelines	

Each of the Themes are now presented in more detail.

5.7. Theme One: Pedagogical Shift

When expressing their conceptualisation of the new QCE system, the participants raised three factors (initial themes) that related to the shift in pedagogy which impacted teacher practice: namely, professional learning community, syllabus demands, and stress levels, each of which is discussed as follows.

5.7.1. Professional Learning Community

The school's culture played a pivotal role in shaping teachers' initial perceptions of the mandated change, especially concerning the implementation of a professional learning

community. From the beginning, the Heads of Departments deliberated on the teachers' readiness to effectively incorporate the pedagogical demands of the new syllabus.

Introspection, though potentially challenging in an environment marked by mistrust, was facilitated by an organisational atmosphere that clearly supported self-renewal and continuous improvement.

In the early stages of implementation, the Heads of Departments recognised that the prevailing "I do, we do, you do" instructional model might not entirely align with the requirements of the new system. This realisation sparked critical conversations exploring more dynamic educational theories. The established culture of the organisation provided an enabling environment, allowing members to reflect and take calculated risks without "fear". This proved to be a crucial factor for the successful implementation of the imposed change. In situations where the impact of imposed change is uncertain, such an environment becomes instrumental in fostering effective and efficient problem-solving (Ingersoll, 1994). Underlying the entire process was a high-level of commitment by the teachers as they attempted to conceptualise the imposed change and ensure it had a positive impact on the students. They took personal responsibility to do the right thing for the students and challenge their own perspectives on what constituted effective practice.

Guided by the Heads of Departments, teachers at the school embarked on innovative content delivery methods to meet the new syllabus's pedagogical demands, influenced heavily by a school culture committed to self-renewal and pedagogical improvement. This process was supported by strategies such as networking with other schools, emphasising subject mastery, and peer coaching. This was despite the teachers having been given limited time for professional development in preparation for this transition. Furthermore, aligning with research on the agenda of imposed change in education settings, this was coupled with the imposed change forcing a renewal of practice (Charlton, 1997; Ingersoll, 1994; Menzies,

1996; Paquett, 1997; Watkins & Lodge, 1999). The critical inquiry into whether this adaptation would have occurred without the impetus of imposed change suggested that the school's culture of continuous learning was crucial. The literature on school culture pointed to this being a fundamental aspect of change management (Exley, 2015; Putnam & Borko, 2000; Wallace & Priestley, 2011). This culture not only prepared the groundwork for successful adaptation but also transformed the imposed change into an opportunity for growth and enhancement of teaching practices.

5.7.2. *Situational Leadership*

The Heads of Departments played a crucial role in shaping teachers' perceptions of the imposed change by demonstrating an understanding of individual needs and pressure points. During the implementation phase, teachers were tasked with maintaining the status quo in certain aspects of daily practice, such as finalising the prior system, while being encouraged to take significant risks in other areas. The Heads of Departments expressed concern about teachers' stress levels, and prioritising the analysis of their needs became a forefront consideration. This commitment to safeguarding teachers emerged as a distinctive characteristic of the school leaders during the imposed change, aligning with principles of situational leadership (Chatalalsingh & Reeves, 2014; Jansen, 2008). In this leadership style, initiatives are executed to provide staff with the appropriate balance of support based on their maturity levels.

The literature on situational leadership by researchers such as Chatalalsingh and Reeves (2014); Jansen (2008), and Flannery (2017) underscores the importance of values associated with an empathetic and compassionate approach, focusing on individuals to effectively inspire them. The evidence strongly suggested that the decision-making by the Heads of Departments during the initial stages of the change significantly influenced the

impact in both positive and negative ways of the imposed change on teachers' pedagogical practices.

5.7.3. *Stress Levels*

The evidence from the data suggested that the imposition of change on organisations often led to elevated stress levels. This was particularly the case in this change process as there had been a prolonged duration between the changes. A significant indicator was the fact that teachers had been teaching within the “previous system” for many years without being compelled to alter their practices. For instance, numerous teachers had accumulated 30 to 40 years of experience within this system without meaningful changes during that period. Within these established constraints, teachers had developed confidence and competence; however, the introduction of the new system brought a new dynamic for which they felt underprepared. Many teachers expressed feelings akin to first-year teachers, navigating the process of implementing a syllabus anew and developing a fresh approach to their practices.

This stress can be attributed to various complex reasons, aligning with the literature on imposed change. As discussed in Chapter two, research suggests that the level of stress experienced by teachers was proportionate to what was happening in their lives, both within and outside of work (Bridges, 2003; Lewin, 1947; Rains, 2013). While the precise cause of stress can be challenging to measure, the stable environment within which teachers had operated, in terms of changes to the education system, provided evidence to suggest that the inherent human search for stability in their lives was a key stressor as they grappled with conceptualising the imposed change. In addition, it was evident that teachers responded as they saw this as doing the “right thing” for students.

5.7.4. *Summary*

The impact of the imposed change on the teachers' mindset about previous practice yielded a mixed response. While there was evidence of positive aspects such as teacher and

school renewal, an apprehensive attitude towards the change prevailed. The evidence indicated that this apprehension was attributed to the extended time between changes within the system. The Heads of Departments navigated the change with a focus on teacher well-being, acknowledging and addressing the anticipated high stress levels in the initial stages.

Despite the initial stress, careful management by the Heads of Departments facilitated teachers' confidence in their ability to reflect on their traditional practices and explore alternative approaches. This process held particular significance for those teachers deeply entrenched in their comfort zones, having taught the same system throughout their careers. The change compelled them to delve into new teaching methodologies aligned with the requirements of the new education system's syllabus. Intriguingly, teachers continued striving to fulfill other job responsibilities to a high standard even as they negotiated this pedagogical shift. The underlying importance was that the teachers were not forced to complete this process but were compelled to act with a sense of integrity and ensure their practice was up to date. Their motivation came from an intrinsic responsibility to their students, to act with integrity, and ensure the students were not disadvantaged in any way.

5.8. Theme Two: Syllabus Demands.

When expressing their conceptualisation of the new QCE system, the participants raised a variety of factors that related to the demands of the syllabus: namely, the removal of key design principles, higher standards, and staffing. These factors are discussed as follows.

5.8.1. *Removal of Key Design Principles*

The participants flagged the change in syllabus requirements as an impact on their pedagogical practice. The content in the prior QCE system had barely changed over the last 50 years and teachers had more flexibility in which topics were taught. While there was core content that every school had to deliver, there were also optional topics that allowed teachers to plan teaching and assessment around their expertise. This was especially advantageous in

the areas of science and mathematics where there were specialised topics within the core content. Therefore, the optional topics were clear strengths in terms of allowing for the individuality of school contexts and teachers. The participants acknowledged that this removal of a flexible component of Queensland education was a major impact on their pedagogical practice in terms of subject mastery.

The Science Head of Department highlighted that they had a range of science teachers who were not specifically trained in science; however, had become experts in the topics of the old syllabus.

5.8.2. *Higher Standard*

When the new syllabus was released, the participants reacted with initial concerns regarding the breadth and depth of the content, which they felt required more explicit teaching to ensure students were “test-ready” rather than encouraging student-guided learning. This concurred with QCAA (2010) observation that: “Since the abolition of external exams, Queensland’s teachers have been able to broaden the ways in which students can demonstrate what they have learnt rather than try and predict what examiners might be looking for” (pp. 4-5).

There was clear discontent among the teachers when they looked through the documents and identified content they had never taught. The evidence from Matters and Masters (2014b) suggested that the length of time between the system changes might have resulted in many teachers only having taught within the previous system. It is my opinion that more regular updates to Queensland syllabuses would have better-prepared teachers for the new adaptations and more confidence to negotiate the changes. From the discussions, it was clear that the Sciences were a practical example of how the syllabus had impacted teachers’ pedagogical practice. There was high pressure on teachers as they needed to learn concepts and skills, which they had not revisited since university or even school. The Science Head of

Department felt pressure to actively staff the senior subjects, and even Year 10, with teachers who have dual degrees in the areas of science as well as education. The Heads of Departments commented on some of the content being at an early university course level.

5.8.3. *Staffing*

The need for teachers who had specialist discipline knowledge (and training) highlighted a gap that had been created during the old system. The nature of the new system and the way it was implemented by the QCAA had created a “Russian roulette-type” situation in this school. A student may be fortunate enough to be taught by an appropriately experienced teacher or not so fortunate by a teacher without adequate understanding of the syllabus content.

5.8.4. *Summary*

Teachers who became confident with the content in the previous system experienced a limitation in their current knowledge and were having to learn new concepts to a standard that was appropriate for the new system. As mentioned before, this idea of teachers being forced out of their comfort zone and renewing their practice is positive; however, the concerning aspect was how much pressure was put on schools and teachers due to staffing restrictions. Some situations could have seen a senior science teacher also teaching a senior mathematics class, which meant it was necessary that they learn content for both subjects. Furthermore, this was being completed while learning the new system, finalising the old system, and taking on the significant task of implementing the new syllabus. These factors diverted teachers from their existing responsibilities, contributing to heightened stress levels. For instance, managing multiple classes was impacted, ultimately affecting their daily teaching practices.

5.9. Theme Three: Assessment Processes.

When expressing their conceptualisation of the new QCE system, the participants raised a variety of factors that related to assessment processes; namely, the change in procedures and the introduction of external assessment. These factors are discussed as follows.

5.9.1. *Change in Procedures*

One of the more obvious impacts on teacher practice was the change in assessment practices when compared to the “old system”. The main stressor came from the unpredictability of the new processes, namely Endorsement and Confirmation, and the introduction of the external examination component. Due to the length of time between changes in the Queensland system, most teachers had become extremely comfortable in the way assessment and reporting operated in senior schools. When the QCAA first presented the change in the system they quickly acknowledged the core principles of Queensland education. The Queensland Government (2016) stated:

The new senior assessment system will build on the strengths of Queensland’s current school-based assessment approach. Teachers will continue to exercise their professional judgement in designing and administering school-based senior assessments. Senior students will continue to be provided with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their skills and knowledge. Under the new arrangements, these features will also be complemented by a subject-based external assessment and new processes to support and promote high-quality assessment practice. (p. 3)

The evidence presented in Chapter four, pointed directly to a significant amount of stress around the new processes for assessment. Firstly, the Confirmation process brought new challenges when assessing student work and allocating marks. The participants communicated that, although still a moderation process, the major change was that each

assessment piece was scrutinised, rather than a folio of student work at the end of the year. In the early stages of the new system, teachers were apprehensive because they perceived a lack of transparency by the QCAA about how their marking would be viewed and their professionalism judged. Teacher confidence levels appeared to be jarred which was understandable given the nature of the context. This whole situation seemed to have triggered significant amounts of stress.

Although the participants felt the QCAA had poorly managed the change, there was an acknowledgment by teachers that certain aspects of Confirmation and Endorsement improved the weaknesses of the old system. The evidence pointed towards the new processes improving consistency across schools and relieving some anxiety within their pedagogical practice. Previously, schools could select which student folios they would send to have the grades verified (QCAA, 2010). My research reflections concluded that this meant schools could hide student work thus inviting an unethical approach to the process. Furthermore, there could have been a concern that due to the assessment results being modified locally, schools in competition with each other would fail to be objective when looking at student work. This implied that the culture which had developed could have been toxic in nature and, if this was the case in other areas of Queensland, then the imposed change would be justified.

The participants noted some of the changes which have impacted their practice positively and improved the perceived toxicity of the previous system. One of these was the random nature applied to the selection of student work (QCAA, 2018). Schools now not being able to control which samples they send in for moderation has created a more equitable approach and increased accountability. It appeared to me that the new system had created more trust among these teachers in the processes and procedures set out by the QCAA. When the results came back from Confirmation, the teachers were aware that the results had been looked at by a random assessor, without preconceived ideas about the school or students. This

enabled teachers to be more accepting of the moderation process. Although student results can still be moved down, the system was such that teachers can reason that it was not personal. Processes that build trust between systems and schools seem to be an important aspect regarding externally imposed change and its impact on teacher practice. This is supported by the literature on imposed change presented in Chapter two (Barsade et al., 2018; Piderit, 2000; Rains, 2013). One consequence of resistance was a lack of trust between the change agents and the recipients of change.

The Endorsement process was also identified as creating more confidence in the teachers' practice. It was however, initially viewed with suspicion and confusion due to the perceived lack of transparency from the QCAA. The participants commented that assessment pieces across schools were being rejected, even though they were the same piece. An example was given in the subject area of Health and how a network of teachers was created to ensure quality assessment instruments for students; however, some were rejected, and some of the same pieces were approved. This was described as puzzling and nerve-racking due to the unpredictable nature of the process and the uncertainty in how teachers will be judged. The inconsistent nature and perceived lack of transparency of the Endorsement process had an understandable impact on teachers' trust regarding the imposed change.

I reflected that there was mistrust and confusion about how the process would work; however, there were some impacts on teachers which were positive in nature. The participants commented that the Endorsement process made it fairer for students. In the old system, assessment pieces were used to justify student outcomes. If the assessment piece was deemed to not allow students to demonstrate a set standard, then the marks could be lowered (Matters & Masters, 2014a; QCAA, 2010). Teachers were then held accountable to parents. Furthermore, the participants acknowledged that this process was unfair to students as their marks were moved due to a lack of evidence when they were not given the opportunity to

demonstrate their understanding to an appropriate standard. My reflection was that the new process has taken the assessment out of the equation when reviewing student marks. They could now confidently administer the assessment, knowing it was endorsed to the correct standard (QCAA, 2018). This indicated to me that if teachers are clear on the reasons for imposed change, and the logic was communicated effectively, then teachers would feel more confident in the impacts it had on their practice. This aligns with research on imposed change and the importance of clear communication between the change agents and the change recipients (Bartunek et al., 2006; Bolman & Deal, 2021).

5.9.2. *External Assessment*

It seemed to me that the introduction of external assessment to the Queensland system was always going to have a notable impact on teachers' practice. I was unsure how the introduction of external examinations in a system that prided itself on an internal assessment culture could ever happen without some degree of stress, apprehensiveness, and unpredictability from teachers (Allen, 2012; Matters & Masters, 2014b; QCAA, 2010). I reflected that this was a huge change for Queensland education. Chapter two had highlighted that the system had developed deep values in being able to offer students contextually appropriate learning experiences which included an assessment that was relevant to their students (QCAA, 2010). This was viewed as important to the context of Queensland which extends to a diverse range of situations, from remote and regional locations to urban living (ACARA, 2012b). Due to the ingrained pedagogy in Queensland education, as highlighted in Chapter two, this area was going to be an important discussion point.

As indicated by the evidence from the participants, the most obvious of these challenges regarding teacher practice is the nature of learning which needs to occur in preparation for the examinations (Matters & Masters, 2014a). The original culture tested students on a term-by-term basis (Allen, 2012; QCAA, 2010). Usually the assessment piece,

for example, an examination, would come directly after eight weeks of work. This could be considered low-stakes and assessing what students know in a timely fashion. The culture of school assessment was built around this notion. Junior classes were aimed at preparing students for the assessment practices in senior. Thus, students would be trained to recall knowledge from a term's workload and then move on to the next topic. Understandably, the new system's initial phase would have brought confusion and stress to how Queensland's students would cope and how teachers were to best prepare the students for this new culture. The QCAA (2018) was clear on trying to preserve the ingrained pedagogical approach in Queensland education; however, the challenge in this occurrence was clearly highlighted by the evidence from the participants.

The most prevalent example given by the participants was in the Sciences where the external examination was 50% of the student's mark. This mode of assessment became high stakes for these subjects and the extra pressure had been felt by the participants. Clarke (2012) highlighted the importance of this consideration since internal assessment should accurately represent the taught content, while external assessment evaluates what needs to be taught. These were two vastly different pedagogical approaches in which these teachers needed to adapt their practice. The participants commented on needing to teach students the skills involved in recalling a year's worth of content. This was especially true for the first students moving through the new system, as much of their preparation had been within the old culture of teaching and learning. The Science teachers felt that their pedagogical practice had been flipped so that teachers were now viewing the content through their students' eyes. This was due to the unknown factor regarding the final examination's content. The participants acknowledged that they now needed to scrutinise the syllabus with the students, and try to predict the external examination questions, rather than focusing on the content delivery. This was a clear contradiction to the preservation of Queensland education core

design principles as presented in Chapter two (Allen, 2012; Matters & Masters, 2014; QCAA, 2010).

5.9.3. *Summary*

The changes to assessment processes had significantly impacted teacher practice. Initially the teachers were apprehensive about the new Confirmation and Endorsement procedures due to an apparent lack of transparency by the QCAA. The research indicated that the communication approach led participants to question the credibility of the agenda set by the QCAA, fostering a sense of mistrust. This, in turn, generated negative feedback among participants, highlighting mistrust as a significant outcome associated with ineffective communication of change initiatives. Once the participants engaged in the process, they started to identify some positives which were masked due to the stress of the imposed change. Clear and transparent communication had a clear impact on teacher's conceptualisation of imposed change.

Furthermore, the introduction of external examination brought a conflicting change to the participants' pedagogical practice. It was also apparent that the QCAA's attempt to preserve Queensland education's ingrained pedagogical approach was not always successful. The natural outcome of externally administered assessment reduced teacher agency and created an emphasis on ensuring students were "test ready". As highlighted in Chapter two, this was not a core principle of Queensland education over the last 50 years and had a significant impact on teachers' pedagogical practice.

5.10. Theme Four: Leadership Structure

When expressing their conceptualisation of the new QCE system, the participants raised a variety of factors that relate to the leadership structure. The factors were distributed leadership, trustful relationships, lack of vision, human resource management, and managing reactions to change. These are discussed in the following section.

5.10.1. Distributed Leadership

The interviewed teachers' accounts showed evidence of parallel leadership (Conway & Andrews, 2022; Crowther, 2010, 2011; Crowther et al., 2009) and showed that this structure was effective for achieving sustainable improvements. The school culture enabled teachers to collaborate with each other and network with other schools, without restrictions. The evidence showed that the problem-solving strategies employed by the teachers when implementing the imposed change demonstrated an allowance by the school leaders for teachers to make decisions regarding school improvement. The teachers were able to research and network freely and were the central core of the implementation phase. The research in Chapter two suggested that distributed or shared leadership would be a point of investigation for this research topic (Crowther, 2010, 2011; Crowther et al., 2009). The research pointed to successful change occurring in organisations when a shared leadership approach was adopted, and this was validated by the participants' accounts.

5.10.2. Trustful Relationships

There appeared to be a prominent level of trust between the teachers and the Heads of Departments due to the shared leadership approach. The agenda of the Heads of Departments was clear from the interview data. They negotiated the imposed change with the approach that would be the least intrusive to teachers. They assisted in finding professional development and negotiated time with the deputies for teachers to be able to plan and work collaboratively. The intentionality of these strategies created an environment of trust which was fundamental for building trust in organisations. The Heads of Departments showed value for teachers working outside the classroom by ensuring the teachers' needs were met. The teacher participants acknowledged their gratitude for the support given by the Heads of Departments and recounted that they felt trusted to use the time given for the assigned purpose. Crowther et al. (2009) points to the students being the main beneficiaries of such an

approach and aligns with the consistent participant narrative which outlined their concern for the students during the implementation of the imposed change.

Where there was trust between the teachers and the Heads of Departments, there was evidence to suggest that the Heads of Departments did not have full trust in the ability of the Deputies to lead the implementation of the new system. The primary example within the evidence was that the Heads of Departments felt that the deputies did not understand their needs due to not teaching any classes as part of their role. Furthermore, they felt that this limited the Deputies' knowledge of the imposed change and restricted their ability to conceptualise the imposed change. The Heads of Departments felt that they were constantly needing to "lead-up" with their supervisors. This perceived lack of empathy by the Deputies for the Heads of Departments created an environment of mistrust. The outcome for the school was Heads of Departments who felt under pressure and undervalued as they negotiated the imposed change.

This was not helped by the non-teaching role adopted by the leadership team. Most participants wanted to know that the people listening understood their position and the issues they faced. For instance, the example was given regarding the use of QCAA data for the Deputies to have conversations with staff about their performance concerning the implementation of the system. The participants felt that the Deputies were focused on small errors during Confirmation and Endorsement processes, rather than a more global view of the work teachers have completed. This added to the view that the Deputies do not understand everything the staff did concerning the implementation of such a major change. I reflected that this view could have been limited if the Deputies could say "hey, I am doing this too!".

5.10.3. Lack of Vision

One aspect the participants identified as an area of weakness was the inability of senior leaders to bring together all areas of the school under one vision. Much of the

commentary regarded the four deputies and the lack of expert knowledge in particular fields. The deputies shared responsibility for all areas in the school related to administration, pastoral, and curriculum. This appeared to result in senior leaders who were competent in all areas but were not specialised in any particular area. When interviewing the deputies, it was evident that they were knowledgeable in the compliance aspects of the new system but did not comment much on the transformational aspects such as pedagogical changes. This was further confirmed by the other participants who were frustrated with the nature of conversations when discussing assessment pieces and school timelines.

While the Heads of Departments were experts within their fields, it seemed necessary to the participants to have a leader who could bring together the commonalities within each of the departments and under a shared vision that allows the imposed change to be implemented effectively. As captured in the literature in Chapter two, a shared vision was an essential part of developing an environment for reform. The lack of leadership in curriculum puts pressure and stress on the Heads of Departments. There appeared to be a disconnect between the deputies and the next level of leadership which produced limitations to the construction of knowledge and resulting processes and procedures of the imposed change.

5.10.4. Human Resource Management

It was clear from the focus group that the Heads of Departments had a unified view on the deputies' ability to support them through the imposed change. Within this school context, the Deputies attempted to demonstrate a supportive approach through actively listening to concerns and negotiating timelines with the Heads of Departments. Kendall and Kendall (2012) explained that staff's behaviour within their immediate environment needs to be analysed as this strengthens their ability to cultivate a positive change culture. If people believe that their concerns are listened to in an un genuine way, then they will not trust the listener. There seemed to be a lack of evidence that suggested there were intentional

strategies that enabled the Heads of Departments to voice their concerns in an environment where the deputies were open to criticism.

The participants identified concerns regarding the perceived disconnection between the Heads of Departments and Deputy Principals. The Deputies had many responsibilities involving the accountability of teachers and students. My reflections were that this could very well be the reason for the perceived disconnection. If the Deputies were spread too thinly, then putting the work into understanding individuals and creating relationships would have been difficult due to the lack of time and number of responsibilities. It seemed that this notion was not the fault of the deputies or criticism of their skills, but a validation of the participant commentary of the need for a leader who can focus on curriculum. Perhaps this could have allowed a clear link between the compliance level understanding and the individualistic nature of departments.

The apparent chaotic nature of this imposed change experienced by the participants only strengthened the argument for a greater connection between the leadership team and Heads of Departments. From the participants' accounts, many procedural and pedagogical changes impacted the organisation to a level that was unprecedented within the Queensland school. The Heads of Departments made comments on the lack of understanding that the Deputies have about what was impacting their subject area and its members. The data implied that a temporary position within this context, whose only role was to lead the change by constructing the knowledge generated by each of the Heads of Departments into something pragmatic and usable, would have been beneficial. This could have focused on each department and given them confidence in the global vision of the imposed change. The QCAA were inflexible in their approach to accountability and hard dates for the submission of the various processes. The role of the curriculum expert would be to understand and build that togetherness that was lacking within the implementation phase of the change. This would

have enabled the ever-important culture of trust and improved perception of the organisation's ability to limit the impact of the change in a more emphatic approach (Adcroft & Lockwood, 2010; Kendall & Kendall, 2012; Putnam & Pacacnowsky, 1983). If this role was to be successful, then the evidence would suggest that they would need a teaching role within the school.

5.10.5. Managing Reactions to Change

The Heads of Departments and teachers expressed their comfort within the previous system, with much of the stress stemming from unknown factors. In their narratives, it became apparent that they experienced various reactions to the imposed change, aligning with Corr (2022) adaptation of the Kübler-Ross model presented in Chapter two. This model illustrated those individuals could progress through various stages of grief when confronted with change. For instance, the health teacher initially found the alterations to Confirmation “perplexing,” then transitioned to anger due to the lack of communication and clarity about the change, ultimately reaching acceptance that the new system was now in place. Furthermore, the reactions of the teachers were complex in a variety of ways. They had varying experiences, and the research study did not explore what was occurring in their personal lives. However, I reflected that people have many events occurring in their lives, which they bring to the organisation, and they are often seeking an order to complement the chaos which was evident in their life. This can result in negativity and resentment towards anything which will add to the chaos and challenge the status quo they need within their employment. Thus, the leaders had an unpredictable landscape in which to lead the imposed change and satisfactorily manage their subordinates' reactions.

Moreover, the compounded intricacy arising from diverse personality types and varying maturity levels in terms of performance introduced a plethora of daily challenges. Within this landscape, the leader's role becomes unmistakable in navigating these

complexities. Leaders must discern when to exert pressure and when to exercise restraint, identify individuals grappling with personal challenges, recognise those in need of performance support, and reciprocally, determine the appropriate leadership strategies to deploy at specific junctures.

As identified in Chapter Two, comprehending how individuals respond to change was a pivotal aspect when navigating imposed changes in organisations. The multitude of individuals within organisations contributes to a complex environment, making it challenging to predict members' reactions to potentially intense situations (Andersen, 2021; Geddes, 1992; Sverdlik & Oreg, 2015). This complexity was notably evident in the researched school.

5.10.6. Summary

The evidence highlighted several key strengths and limitations in the leadership of the imposed change within the researched school. It recognised the existing essence of distributed leadership that empowered teachers to effectively address crucial aspects of the new system. This approach facilitated research, networking with other schools, and positioning the school at the forefront of change. The success in this regard was attributed to trusting relationships cultivated with the Heads of Departments, who were deliberate in addressing individual needs.

However, a notable limitation emerged in the lack of trust between the Heads of Departments and the deputy principals. Numerous factors, including a perceived deficit in expert knowledge about the imposed change, contributed to the Heads of Departments doubting that they would receive suitable support. Additionally, the absence of a shared vision for the implementation phase, compounded by the lack of a direct supervisor overseeing curriculum or the new system's implementation, further strained relationships. Despite the deputies' efforts to manage the situation, the challenges stemming from the

complexity of individuals, role ambiguity, and the unpredictable nature of organisations made it difficult to adequately support the Heads of Departments.

5.11. Theme Five: Staff Development.

When expressing their conceptualisation of the new QCE system, the participants raised a variety of factors that relate to staff development. These factors are the time dilemma, a culture of learning, and professional development. These are discussed in the following sections.

5.11.1. The Time Dilemma

The data identified the leadership team's efforts to minimise the impact on teachers' pedagogical practice through professional development. The school's pedagogical framework reflected the leadership's attempt to foster an effective school community. A challenge highlighted was the time constraint on teachers, given the extensive workload of implementing a monumental new system. Leaders emphasised the coping mechanisms needed for teachers to construct new knowledge in a time-poor environment. The evidence indicated that the school leadership allowed teachers to apply for planning time to create successful learning opportunities. However, issues arose as the planning time allocation became “tokenistic” due to other commitments.

The difficulty in quantifying the time needed for successful task completion was a common theme. Teachers emphasised that planning time release meant being relieved from daily duties, requiring detailed plans, often more challenging than teaching itself. While leadership prioritised creating time for staff, it was perceived as a “blanket opportunity” without meeting individual needs. Teachers expressed concerns using phrases like "morale dropping" and "needing triple the amount of time on offer". Considering varying maturity levels and performance abilities among teachers, a tailored approach would have been more appropriate. Highly confident and competent individuals may find tasks less challenging,

while others with reduced confidence and high emotional needs may struggle (Hersey et al., 1979).

The conclusion drawn was that sustainable change requires addressing individual needs through individualised strategies. Allocating time for teachers might be coupled with ongoing staff development, especially considering potential future imposed changes. This approach was logical for fostering sustainable change, particularly during significant organisational transitions. The literature in Chapter Two suggested that staff development can have a motivating effect on the organisation's members through the identification of areas of weakness and appropriate ongoing development addressing these areas (Flannery, 2017; Ng, 2018).

5.11.2. Culture of Learning

The encouragement of learning by leadership was an aspect that appeared frequently within the data. The research participants were clear in the identification of cross-school networking as a learning strategy that was encouraged by the leadership team. The connection of schools, across states and systems, was a sound and effective strategy to encourage the creation of knowledge. The teachers were encouraged to break down the barriers between classrooms and schools to learn from each other and see different perspectives on how things could be done. The literature presented in Chapter Two highlighted that humans have been involved in the learning process for thousands of years (Lambert, 2002). It was no coincidence that knowledge and societal advances grow exponentially. Throughout time humans have gradually been able to travel more, been able to communicate faster and work more efficiently. With more exposure to diverse cultures and ideas, a mixture of collective intelligence produces more innovative ways of completing tasks (Putnam & Borko, 2000).

There was further evidence of a culture of learning within the school's pedagogical framework and annual action plan, demonstrating the value of teacher-teacher learning within the school. This was shown in the researched literature to be an important aspect for implementing change. Elmore (2003) and Patricia (2007) studies showed that deprivatisation was a key aspect of any learning culture. If schools are to negotiate imposed change, then they must find ways to work effectively and limit the impact of the change in their pedagogical practice (Elmore, 2003). This school already had an agenda which pushed for de-privatisation, and this enabled the school to draw on this culture when implementing the new system.

An interesting challenge presented from the data was the sometimes lack of quality assurance within the networking. The evidence showed that the school had developed networks to have assessment pieces reviewed by peers from various schools. The teachers were encouraged by this process and gained confidence from external feedback; however, it came with some adverse impacts. Some schools changed their minds, and the teachers felt guilty when asking other teachers to use their own time. It was implied that networking should have occurred at a system level, with the suggestion that schools should be encouraged to close for the day, thus allowing teachers to get together. It would appear that if this occurred, it may have reduced the teachers' stress levels.

Another stressor of this process was that most networking was completed by email, and this presented many challenges for the teachers. For example, one teacher checked one school's Chemistry assessment and then sent theirs to the school and received no reply. This meant that the teacher had put their time into someone else's work and received no transaction for the service. The uncontrollable nature of this networking initiative seems to lie in the creation of false relationships between the organisation's members. Intrinsic motivation

to be involved in this process would be important if the transactions between teachers were to be equally successful.

5.11.3. Professional Development

The data identified the leadership team's efforts to minimise the impact on teachers' pedagogical practice through professional development. The school's pedagogical framework reflected the leadership's attempt to foster an effective school community. A challenge highlighted was the time constraint on teachers, given the extensive workload of implementing a monumental new system. Leaders recognised the coping mechanisms needed for teachers to construct new knowledge in a time-poor environment. The evidence indicated that the school leadership allowed teachers to apply for planning time to create successful learning opportunities; however, issues arose as the planning time allocation became tokenistic due to other commitments. Literature cited in Chapter Two suggested that staff development can motivate organisation members by addressing weak areas and facilitating ongoing development; however, managing various complex and individualistic situations is crucial (Kendall & Kendall, 2012; Putnam & Borko, 2000).

I reflected that the difficulty in quantifying the time needed for successful task completion was a common theme. Teachers emphasised that planning time release meant being relieved from daily duties, requiring detailed plans, often more challenging than teaching itself. The failure in this situation impacted student learning.

While the leadership prioritised creating time for staff, it was perceived as a blanket opportunity without meeting individual needs. Teachers expressed concerns using phrases like "morale dropping" and "needing triple the amount of time on offer". My reflection was that considering varying maturity levels and performance abilities among teachers, a tailored approach was essential. Highly confident and competent individuals may find tasks less challenging, while others with reduced confidence and high emotional needs may struggle.

My conclusion was that sustainable change requires addressing individual needs through individualised strategies. Allocating time to teachers should be coupled with ongoing staff development, especially considering potential future-imposed changes. This approach seems logical to me for fostering sustainable change, particularly during significant organisational transitions.

5.11.4. Summary

The evidence underscores a crucial emphasis on the professional development of staff to mitigate the impact of imposed change on teachers' pedagogical practices. The school leadership recognised the challenges of acquiring new knowledge within a time-constrained environment and aimed to ensure the well-being of both teachers and students, irrespective of their direct involvement in the change. Although the leadership initially permitted teachers to request planning time for adapting to the new system, issues arose as this allocation became superficial due to conflicting commitments.

A recurring theme was the prioritisation of providing time for staff by leadership, yet this did not sufficiently address individual teacher needs and maturity levels. Nevertheless, the importance of ongoing professional development alongside time allocation was emphasised to prepare for potential future changes. The encouragement of learning by leadership and the pre-existing culture of deprivatisation in the school proved beneficial during the implementation of the new system, as evident in networks for peer review of assessments across schools. This initiative bolstered teacher confidence through external feedback.

Professional development emerged as a pivotal factor in the successful implementation of imposed changes, contributing to enhanced teacher confidence and pedagogical practices. Leadership effectively leveraged the changes to promote external

learning providers, leading to improved teaching practices, particularly in assessments. This demonstrated the positive potential of imposed changes on teacher practices.

5.12. Theme Six: Teacher Workload

When identifying factors considered to impact teachers' pedagogical practice, the participants raised a variety of factors that relate to teacher workload. These factors within this category were the impact on the global community and the indirect impacts. These are discussed as follows.

5.12.1. Impact on the Global Community

The recurring theme of increased teaching workload is interwoven throughout the identified themes. Although not explicitly named, the aspects discussed concerning task completion and management had a direct impact on teachers' daily work. Tasks such as creating new learning opportunities and assessment pieces, alongside their existing roles, resulted in a perceived intensification of daily practice. The indirect and unintended consequences on the global teacher community were evident, as the new approach to teaching and assessing senior students affected even the most junior levels of the school. Teachers in the middle school found themselves questioning whether they were adequately preparing students for their senior schooling.

The evidence suggested that the implementation of the new system provided opportunities for professional dialogue, an essential learning tool about the entire school rather than just the senior levels. However, challenges arose with the perceived misalignment of the junior and senior curricula. Teachers of junior subjects had to problem-solve how to deliver the junior curriculum to an appropriate standard while ensuring students acquired the foundational knowledge needed for success in senior school. Notably, since the data collection phase, three years after the first cycle of students through the new system, a newly adapted junior curriculum was released. It appeared that this could have been an indirect

acknowledgment that the previous version did not meet the necessary standards for effective teaching.

Participants highlighted the additional stress of simultaneously working on the new senior system and adjusting the existing junior system. This dual responsibility required teachers to navigate differences in terminology and cognitive verbs used in both curricula. For instance, the emphasis on cognitive verbs by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) created challenges, as the use of "evaluate" in the junior curriculum contrasted with the senior curriculum's focus on "analysing". The impact on teachers' practice was evident, with the need to interpret the senior curriculum while identifying strengths and weaknesses in the junior curriculum. The participants suggested that a more thorough and considered insight before the implementation process could have mitigated the impact on teacher practice and reduced the guesswork teachers had to endure.

5.12.2. Indirect Impacts

Separate from classroom teaching, the new system impacted these teachers in several ways. The evidence indicates that changes in assessment processes and procedures in the new system have influenced the school's policies at all levels. I reflected that assessment plays a crucial role in schools, providing opportunities for teachers, parents, and students to visually track learning progress and facilitating broader discussions about teaching program effectiveness and improving student outcomes.

According to the evidence, some changes include the way feedback was delivered to students by teachers. For example, in science, the new senior syllabus specifies that teachers cannot provide individualised feedback on assessment drafts to students but can only offer whole-class general feedback. This raised for me ethical concerns as it may provide junior students with a potentially inaccurate view of the senior-level practices. I reflected that this contradicts the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority's (QCAA) claim of

retaining authentic pedagogy, as the assessment no longer serves as an opportunity for students to learn aligned with their needs but becomes a procedural task. This change appeared to be a significant departure from how Queensland teachers have traditionally operated and serves as a prime example of how an externally imposed change can impact the entire teacher population and their pedagogical practice.

5.12.3. Summary

Throughout the analysis, a recurring theme emerged - the increased teaching workload, even though it was not explicitly stated. The range of factors discussed, including task completion and management, significantly impacted teachers' daily routines. This heightened workload was particularly evident in tasks such as creating new learning opportunities and assessment pieces, which had to be managed alongside existing responsibilities, resulting in a perceived intensification of their daily practices.

The evidence suggested that the implementation of the new system created numerous opportunities for professional dialogue, a valuable avenue for learning. However, the simultaneous requirement for teachers to navigate the new senior system while adjusting the existing junior system was a significant source of stress. Teachers voiced concerns about differences in terminology and the need to interpret both curricula, further complicating their roles. It was evident from the data that better preparation and insight before the implementation process could have mitigated the impact on teacher practices and reduced the guesswork teachers had to contend with.

Beyond classroom teaching, the new system also had various effects on teachers, including alterations to assessment processes and procedures that influenced school policies at all levels.

5.13. Theme Seven: External Pressures.

When identifying factors considered to impact teachers' pedagogical practice, the participants raised factors that relate to external pressures. These factors were disconnections and mistrust, a suitable implementation plan, and communication. These are discussed in the following sections.

5.13.1. Disconnection and Mistrust

The evidence consistently highlights a primary concern: the disconnection between the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) and the school. The research regarding externally imposed change suggests that the disconnection between schools and the governing body may emerge as a significant impact on teacher practice. Participants in the study identified that the traditional relationship between the governing body and the school was affected by a lack of clear communication between the two. There seemed to be limited communication between the QCAA and the wider school sector, resulting in mistrust and misconceptions regarding past initiatives.

Research by Barsade et al. (2018), Judge et al. (1999), Piderit (2000), and Rains (2013) has shown that imposed change from a large governing body requires maximum support, or it will face resistance from the organisation and its members. Establishing mutual trust was crucial, with a dedicated focus on reinforcing relational interactions between the system and the organisation leading up to the implementation. The evidence suggests that preconceived ideas held by participants, based on prior experiences with other imposed changes, limited the initial conceptualisation of the imposed change. Much of the stress on teachers appears to have originated from mistrust in the governing body and the lack of a shared vision, making it challenging for participants to understand the "why" behind the imposed change and generate maximum engagement.

5.13.2. Implementation Plan

The implementation plan utilised by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) was a notable aspect in the evidence worth discussing. The new system was uniformly implemented across all subject areas. Participants' accounts reflected a sense of urgency to acquire the knowledge and skills for successful adaptation to the new system, with a primary focus on ensuring that their pedagogical practices effectively prepared the first students engaging with the new syllabus.

Participants expressed confusion regarding why the QCAA did not use stages of implementation to mitigate stress and negative impacts on schools. One participant noted that past changes, such as the junior curriculum, had been implemented in phases, and they considered this approach effective. It was described as "even more puzzling" why a similar strategy was not employed for the current change. One potential consideration conflicting with the participants' sentiments could have been how to transition the first student cohort through a hybrid system, with some subjects following the old syllabus and some following the new, while still arriving at a consistent calculation for tertiary entrance.

During the Implementation phase, the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) published comparison tables for tertiary course entry in their university guide for students. Additionally, the ATAR calculation had been used in Queensland previously to distinguish between higher Overall Position students. The implementation phase emerged as a major failing of the new system concerning its impact on teacher conceptualisation. Much stress could potentially have been avoided with a more thoughtful and effectively executed plan.

5.13.3. Communication

A major concern emphasised by participants was the perceived lack of communication regarding how the new system would integrate into the current structure of

the school year. Participants expressed frustration with the new system impacting not only their direct classroom practice but also with confusion about how to operate within the boundaries of the new school year. For example, the last date for Confirmation being in August of the students' final year of study led to stress about fitting four units of work into the current calendar. This resulted in starting Unit Three in the latter part of Year 11, which the participants found illogical and suggested reducing time spent on foundational knowledge in Units 1 and 2.

The evidence suggested that the QCAA did not effectively communicate how schools should structure the curriculum within the school's calendar, impacting the cultural restraints in which the organisation operated. Communication issues extended to yearly administrative tasks, such as reporting timelines, challenging the school year, and forcing adjustments to embedded structures and processes.

The evidence showed that the school's reporting timelines were adjusted to limit the impact, but unintended consequences arose. For instance, moving the start of Unit 3 to the beginning of Term 4 in Year 11 led to anxiety among participants due to challenges in reliable reporting during that term. Health teachers explained the pressure caused by teaching content before administering Internal Assessment One at the start of Term 1, followed by a 6-week break, requiring reteaching upon students' return. The lack of clarity from the QCAA regarding best practices for the new system led to confusion for teachers on how to implement the best pedagogical practices for students.

I reflected that traditionally, Queensland schools operated on a semester-based system with deadline dates aligned with 10-week terms, a system in place for almost 50 years. Schools had developed cultures around this structure, including events like the Year 11 cohort transition into senior school and Year 12 school leadership ceremonies. Year 12

traditions like retreats, formals, and academic award ceremonies also fit into this established calendar. Furthermore, Chapter two underscored the fundamental importance of high-quality communication in any reform initiative. Various studies, including Morgan (2006) and Putnam and Pacacnowsky (1983) had highlighted that organisations are composed of diverse personalities, each bringing their own stories and artifacts to the workplace. Individuals react in unpredictable ways, drawing on unconscious historical data to negotiate their work. Furthermore, organisations evolve and respond to external environments, making each unique in culture and operation.

5.13.4. Mismatch of Timelines

As participants reported the considerable stress caused by the “unrealistic” timelines of the new system, it became necessary to delve into the impact on teachers in more detail. The new system prescribed the number of hours needed to teach the content of the new syllabus. Additionally, all syllabi had the same deadlines for Confirmation, Endorsement, and External examinations. Given the diverse needs of each subject area, each teacher was affected differently due to this highly structured process.

As highlighted in Chapter two, Mathematics and Science subjects assess all content from Units 3 and 4 within Internal Assessments 1, 2, and 3, accounting for 50% of all marks available for the course. This must be submitted to the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) for Confirmation by halfway through Term 3 of the student's final year, necessitating the delivery of all content by this date. The external examination for these subjects covers all content from Units 3 and 4, constituting the remaining 50% of available marks. In contrast, English subjects must assess all content except Topic 2 of Unit 4 by the final Confirmation date, accounting for 75% of all marks available. The English external examination then focuses purely on Topic 2, covering the other 25% of marks. The

participants expressed concerns that this structure had an unfair and inconsistent impact on teacher practice and on students.

Participants described how Mathematics and Science teachers must meet their notational hours in a shorter timeframe than English teachers, which they deemed unfair to students. In the participants' own words, the QCAA was "trying to fit a square peg in a round hole". Even the Health Department found the "one-size-fits-all" model frustrating when the assessment demands varied widely across subject areas. This lack of understanding from the QCAA impacted teachers' pedagogical practice as they attempt to navigate the change effectively for their students.

5.13.5. Summary

The external factors impacting teachers' pedagogical practice were evident in the participants' responses. The evidence indicated that the primary concern was the disconnection between the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) and the school, leading to communication issues during the infancy of the imposed change. Participants entered the process with preconceived ideas based on past experiences with imposed changes in Queensland, initially limiting their conceptualisation of the new changes. Teachers experienced stress due to a lack of trust in the QCAA and a shared vision explaining the reasons for these changes.

The implementation of the new system presented significant challenges, further contributing to teacher confusion. A major issue highlighted was the perceived lack of communication regarding how the new system would fit into the school year, creating uncertainty for teachers. Participants also implied that the QCAA did not offer clear guidance on the best teaching practices for the new system. To address these issues, it was suggested that improved communication, a shared vision, and a more thoughtful plan were needed to ensure the successful integration of the new system at the school.

5.14. Chapter summary

This study uncovered a complex interplay of factors influencing teachers' pedagogical practices because of an imposed change and a profound impact on their daily routines. While positive outcomes such as teacher and school renewal, were evident, teachers exhibited apprehension primarily rooted in long time periods between changes in the system causing discomfort. Effective leadership, particularly demonstrated by Heads of Departments, played a crucial role in navigating the transition while prioritising teacher well-being. Though stress levels were initially high, strategic management empowered teachers to explore new pedagogies, and gradually step outside their comfort zones.

Changes in assessment processes, initially met with scepticism due to poor communication by the assessment authority, eventually revealed hidden benefits. In addition, the introduction of external examinations posed a conflicting shift in pedagogical practices. Professional development emerged as pivotal, but its effectiveness varied, underscoring the need for tailored support. The study highlighted the importance of clear communication and alignment between educational authorities and schools to address teacher concerns about trust and vision.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This qualitative case study used an interpretivist lens to capture a phenomenological example of imposed change in education systems. The study comprehensively examined the impact of an externally imposed change to Queensland's senior education system on teachers' pedagogical practice. The study's findings provide a comprehensive understanding of the research question:

What emerges as the impact of an externally imposed change on teachers' pedagogical practice in a Queensland secondary school?

Chapter five meticulously explored various factors that emerged as significant to the research project. From these factors, a number of themes surfaced to enable the researcher to make meaning of data within the theme. Each theme exists within an interwoven web of components, providing a comprehensive understanding of how externally imposed change impacts teachers' pedagogical practice. This chapter revisits the study's context, focusing on the substantive change to Queensland's education system. It then discusses the conceptual understanding, the theoretical and contextual interpretations, and practical recommendations based on the study's findings, which are directly applicable to the field of education. Following this discussion, this chapter discusses some limitations to the study's conclusions and makes recommendations for further research.

6.1. Revisiting the Context of the Study

As discussed in Chapter One, Queensland education has a unique history shaped by influential reports guiding its evolution over several decades. Kelly (2014) highlighted four significant reports from the 1970s to the 1990s: the Radford, the ROSBA, the Pitman, and the Vivian reports, which defined Queensland education. Each report fundamentally shaped Queensland education at historical points, reflecting and influencing the state's educational policy, values, beliefs, and practices. From the 1990s onwards, Queensland education

appeared content with the influence of the noted reports and, during this time, made only minor changes to how senior education was enacted.

During the 2010s, a review of Queensland senior education began, prompted by concerns over declining academic performance among students compared to other states and territories. The review led by Matters and Masters (2014a) argued that societal changes since the last nationwide change necessitated a review despite several minor changes to improve the system (van Vonderen & Langbroek, 2012; Wordsworth et al., 2014). Overall, the review highlighted the need for Queensland education to adapt its senior assessment system to modern education priorities, emphasising broader skills and aligning with national standards (Matters & Masters, 2014a, 2014b). The significant move towards a more standardised curriculum and the reintroduction of external examinations to assess student achievement levels were essential to this study, as was the length of time Queensland teachers had operated without significant change. The contextual understanding produced a valuable viewpoint for examining externally imposed change and how it affects teachers' pedagogical practice.

6.2. Seeking Clarity on the Impact of Imposed Change

The process of undertaking the literature review highlighted that there had been very little research documented on how an externally imposed change to education systems impacts teachers' pedagogical practice. More significantly, while Beare (1983), Elmore (2000), Ingersoll (1994), Newmann (1993), Raelin (2016), Solansky (2008), and Wallace and Priestley (2011) each agreed that change initiatives in schools are often unpredictable, the literature fails to give a definitive viewpoint on the impacts of imposed change in an education setting. This study has enabled such a view. Queensland's unique situation was the ideal catalyst for a significant contribution to understanding the impact of imposed change on teachers' pedagogical practice.

Over the 50 years of teacher-led assessment and a flexible curriculum, the teachers had developed a blend of key principles and embedded practices, which they honed to produce contextualised learning experiences for their students (Matters & Masters, 2014a, 2014b; QCAA, 2010). The reintroduction of external examinations after a 50-year hiatus dramatically changed the landscape in which Queensland teachers operated. This allowed me, as an insider researcher, to view imposed change through a distinctive lens and add value to related literature. The complex nature of change in systems and organisations is dictated by the context in which the change exists and the speed at which it is implemented. For this reason, my case study has produced a rich tapestry of data from a distinctive canvas and provided valuable insight into how imposed change impacts teachers' pedagogical practice.

6.3. Findings Related to the Research Question

The findings from this study, captured in Figure 6.1 reveal that sudden and unplanned implementation plunged teachers into stress and overwhelming demands, creating an environment that teachers perceived as chaotic. A sudden, poorly communicated implementation by the external change agents (QCAA) regarding why the change was needed and how it would be implemented only added to the confusion, stifling understanding and clarity.

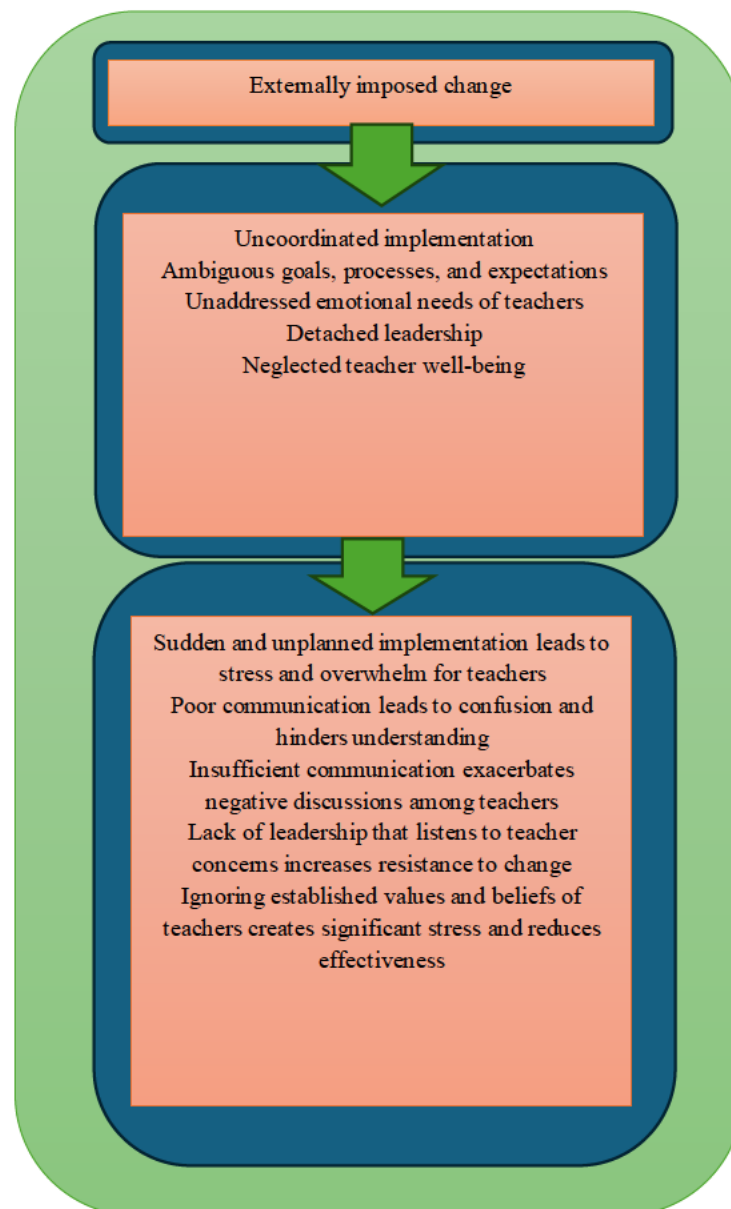
Insufficient communication amplified negative discussions among teachers, fostering discontent and discord. Furthermore, this study has shown that leadership which fails to listen to and address teachers concerns exacerbates resistance to change—ignoring teachers' established values and beliefs not only heightened stress but severely undermined the effectiveness of the implementation process.

My study found that if imposed change is accompanied by uncoordinated implementation, ambiguous goals, unclear processes and expectations, unaddressed teacher needs, detached leadership, and neglected teacher well-being, it can lead to impacts outlined

in Figure 6.1. The following sections outline the impact of each element on teachers, followed by a more in-depth discussion.

Figure 6.1

Visual of the Impact on Teachers' Practice



6.4. Uncoordinated Implementation

6.4.1. Impact on Teacher Practice

The uncoordinated implementation of the new system disrupted teacher practices by affecting how they designed and delivered the curriculum. Teachers experienced increased

workload and resultant stress due to changes needed in learning programs, learning experiences, and timelines. These changes disrupted established work practices that had been created during a period of relative stability. Adjusting long-standing practices was difficult for teachers because of the unintended consequences of the imposed changes. These consequences relied on the goodwill of teachers to juggle numerous issues while ensuring their students received the highest quality teaching possible. Although there were positive opportunities for growth and the renewal of key skills through professional dialogue, these were minimal compared to the additional stress placed on teachers. Table 6.1 show the factors and related impact on teacher practices that are discussed in this section.

Table 6.1

Uncoordinated Implementation Factors and Impacts

Factors	Impact on teacher practice
Change to learning programs, learning experiences, and timelines	Increased workload and stress
Relative stability before imposed change	Disruption of established pedagogical practices
Relying on the goodwill of teachers Unintended consequences	Multiple issues to contend with
Professional dialogue Investigating practice	Professional growth and renewal

6.4.2. Discussion

The most profound feature emulating from this study was the fact that Queensland had not transitioned through a significant imposed change for over fifty years, and this directly impacted the school's readiness for the mandated change. The relative stability in

Queensland's system impacted a series of embedded practices within which teachers operated. My data suggested that over the 50 years of relative status quo, the school studied had developed practices, processes, and procedures that either aimed at preparing students for senior learning or were cultural events systematically placed within the school calendar to limit the impact on teacher practice. The seemingly lack of recognition of these factors by the QCAA resulted in chaos, with teachers and school leaders scrambling to change junior learning programs, learning experiences, and assessment reporting timelines. Furthermore, the more traditional rituals within a school that impact teacher planning, such as formals and graduation ceremonies, had to be strategically moved to cater to the new system's mandates.

Through limited coordination in the implementation, Queensland's system was placed in a situation where change caused unintended consequences that were not immediately obvious. My research indicated that these unintended consequences need consideration when timing the implementation of the imposed change. Until now, the literature on the change theory has only alluded to the unpredictable nature of imposed change, ranging from early work by Beare (1983) to more recent writing by Raelin (2016). However, my study has allowed a more complete view of the unprecedented reactions at a teacher level. In the context of this research study, the implementation phase relied too heavily on the goodwill of teachers to ensure that disruptions had a minimal effect on student learning. Teachers were left to juggle the many issues while ensuring students had the most significant opportunity for success.

Exploring the unintended consequences of uncoordinated implementation provided valuable insight that significantly contributes to educational research. School leaders should consider the contextual complexities revealed due to the diverse experiences of the participants. The literature in Chapter two showed that every school brings together individuals whose collective values and beliefs create unique environments where imposed

change occurs (Hatch & Yanow, 2009; Kendall & Kendall, 2012; Putnam & Pacacnowsky, 1983; Putnam & Borko, 2000; Venables, 2018). The school in this study had a unique blend of personalities and experiences, which produced a singular narrative of the imposed change. Due to the many contingencies, it was challenging to coordinate the implementation fully. The surfacing of this understanding highlights the intricate dynamics involved in implementing unanticipated mandated change; my discussion should aid future researchers in comprehending the multifaceted nature of educational reform and its contextual relevance.

The data also revealed some impacts of imposed change that can be positive. Implementing the imposed change required teachers to renew their critical skills and competencies. Previously, the school and teachers had enacted their business within a system they knew well, they were comfortable and complacent within their practice, for example, using the same assessment pieces each year and lacking planning after years of teaching the same content and skills. Introducing the new system forced a conversation about teaching practice, and teachers started investigating alternative views on education. Having a school environment where teachers can take risks is crucial in supporting these conversations for change, as illustrated in Chapter two (Butler et al., 2004; Conway, 2009; Eaker et al., 2020). From the outset of the implementation, and due to the culture of the school allowing this to occur, the teachers felt safe conversing and critiquing teaching and learning. They were determined to identify the critical teaching and learning strategies now required for their students' success, often putting aside past pedagogical practice as they coordinated their efforts. I considered this a positive unintended consequence of the implementation phase of the mandated change.

6.5. Ambiguous Goals, Processes, and Expectations

6.5.1. *Impact on Teacher Practice*

The ambiguous nature of the imposed change's goals, processes, and expectations impacted teacher practices, challenging their core values as educators. Teachers lost a sense of flexibility and autonomy in their practice due to increased rigidity in the curriculum and assessment. The new rigour of the syllabus required teachers to find new ways to prepare their students, unlike anything they had previously experienced. Part of the confusion stemmed from the need to prepare students for an external exam component as this preparation required teachers to be experts in all curriculum areas despite challenges related to the availability of specialised teachers within the school and to the timetable structure. Furthermore, the lack of clarity about the reasons for the change added to the confusion and ambiguity as teachers negotiated and conceptualised the change. This compromised their professional values and the trust between themselves and key stakeholders. Table 6.2 shows the factors and related impacts on teacher practices discussed in this section.

Table 6.2

Ambiguous Goals, Processes, and Expectations Factors and Impacts

Factors	Impact on teacher practice
Change to core values and beliefs	Loss of flexibility and autonomy
Increased rigidity in curriculum and assessment	Loss of confidence
Rigorous syllabus content	Confusion and ambiguity
Preparation for external examinations	Challenged professional values and trust
Lack of clarity and reassurance	
Changes to assessment processes	

6.5.2. Discussion

Queensland education's core principles, values, and beliefs about teaching, learning, and curriculum have been challenged by the core structures of the new system, which had been developed over a lengthy period of little change. Queensland education's identity had been founded on a flexible approach where schools had a degree of autonomy when designing their learning programs and assessment experiences (Allen, 2012; Matters & Masters, 2014b; Maxwell & Cumming, 2011). This had been developed over many years and was deemed necessary as Queensland schools operate in situations that range from metropolitan to regional and then remote locations, where students' priorities vary depending on the community's needs. My research project has identified how the new system failed to address these embedded principles. The ambiguity in goals, processes, and expectations created confusion as teachers tried to conceptualise the mandated change.

One central principle was the loss of contextual sensitivity due to centralised external examinations that required a new inflexible syllabus. The nature of statewide examinations dictated that all students should learn the same content and be assessed similarly (Corcoran & Silander, 2009; Eacott & Holmes, 2010). In addition, this notion demanded specialised teachers in all schools who could deliver the content with rigour and confidence. Furthermore, the content had to be strictly the same, with no room for contextual understanding, which had previously addressed the needs of Queensland's diverse regions (Eacott & Holmes, 2010). This study highlighted that this implication was not clear to the teachers. Also, the change provided a challenge common in regional Queensland, that is, the difficulty in employment attraction for specialised teachers. In the past, it resulted in many teachers working outside their subject areas and in a "gap-filling" process in areas such as Physics and Specialist Mathematics. The response to this "gap" highlighted the integrity of Queensland teachers who ensured the success of their students despite teaching outside of

their areas by adapting their programs and assessments to their strengths to ensure students got the best outcome. However, the new system removed this flexibility, and this school, like other regional schools, struggled to fill these “gaps” and ensure students were thoroughly prepared for the external examinations.

Another finding from my study was the change to assessment processes that brought a positive yet new challenge for teachers. For the case study school, after 50 years of little change, Queensland teachers had developed negative beliefs regarding the preceding QCE system. There were many concerns regarding mistrust around how the assessment was modified using a regional panel. Factors such as preconceived ideas about local schools and the existing competitive nature were emphasised as problems that needed to be fixed. When assessment processes are treated with distrust and suspicion of unethical behaviour, it goes against the professional values of the teaching profession. Most participants in this study indicated that they felt the new processes for Confirmation and Endorsement aligned more with their need for the system to be fairer in how it operated.

The new process continues to align with the basic principles of Queensland education, where school-based assessments are teacher-designed and administrated, and results are regulated through external moderation processes. The improvements focused on fairness for students and the anonymous nature of school submissions. This change alleviated teachers' concerns about potential biases based on the school's reputation while ensuring that the established practices of Queensland education regarding internal assessments were maintained. However, a downside to this process is that students' work is now judged on individual assessments rather than on a portfolio of six assessments from the year. This shift challenges Queensland education's traditionally flexible approach, where students could recover from a poor performance on one assessment without being significantly disadvantaged. Whether this change is beneficial or detrimental is a critical issue for

Queensland teachers, as the misalignment between their core values and the new processes has proven challenging for their practice.

6.6. Unaddressed Emotional Needs of Teachers

6.6.1. *Impact on Teacher Practice*

The unaddressed emotional needs of teachers as participants in this study significantly impacted their practice, generating feelings of being overwhelmed and neglected by leadership. Although the school leaders attempted to implement strategies to support teachers, they failed to move beyond a surface-level approach and address the emotional needs of the individuals. This led to teachers feeling isolated in their attempts to conceptualise the change. The nature of the change elicited diverse reactions among teachers, which the leadership struggled to manage. This resulted in the lack of an empathetic and compassionate environment for teachers to implement the change. Table 6.3 identifies the key factors and resulting impacts on teacher practices discussed in this section.

Table 6.3

Unaddressed Teacher Needs, Factors, and Impacts

Factors	Impact on teacher practice
Surface-level professional development	Unaddressed feelings of overwhelm and stress
Insufficient support	Struggled to adapt their practice
Challenge to manage teacher reactions to the change	Lack of empathetic and compassionate environment and feelings of being undervalued
Unaddressed emotional needs	Lack of trust and confidence in leadership driving the change, generating feelings of isolation

6.6.2. Discussion

School leaders in this study implemented several surface-level strategies to manage the change; however, they ultimately failed to address the emotional needs of their teachers. The deputy principals tackled the new system by arranging professional development, working with universities to fill knowledge gaps, strategically scheduling teachers to reduce stress, and giving teachers planning time by releasing them from classes. However, it was found that these strategies failed to reduce anxiety and stress levels among teachers, preventing them from operating effectively across all facets of school life.

Various factors have influenced the school leaders' ability to enact the change and have impacted teachers' pedagogical practice. The literature in Chapter two demonstrated that school leaders need to recognise the numerous diverse realities teachers bring to their profession (Meirink et al., 2009; Wallace & Priestley, 2011). For Queensland, these had resulted in values, principles, and beliefs that teachers used to construct the meaning of education within their context. Combined with the significant time between major changes, it created an environment where the school leaders were challenged to manage the many different reactions on a teacher level. Authors such as Chatalalsingh and Reeves (2014) and Jansen (2008) discussed that situational awareness is crucial for leaders to exhibit during imposed change. My study shows a practical example of situational leadership but also reveals that teachers do not feel adequately supported when leaders focus too much on management and processes. There must be a greater emphasis on creating an empathetic and compassionate teacher environment, one that addresses the emotional aspect of imposed change. Teachers are the drivers of change, and their needs should not be overlooked.

6.7. Detached Leadership

6.7.1. *Impacts on Teacher Practice*

Due to the structures and boundaries within which the leaders (the deputy principals) of this study operated, there was a perceived lack of understanding of the impact of change on teachers. The perceived detachment of the deputy principals negatively impacted teachers. The detachment arose because while the deputy principals struggled to implement the imposed change while managing the various teacher reactions, not being involved at the “chalkface”, led to developing a culture of suspicion and distrust as the leaders implemented the change. The fact that the deputy principals did not teach any classes detached them from the direct impact of the change and, as such challenged their ability to relate to the change at the classroom level. This detachment generated feelings of disconnection, frustration, and confusion among teachers. Consequently, there was an inability to create a shared vision, which hindered the school's ability to negotiate the imposed change. Table 6.4 shows the factors and resulting impacts discussed in this section.

Table 6.4

Detached Leadership Factors and Impacts

Factors	Impact on teacher practice
Perceived lack of understanding by the deputy principals	An environment of suspicion and distrust
Lack of a shared vision	A culture not suitable for reform
Lack of transparency and clarity	Feelings of disconnection, frustration, and confusion
Structures and processes within the school	Low confidence Lack of direction

6.7.2. Discussion

An essential factor that surfaced during my study was the non-teaching role of the deputy principals. My findings indicated that those leading the change did not have current hands-on classroom experience, and so a perceived lack of understanding about the impact of the stress felt by teachers. During imposed change, it is typical for the rhetoric between teachers to be around the lack of lived experience by the people implementing the change. Crowther (2009, 2010, 2011) discussed the need for a shared vision between teachers and leaders regarding the imposed change which creates a sense of unity which is essential to developing a culture conducive to reform. Teachers want to know that any introduction of theory-based concepts works in a practical environment. This study showed that this was challenging to achieve in the target school since the people leading the change were not actively involved. Creating a shared vision proved challenging when the leaders were seen as exempt from the many impacts of the mandated change.

My study has shown that if the people making decisions that impact a teacher's pedagogical practice are not implementing the changes directly in their own classroom, they are often viewed with suspicion by those immersed in the daily operations. The fact that the deputies in this school did not teach a class, nor did they actively generate shared leadership of the process, created a lack of transparency and understanding of how decisions were being formulated. This is an example of how the deputies struggled to manage the change due to the internal structures they worked within, and a fixed mindset related to leadership. The work expectations of deputies were too demanding and poorly resourced, which made taking a class an impossible addition to their duties; however, they still "directed" implementation.

The narrative around the leaders has highlighted gaps in leadership theory related to human resource management, which the research suggests has added to the impact on teacher practice. Chapter two presented much research on motivational theory (see Flannery, 2017;

Gagné & Deci, 2005; Gronn, 1995; Ng, 2018; Patricia, 2007; Ryan & Deci, 2017). This research discussed concepts such as leaders needing to identify what teachers are motivated by and using this to act positively within the organisation. Further, the literature on change theory discusses the need for charismatic individuals to understand and lead the change and ensure teachers are empowered (Ryan & Deci, 2017). What has failed to be mentioned in the literature is the need for expert knowledge regarding the intricate details of the change, including the complex context of where it is being implemented. Leaders need to be able to use charisma, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Gronn, 1995); however, it is evident that they must also have expert, grounded knowledge regarding the imposed change.

6.8. Neglected Teacher Wellbeing

6.8.1. Impact on Teacher Practice

Teachers' well-being was impacted on many levels as they conceptualised the imposed change. Struggling to adapt to the sudden change, they operated with a perceived lack of confidence and competence in their practice. This affected their self-efficacy as they engaged in unhelpful dialogue to support each other through the change. A loss of the supportive culture undermined the informal meetings and reliance on peer reassurance due to the many nuances of the imposed change. This manifested as resistance and commentary about the lack of timely communication and the need for deeper clarification on why the change was necessary (the lack of a shared vision). Table 6.5 shows the factors and impacts of neglected teacher well-being, which are discussed in the next section.

Table 6.5*Neglected Teacher Well-being Factors and Impacts*

Factors	Impact on teacher practice
Struggling to adapt to the new system	Threat to wellbeing
Sudden change	Loss of sense of confidence and competence
Unhelpful dialogue during informal meetings	Loss of supportive culture
Dependence on peer reassurance	
Lack of communication	Confusion and resistance
Need for deeper clarification	

6.8.2. Discussion

The significant time between major changes in Queensland's education system threatened teachers' well-being, particularly those who had spent their entire careers within the preceding system. These teachers had developed a collective meaning regarding their practice, embedding specific values and beliefs, and defining their professional self – their self-efficacy. The imposed change disrupted this established mindset, leading to stress and feeling overwhelmed as they struggled to adapt. My evidence showed that experienced teachers felt confident and competent within the old system, mentoring new teachers and embodying Queensland's educational values. However, the new system challenged this confidence, resulting in teachers doubting their ability to deliver effective learning experiences. This loss of confidence was exacerbated by unhelpful organisational dialogue, where teachers fuelled each other's concerns. This notion concurred with Venables (2018), who highlighted the negative impact of informal “Parking Lot Meetings” which spread harmful effects and confusion among teachers. However, this study has shown that, if left

unattended, this aspect of school culture disrupts teacher well-being and harms the change process. If teachers' well-being is not taken seriously, they will look to each other for reassurance of their feelings. They will develop a culture where the mentality becomes “them versus us”, thus negatively impacting the organisation.

The lack of communication between the QCAA and teachers was a critical factor in this confusion. The participants felt that deeper clarification was necessary to justify why a long-standing system required a major overhaul. Ultimately, the combination of Queensland's educational nuances and the collective understanding of teachers created a pivotal identity that psychologically resisted the imposed change. Literature on imposed change emphasises the importance of clear communication for understanding between change agents and recipients (Bartunek et al., 2006; Bolman & Deal, 2021). This study illustrated how ineffective communication and the lack of a clear implementation plan, leaving it to the school and the teachers to work out, negatively impacted teacher well-being. Furthermore, this supports theories by Wallace and Priestley (2011) and Leat et al. (2006) that successful change requires challenging beliefs and making sense of new practices through reflection on lived experiences. The new system's implementation fell short of these ideals, highlighting the crucial role of communication and practical support in managing educational change and protecting teacher well-being.

6.9. Summary of Findings

This section has provided an insight into the impact on teachers' pedagogical practice of sudden and unplanned change. Factors ranging from insufficient communication to neglected teacher well-being bring confusion and stress to teachers trying to implement the change. In addition, this has demonstrated a range of components that should be avoided when implementing imposed change, as they have negative outcomes for teaching and learning within schools. Using the findings from this study, the next section outlines some

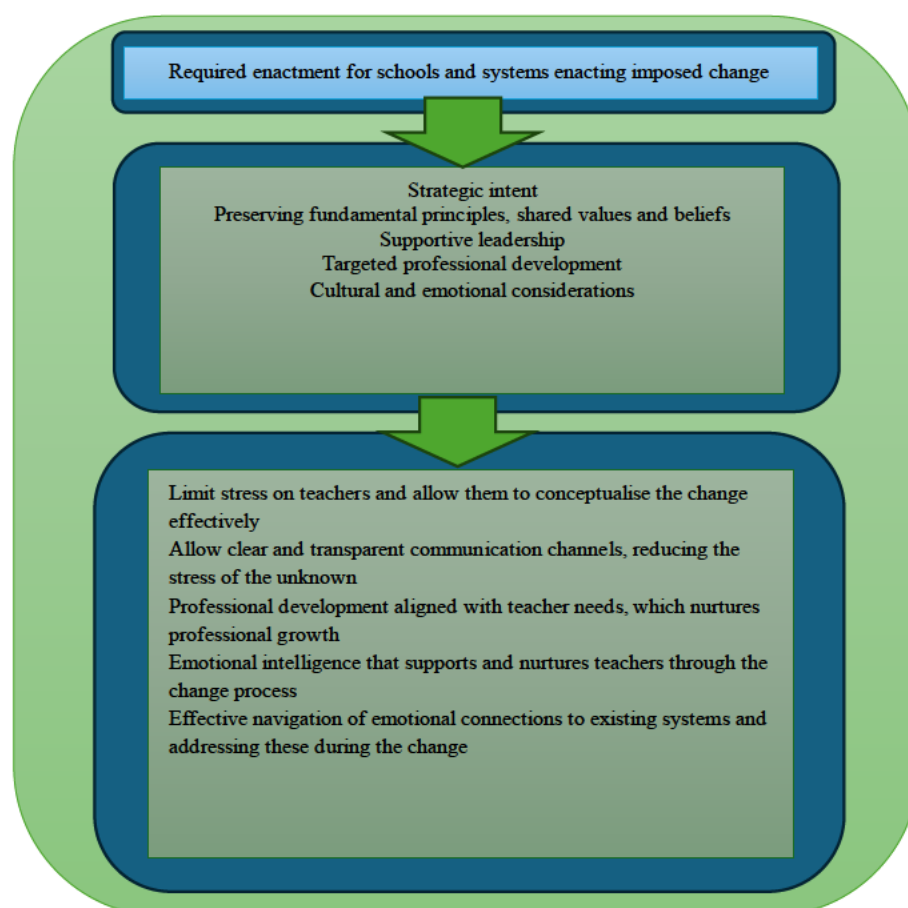
key areas that the external change agents need to consider when implementing change so the impact on teachers' pedagogical practice improves educational outcomes.

6.10. Contributions to Knowledge and Practical Application

The study has revealed much about the impact of externally imposed change in schools and can identify some key areas that must be considered when implementing mandated change. Figure 6.2 identifies how the study's findings can be applied to the literature and to practice.

Figure 6.2

Practical Application for Enacting Imposed Change



While this study acknowledges that imposed change is generally a reality for schools, Figure 6.2 shows the system and school response needed to negotiate inevitable imposed change. This suggests that five major influencers could limit the negative impact of imposed

change on teacher practice and emphasises the outcome of following such an approach. The critical aspects of managing change are strategic intent, preserving fundamental principles, shared values and beliefs, supportive leadership, targeted professional development, and cultural and emotional considerations. The following discussion outlines areas for consideration and identifies areas that contribute to the field of knowledge regarding externally imposed change in schools.

6.11. Strategic Intent

6.11.1. Overview

Using strategic intent when implementing imposed change is fundamental to limiting the stress felt by teachers, allowing them to conceptualise the change effectively and establish a shared understanding of purpose. Policymakers must consider that sudden change-making decisions revolving around large-scale curricula will overwhelm teachers. These decisions should not be made quickly, and the external change agents should challenge their assumptions regarding the complexities that may arise during the implementation phase. The external change agents should not view educational policy as a rigid model but must consider each organisation's strengths and weaknesses so they can adapt the change to suit the context. The external change agents must harness teachers' key skills and competencies to implement the change. Table 6.6 identifies the key factors and their predicted impacts on teacher practice.

Table 6.6*Strategic Intent Factors and Predicted Impacts*

Factors	Predicted Impacts
External change agents challenging their assumption and considering complexities	More realistic and effective educational reforms catering for the diversity of teachers
Policymakers considering the stress of sudden changes	Smoother transitions and reduced stress for teachers
Policymakers and educational leaders avoiding a one-size-fits-all model	Reforms are tailored to specific contexts, leading to more effective and sustainable changes
External change agents having more foresight	Reduced chaos and unintended circumstances
External change agents focusing on harnessing teachers' skills and competencies	Enhances the effectiveness of reforms and improves the overall educational outcomes

6.11.2. Discussion

The teachers in this study strived to make meaning of the change while maintaining the status quo for the students who were not directly impacted. They struggled to piece together fragments of understanding and link these to their context. This was a key finding in my study, which is absent from the literature. A plausible explanation is that this resulted in response to the abrupt shift from a highly flexible system, with optional curriculum components, to standardised, linear learning programs—a unique aspect of this study. Teachers although stressed and overwhelmed by the nature of the change, were left to “make it work for the students” in their care. The impact on teacher well-being should be considered by policymakers when making decisions about large-scale curricula reform. Policymakers should be aware of the impact on teachers and put in place appropriate resources and realistic timeframes that enable change implementation to be more effectively managed.

My study has highlighted the need for external change agents to challenge their assumptions about “reform” and consider the complexities that may arise when implementing imposed change. The lesson learnt substantially contributes to the educational field as it moves away from the traditional two-dimensional view of educational reform and towards a more pragmatic approach. This has demonstrated that trying to bring a standardised curriculum to complex organisations can lead to unpredictable reactions at the teacher level. Traditionally, the implementation of educational reform has focused on generating “buy-in” by promoting the benefits and focusing on knowledge construction for teachers based on processes and procedures (ACARA, 2012a, 2012b). This has added value to the literature on imposed change and found that while the “buy-in” is essential for the success of the reform (Andersen, 2021; Rains, 2013; Sverdlik & Oreg, 2015), it should not be assumed that this is enough for the reform to be successful. This buy-in resulted from teachers doing the “right thing” for students in their care rather than effective leadership direction.

The teachers within this study often called for direction regarding the pedagogical practice as they tried to conceptualise and navigate the change within the chaos and unintended consequences that developed during the first implementation phase. This highlighted the need for policymakers and educational leaders to challenge their assumptions regarding the outcome of the imposed change. This study uncovered that viewing large-scale change through a “one-size-fits-all” model is not ideal. The external change agents must consider the unique contextual factors in complex environments such as educational organisations. The awareness generated from this can shift future reforms from a surface-level perspective on outcomes to a more contingency-driven and dynamic approach to shaping educational landscapes. This will allow for a less chaotic approach for teachers on whom the external change agents rely for the reform to be successful.

This case study provides a unique viewpoint on how mandated educational changes influence teacher practice. While experts such as Bridges (2003) and Lewin (1947) each emphasised individuals' innate desire for stability, my research presents a practical example of how stability interacts with imposed policy changes. The findings emphasise the importance of timing, nature, and scope in educational innovations, demonstrating how a lack of preparation can generate significant stress for teachers. The study demonstrates that Queensland teachers, who were used to established methods, had difficulties when a new assessment system was implemented without strategic planning or appreciation of what was being imposed. The overlap between the old and new systems, where one senior cohort was learning in the old system and one senior cohort was learning in the new system, created a difficult environment where teachers struggled to satisfy their educational standards. This example emphasises the necessity for governments imposing change to foresee and address potential issues.

6.12. Preserving Fundamental Principles, Shared Values, and Beliefs

6.12.1. Overview

Preserving the fundamental principles, values, and beliefs of education systems will lead to a more sustainable and less rigid approach to reform. The external change agents must acknowledge the role of autonomy as the key factor in helping teachers align their core values with new systems. Furthermore, they must ensure that the core values of education systems are maintained and integrated during the implementation phase to increase the likelihood of success. Above all else, the psychological needs of the individuals must be addressed to foster intrinsic motivation and positive engagement. Table 6.7 identifies the key factors and their predicted impacts on teacher practice.

Table 6.7

Preserving Fundamental Principles, Shared Values, and Beliefs Factors and Predicted Impacts

Factors	Predicted impacts
Acknowledge the role of autonomy	Ensures teachers are better equipped to adapt to changes
Ensure core values are integrated	Aligns the new system with existing beliefs and practices, increasing acceptance of the change
Address psychological needs	Enhances motivation and engagement for the change, resulting in sustained adoption of new systems and practices

6.12.2. Discussion

The teachers within this study were presented with a change within the system that did not entirely agree with their values; however, they were still motivated to act positively as an overall moral purpose, that is, ensuring the best outcomes for students in their care determined their practice. It can be theorised that this was due to the embedded autonomy the Queensland system had allowed throughout a period of relative stability. The teachers could take the imposed change and create meaning for the students. The school-based autonomy that teachers had within the Queensland system ensured the success of the imposed change despite the aspects that challenged their ideals. This adds value to the literature on organisational change by taking the understanding further and adding essential understanding. Studies by Limerick et al. (1993) and Flannery (2017) show that when people fulfil their psychological needs of autonomy, competencies, and relatedness, they are more likely to participate in intrinsically motivated behaviours. My evidence gives a further understanding and a pragmatic example of what occurs when these needs are not satisfied.

6.13. Supportive Leadership.

6.13.1. Overview

Supportive leadership should be at the forefront of imposed change in schools. This should come from leaders who aim to bring consistency and balance to individuality within the school's shared vision. The leader should be well-versed in the implication of change and use this knowledge to link the various learning areas across the school through a culture of continuous learning. Furthermore, the leader should investigate the needs of teachers and relevant targeted professional development, which will enhance the adoption of the change. This includes anticipating the emotional response of the teachers using intentional structures and processes aimed at checking in on teacher wellbeing. Table 6.8 identifies the key factors and their predicted impact on teacher practice.

Table 6.8

Supportive Leadership Factors and Predicted Impacts

Factors	Predicted impacts
Using an expert leader	Ensures consistency and coherence in teachers' conceptualisation of the change
Balance individuality with a unified vision	Allowance for teacher individuality reduces confusion and enhances effectiveness
Address emotional responses	Reduces stress and resistance, helping them adapt more quickly to the change
Promote continuous learning	Encourages ongoing professional growth and adaptability, which supports a more resilient and flexible approach to implementing new systems.

6.13.2. Discussion

My data suggest that the absence of a leader who ensured consistency across key learning areas during the implementation phase hindered the reform's success. While the

Heads of Departments oversaw their areas, they were department heads who operated individually due to the diverse needs of each learning area. Further, the deputies shared the responsibility for implementing the new system, which suggests produced a haphazard approach. This gap between the Heads of Departments and deputy principals created a disconnection when implementing the imposed change and an adverse effect on teachers. Each group (leaders, HODs, and teachers) needed to develop a shared understanding through shared leadership. A curriculum expert linking the two teams could have ensured that the commonalities between the departments could have been deduced more effectively. It would have allowed for individualistic learning areas but enabled a consistent pedagogical practice across teachers' practice. Research presented in Chapter two (Crowther, 2009, 2010, 2011; King & Newmann, 2000; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995) demonstrated that both individual and collaborative action are crucial for successful implementation processes. It is also essential to ensure that individuals are invited into a shared vision. This would have addressed one of the more challenging aspects of within schools, where teachers often work in multiple learning areas. If the core pedagogy differs across subject areas, it confuses teachers and students. The need for a person to critically lead teaching and learning would have been a justified approach to implementing the new system.

The research on resistance to change highlighted some fundamental theories that my study has shown through lived experience (Barsade et al., 2018; Piderit, 2000; Rains, 2013). This study has given insight into the importance of a leader using contextual understanding to tailor professional development strategies to enhance teachers' adaptability and efficacy. This involves recognising patterns of resistance and identifying entrenched practices. This has shown that teachers are well-placed to identify the weaknesses of policy that directly impact their daily practice. A more detailed investigation by educational leaders before the implementation phase would enable them to cater to teachers' specific needs. This would

ensure professional development is correctly aligned to the school context, ensuring a more effective and less stressful implementation phase.

Before implementing change, school leaders should assess teachers' abilities to adapt and ensure a culture of continuous learning is in place. Whilst the researched school demonstrated this through a strong pedagogical framework, however, a more flexible approach to classroom instruction could have further supported adaptation. Professional development should move beyond immediate needs, fostering long-term growth and exploring emerging practices, especially during stable periods, to build a foundation for future changes.

Addressing the emotional aspects of change is also crucial. Research, including the Kübler-Ross model (Leybourne, 2016; Mayers-Elder, 2008; Rains, 2013), highlights how emotional responses such as denial, anger, and acceptance can impact adaptation. In Queensland, some teachers had deep connections to the existing system, leading to emotional reactions to the imposed changes. Leaders must acknowledge these feelings and provide support through mentoring, regular check-ins, and strategies that build resilience. This emphasises the importance of stability in preparing for change and the need for school leaders to design professional development that addresses both practical and emotional challenges. Effective leadership involves clear communication, strategic planning, and emotional intelligence to support teachers through the transition. By fostering a shared vision and addressing potential stressors, leaders can facilitate a smoother and more successful implementation of imposed changes.

6.14. Targeted Implementation Strategies

6.14.1. Overview

Targeted implementation strategies should be well thought out and strategically tailored to minimise the negative impact of reforms on teacher practice. Such strategies

include more effectively managed approaches that minimise disruptions in teaching and learning. This would include a more staggered implementation, focusing resources on a few learning areas, making it more manageable for teachers. Furthermore, more effective support structures should be used to adequately support teachers through the change and enhance the students' overall teaching and learning experience. Table 6.9 identifies the key factors and their predicted impacts on teacher practice.

Table 6.9

Targeted Implementation Strategies Factors and Predicted Impacts

Factors	Predicted impacts
Implement professional development strategically	Reduces negative impact on teacher practice, leading to smoother integration
Staggered rollout	Minimise disruptions and reduce overall stress on teachers
Align policies with existing practices	Facilitates a more seamless transition
Effective support structures	Improves teacher's ability to implement new practices effectively
Assess long-term impacts	Reduces stress on teachers and enhances the sustainability of reform

6.14.2. Discussion

Unplanned professional development negatively impacts the successful implementation of imposed changes. While the literature emphasises the importance of professional development in change management (Leat et al., 2006; Priestley et al., 2011; Wallace & Priestley, 2011), my research shows that it must be strategically planned to avoid disruption. In the studied school, professional development sessions led to a negative snowball effect, where teachers were removed from their classes, resulting in stress, and diminishing the quality of teaching and learning.

Furthermore, the work intensification conflicted with teachers' abilities to prioritise their responsibilities, ultimately challenging the fundamental principle of education—serving students. A staggered rollout would have been more effective, allowing for strategic planning and reducing the impact on teachers' practices. This approach would align better with teachers' existing methods and reduce the intrusiveness of the imposed changes. Policymakers, particularly in Queensland, failed to recognise the deeply ingrained instructional methods developed during a period of stability in the senior assessment system. The introduction of external exams was a radical change that did not build upon or complement existing pedagogical practices. A phased implementation, with gradual adjustments and support structures, would have been more effective. This study highlights the need for policymakers to assess the long-term impacts of imposed changes within their situational context and clearly communicate the intent – the need to change. This insight is crucial for designing effective and sustainable educational policies that minimise stress on teachers and enhance teaching and learning outcomes in an unpredictable environment.

6.15. Cultural and Emotional Considerations

6.15.1. Overview

Consideration of the cultural and emotional aspects of organisation is essential for reducing the impact of imposed change on teachers' pedagogical practices. The focus should be on developing a continuous learning culture to foster an environment where teachers feel safe to analyse and adapt their practice. There should be intentional opportunities for teachers to engage in professional dialogue and evaluate their teaching and learning practices. Suppose a successful professional learning community can be established. In that case, it will mean that when imposed change occurs, teachers will have the key skills and competencies needed to negotiate the change successfully. Table 6.10 identifies the key strategies and their predicted outcome on teacher practice.

Table 6.10*Cultural and Emotional Considerations Factors and Predicted Impacts*

Factors	Predicted impacts
Promote a culture of professional learning	Teachers will feel more secure and supported in sharing their practice
Establish a professional learning community	Creates a collaborative environment so teachers can effectively conceptualise the change
Allow autonomy for Heads of Departments and teachers	Fosters creativity and enhances professional satisfaction during change

6.15.2. Discussion

This study highlights the critical importance of a culture of continuous learning in mitigating the negative impact of imposed changes on teachers' pedagogical practices. When introduced to the new QCE system, teachers felt secure in evaluating their current methods and exploring new pedagogical frameworks. This environment fostered a professional learning community where teachers actively engaged in professional dialogue, experimented with new ideas, and reflected on their practice. The school's strong learning culture was evident through initiatives such as regular classroom walkthroughs, a faculty coaching model, data-informed practice, and ongoing professional development. These structures supported teachers as they needed to adapt their practices while maintaining a deep commitment to their students. Teachers demonstrated professionalism and integrity, ensuring that students were not disadvantaged despite the challenges of the new system.

Moreover, creating networks with other schools facilitated sharing best practices, giving teachers autonomy, and fostering a collaborative spirit. This sense of collaboration and willingness to take risks was crucial in helping teachers navigate the imposed changes positively. School leaders play a vital role in cultivating this culture by providing

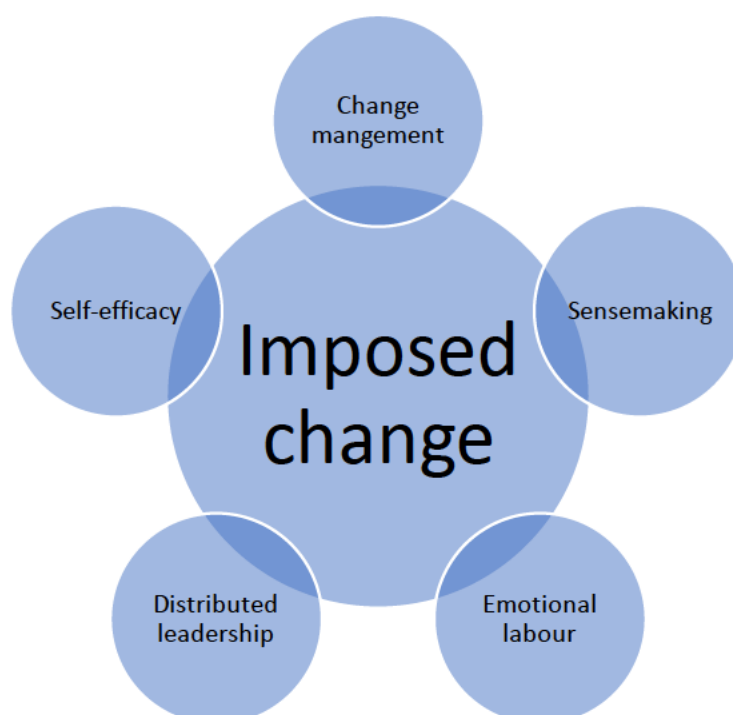
opportunities for teachers to develop the necessary skills and competencies. Recognising teachers' commitment to their students and supporting their professional growth can reduce the stress and anxiety associated with imposed changes, leading to a more positive and productive learning environment.

6.16. Underlying theory

The underlying theory surfacing from this study and contributing to existing discussions on what is needed for imposed change to occur successfully, concludes in five distinct areas, as shown in Figure 6.3 below.

Figure 6.3

Key Components for Successful Imposed Change to Occur



1. **Change management** insists that the imposed change must be effectively communicated between the highest levels of educational institutions to the teachers implementing the change. Effective change management strategies are essential in ensuring sensitivity to schools' unique contexts. This will minimise negative impact while leveraging potential growth opportunities.

2. **Sensemaking** is vital to explaining how ambiguity, lack of alignment with teacher values and inadequate development of an implementation plan can result in a misalignment between all key stakeholders. The implementation plan must ensure a shared commitment to the change process through a collective understanding.
3. **Emotional labour** points to the critical role of compassionate and emotionally responsive leadership. These leaders need to be embedded in the school environment where the change is having the most impact. The leader is in a better position to understand and support the emotional aspects of change, making the transition smoother and more sustainable.
4. **Distributed leadership** is critical in aligning all stakeholders, guiding initiatives from across the school, providing resources, and facilitating targeted professional development. It underscores that successful change in educational settings depends on the leader's ability to connect meaningfully with staff, share a clear vision, and understand the frontline impact of changes.
5. **Self-efficacy** illustrates that successful change requires both individual and collective confidence. Within the school, fostering a culture that enables innovation without the fear of failure allows educators to engage in new initiatives openly and creatively. Without this, imposed changes can erode both self- and collective efficacy, leading to resistance and decreased morale.

6.17. Recommendations

Based on the previous discussion, the study now presents a series of recommendations.

6.17.1. Recommendation One

Educational external change agents and policymakers must consider the complexities when implementing imposed change that has a direct impact on teachers' pedagogical practices.

To address this recommendation, they need to evaluate the context in which the change is being implemented, establish the underlying vital skills and competencies with the teachers enacting the change, and write policies that harness these attributes.

6.17.2. Recommendation Two

Policymakers must intentionally preserve the education system's principles, values, and beliefs to ensure a seamless transition when implementing imposed change.

Preserving these areas is central to an education system's teaching and learning culture and should be strengthened to ensure its effectiveness.

6.17.3. Recommendation Three

Schools must appoint a person with expert knowledge regarding imposed change who bridges the gap between leaders and teachers during the implementation phase.

The appointed person's plan must clearly outline a strategy for implementing the change, including a detailed timeline and communication of key events. By using charisma, warmth, and expert communication, the person can help teachers feel secure and informed by providing a clear collaboratively developed roadmap. The plan should also establish communication channels and address professional development, ensuring teachers are well-prepared and supported throughout the change process.

6.17.4. Recommendation Four

The development of staff should be well thought out and strategically tailored to minimise the negative impact of imposed change on teacher practice.

This can be achieved through more effectively managed approaches to professional development that reduce disruptions in teaching and learning, such as a staggered implementation process. By focusing resources on a select number of learning areas at a time when the imposed change becomes more manageable for teachers, allowing for a smoother transition and more sustainable change.

6.17.5. Recommendation Five

To reduce the impact of imposed change on teachers' pedagogical practices, it is essential to prioritise the cultural and emotional aspects of the organisation.

Developing a continuous learning culture should be a key focus, fostering an environment where teachers feel safe to analyse and adapt their practices. Intentional opportunities should be created for teachers to engage in professional dialogue and critically evaluate their teaching and learning methods. Establishing a successful professional learning community will equip teachers with the key skills and competencies needed to navigate imposed changes effectively.

6.17.6. Summary

These recommendations show that school leaders should nurture a culture of continuous learning in anticipation of externally imposed change. Leaders should intentionally create opportunities for teachers to develop the skills and competencies to negotiate imposed change, construct knowledge, and work collaboratively. Thus, they should create a ready-made environment so that when imposed change occurs, they can positively impact teaching and learning.

6.18. Limitations

The strength of this study is also one of its most significant limitations. While the context allowed a view of a relatively static education system negotiating imposed change on education, I acknowledge the limitations this presents. During the literature review, different

education systems were explored for occurrences of imposed change. This highlighted Queensland education's unique situation, and although it offered an optimum opportunity to gather data in this area, the contextual limitations of the results should be acknowledged. This case study prioritised depth over breadth in that it aimed to develop an understanding of the uniqueness of the situation rather than generalising findings across multiple cases or populations. While this ideographic approach was valuable, it may limit the generalisation of findings to broader situations.

The implemented research methodology should be mentioned, specifically in the amount of research gathered. While data was collected from an adequate number of participants, there is an acknowledgement that these were restricted to only certain subject areas and limited to the experiences at only one school within one sector. This limits the “moment in time” and prompts a more thorough understanding to be gathered using the same methodology within multiple schools and with a full suite of subject areas. This would have solidified the findings through more effective cross-referencing to view whether the experiences were the same across multiple schools, experiencing the exact imposed change.

Furthermore, the study was implemented using an interpretivist perspective, emphasising the importance of understanding social phenomena within Queensland schools. The literature review acknowledged that organisations operate within a complex web of interactions. Every member brings life stories and artifacts that dictate how they respond to daily challenges. The unique experience of everyone informs their actions both consciously and unconsciously, providing dynamics unique to each organisation. Therefore, this acknowledges the subjectivity of human experience as a limitation of its findings. When generalising the results of this study, it is crucial to acknowledge that each organisation operates within its own unique context, shaped by factors such as its culture, leadership style, industry, workforce composition, and historical experiences with change. While patterns and

trends may emerge across multiple organisations, the way individuals within each organisation perceive, respond to, and adapt to imposed changes can vary significantly. Human experience plays a fundamental role in shaping these responses, as employees bring their own perspectives, emotions, and past experiences to the change process. What may appear as a uniform implementation of change on paper can lead to diverse and sometimes unpredictable outcomes in practice. Therefore, any attempt to apply these findings more broadly must take into account the complexities of human behaviour, organisational dynamics, and the potential for different narratives to emerge even under similar conditions.

6.19. Further Research Considerations

Key areas of future research are needed to determine the different factors of externally imposed change and how they impact teachers' pedagogical practices. Given the limited research on how imposed change impacts teachers' practices, there is scope for further research. Recently, the Queensland system conducted its first inquiry into the effectiveness of the new system's syllabus, with the second reiteration of the General syllabus being implemented in January 2025 (QCAA, 2024). Although this is a minor alteration to the current system, it does mean that teachers will revisit the syllabus for the first time since the inception year. It is pertinent to focus further on how teachers respond to implementing imposed change again so soon after going through such a significant change. Furthermore, a deep delve into the lasting impacts on the school including the overall impact on the junior school would be beneficial.

This research focused on an externally imposed change fresh in the participants' memories. They were living and breathing the change, and their emotions were heightened in contrast to when they had gone without significant change for several decades. As the QCAA is refining some of the key aspects of the new senior system, it would be interesting to conduct a longitudinal study that viewed the change through teachers' eyes now that the “dust

has settled”. Caruana et al. (2015) highlighted that longitudinal studies help identify change regarding attitudes, biases, and emotions over time. Further, Vogl (2023) explained that subjective meaning-making is linked to change and continuity over time. This has shown a range of complex factors in which teachers conceptualised the imposed change, and how they reacted was key to its findings. Revisiting the imposed change now that it is more established would give longitudinal data on how it has impacted teacher practice and perhaps offer a more measured understanding.

6.20. Conclusion

Externally imposed change in schools is an inevitable truth. Permeating this study is the story of chaos and unintended consequences that can eventuate when externally imposed change is forced upon schools. This study clearly suggests that there are five factors that underpin externally imposed change whereby it can be enacted more effectively and with less chaos. Through expanding the notion of strategic intent beyond mere policy implementation and compliance to also include teachers’ moral purpose and their core commitment to their profession, teachers will be supported to conceptualise the change in terms of their concrete practice and hence reduce the stress caused by chaos. During imposed change implementation, teachers are often simultaneously balancing it with their other core responsibilities. Leadership structures must prioritise the role of teachers as they are the people that will ensure the mandated change is successful regardless of any ambiguity in policy or unfair expectations in implementation. Furthermore, the preservation of fundamental educational principles, shared values and beliefs must be at the fore, as these are complex entities that impact the overall meaning-making of the change by the teachers. For instance, this study shows that teachers’ moral compasses ensure the success of externally imposed change and more should be done by leaders and external agencies to hone the knowledge and skills of these individuals, and their role should not be taken for granted. This

would take supportive leadership who use emotional intelligence to support and nurture teachers through the change process. They would target professional development so it aligns with the teacher's needs ensuring they can continue to educate the students in the most unintrusive way and relieve them of conflicting stress often coming from a misalignment in the imposed change and their personal values. Above all, the cultural and emotional environment in which the change exists must be effectively navigated by the change agents so that teachers can target their energies in the most practical and effective way for their students.

Teachers are the “soul of schools”, and their pedagogical practice is based on integrity and a willingness to ensure their students' success. Leaders should be aware that much of the stress and anxiety that impact this practice comes from a place of commitment. Teachers will prevail in the face of adversity. When policymakers and school leaders plan for imposed change, they must consider the teacher's intrinsic motivation, which naturally intensifies their work as they negotiate the change in pedagogical practice.

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APPENDIX A

Ethics ETH2020-0018 (HREC): Mr Michael Simpson (Student) (Low risk)

Academic/Researcher	Mr Michael Simpson (Student) Prof Dorothy Andrews A/Pr Joan Conway
Project	The impact of externally imposed change on teachers' pedagogical practice: A Queensland secondary school study
Division	Academic Division
Faculty/Department	Academic Affairs

Ethics application

Key data

Project title

The impact of externally imposed change on teachers' pedagogical practice: A Queensland secondary school study

Principal Investigator

☐

Mr Michael Simpson (Student)

UniSQ ID

[REDACTED]

Person type

Staff

Organisational area

Faculty of Business, Education, Law and Arts

Other affiliations

Field of Research (FoR)

Co-investigator (UniSQ Staff)

☐

A/Pr Joan Conway

UniSQ ID

[REDACTED]

Person Type:

Staff

Organisational area

School of Education

Other affiliations**Field of Research (FoR)**

390102. Curriculum and pedagogy theory and development; 390305. Professional education and training; 390307. Teacher education and professional development of educators; 390403. Educational administration, management and leadership;

Co-investigator (UniSQ Student)**Legacy form****Principal Investigator**

Mr Michael Anthony Simpson

Co-Investigator/s

Dorothy Andrews (External)

A/Pr Joan Conway

1 Application Type

1.1 Has this application been reviewed and approved by another Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)? Select 'Yes' if your project has already been approved by a human research ethics committee (HREC) that is not operated by the University of Southern Queensland, (i.e. you wish to register your ethics approval with USQ). Select 'No' if the University of Southern Queensland Human Research Ethics Committee will review and approve your proposed research.

No

1.2 Does this research project involve? Tick all that apply.

Direct recruitment and/or observation of human participants

2 Potential Participant Group

2.1 Women who are pregnant, the human foetus, or human foetal tissue?

No

2.2 Children or young people under the age of 18 years?

No

2.3 People with a cognitive impairment, an intellectual disability, or a mental illness?

No

2.4 People considered to be a forensic or involuntary patient?

No

2.5 People with impaired capacity for communication?

No

2.6 Prisoners or people on parole?

No

2.7 People highly dependent on medical care, including a person who is unconscious?

No

2.8 Military personnel?

No

2.9 Military veterans?

No

2.10 People who would not usually be considered vulnerable but would be considered vulnerable in the context of this project?

No

2.11 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples?

No

2.12 Hospital patients?

No

2.13 People in other countries?

No

2.14 People who would consider English to be their second language?

No

3 Proposed Procedures

3.1 Any physical, psychological, social, economic, and/or legal risks greater than inconvenience or discomfort, in either the short or long term, resulting from participation in, or use of data in this project?

No

3.2 The collection and/or analysis of any biological material obtained from a person (e.g. tissue, blood, urine, sputum, or any derivative of these such as cell lines) in laboratory based research?

No

3.3 Generating, gathering, collecting, conveying or using genomic data, information, or biological materials (such as germline/germ cells or somatic cells) that has hereditary implications and/or is predictive of future health in research involving participants, relatives and other family members?

No

3.4 Research intended to study and/or expose illegal activity?

No

3.5 Radioactive substances and/or ionising radiation? (e.g. DXA, X-ray)

No

3.6 Sensitive and/or contentious issues? (e.g. suicide, eating disorders, body image, trauma, violence, abortion, etc.)

No

3.7 Toxins, mutagens, teratogens or carcinogens?

No

3.8 Deception of participants, concealment or covert observation?

No

3.9 Seeking disclosure of information which may be prejudicial to participants?

No

4 Operational Requirements

4.1 collection or use of information or data from or about USQ Students?

No

4.2 collection or use of information or data from or about USQ Staff?

No

4.3 International travel for data collection purposes?

No

4.4 Collecting data in a rural and remote setting?

No

4.5 The collection, use or disclosure of IDENTIFIABLE personal information (eg, names and contact details on consent forms)

Yes

4.5.1 Will this IDENTIFIABLE information be collected or used WITHOUT the consent or knowledge of the individual whose information is being used?

No

4.6 The collection, use or disclosure of RE-IDENTIFIABLE personal information (eg, when identifying details are replaced by codes, pseudonyms, etc)

Yes

4.6.1 Will this RE-IDENTIFIABLE information be collected or used WITHOUT the consent or knowledge of the individual whose information is being used?

No

4.7 The collection of information by observing participants WITHOUT their knowledge?

No

5 Project Title and Summary

5.1 Project Title

The impact of externally imposed change on teachers' pedagogical practice: A Queensland secondary school study

5.2 Using plain language, provide a succinct description of the background and the potential significance of the research project.

Queensland secondary schools are experiencing the most significant externally imposed change to its senior education system in around 50 years. This change entails the introduction of an external exam component to senior assessment replacing the Overall Position (OP) system with an Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR). The new approach is a significant change to the previous system

which traditionally relied solely on internal school-based assessment to judge student achievement. This research study, conducted in one large secondary school, aims to use a qualitative case study approach to investigate the impact of the externally imposed change on Queensland teachers' pedagogical practice. It is intended that the results will contribute to the current knowledge regarding externally imposed change to education and how it impacts teachers' pedagogical practice. This study may also give a valuable insight into understanding how a Queensland secondary school has received the new senior assessment system.

5.3 Clearly state (a) the project aims; and (b) the research questions and/or hypotheses.

(a) The project aims to view externally imposed change from the viewpoint of teachers and explore the impact(s) on their pedagogical practice. (b) Primary research question: What emerges as the impact of an externally imposed change on teachers' pedagogical practice in a Queensland secondary school? Subsidiary research questions: 1. How have teachers of a Queensland secondary school conceptualised the new QCE system concerning their pedagogical practice? 2. How have the school leaders of a Queensland secondary school conceptualised and prioritised the new QCE system concerning teachers' pedagogical practice? 3. What has contributed to the impact of the new QCE system on teachers' pedagogical practice in a Queensland secondary school?

6 Investigators

6.1 Enter the Academic Organisation Unit (AOU) (six-digit project code) that will be aligned to this project. Search for the AOU by entering a portion of your school or centre (e.g. eng, health, psy, edu, sci) in the text box, then clicking on the magnifying glass. Choose the appropriate AOU code from the list returned and tab out of the text box. Attempt to select AOU that reflect school-level units rather than broader faculty-level units. If the Principal Investigator for this project is NOT affiliated with the University of Southern Queensland, enter 'EXTERNAL'.

Faculty of Bus, Edu, Law, Arts

7 Benefit and Risk

7.1 Outline the benefits to participants and/or to the community as a result of this research being conducted.

The benefits of the study to participants, and/or community, is that it may give insight into understanding how a Queensland secondary school has received the new senior assessment system. Further, it may strengthen teachers' and school leaders' understanding of the areas which impact teacher's pedagogical practice when negotiating externally imposed changes to education.

7.2 Define the risks, in either the short and/or long term, of participation in this project (e.g. physical, psychological, social, economic or legal risks greater than inconvenience or discomfort)

The only potential risk for this study is the commitment of time by the participants for the interviews.

7.3 Are all of these risks outlined in the Participant Information Sheet or within the explanatory statement at the beginning of a data collection instrument, and (where relevant) on the consent form?

Yes

7.4 Outline the arrangements planned to minimise the risks involved in this project.

Strategies which will be used to minimise the risk will be: - Participants able to negotiate a time which is convenient for them to engage in the data collection - The transcript will be shared via email so participants are able to check for misrepresentations at their convenience

7.5 What will you do in cases where unexpected events or emergencies occur as a result of participation in this project? For example, what facilities or services are available to deal with events such as adverse drug reaction, revelation of child abuse, illegal activities, participant becomes distressed during or after data collection.

Due to the nature of the research topic, it is not anticipated that there will be any unexpected events or emergencies

7.6 Is an appropriate list of referral services available within the Participant Information Sheet or explanatory statement?

Not applicable

7.7 Outline the strategies that you have in place to reduce any risks to the researchers.

Strategies which will be used to minimise the risk will be: - Keeping the data collection to a minimum time allocation - Using an external company, Pacific Solutions, to transcribe data collection audio recordings. This will minimise the impact on the principal investigators time commitment

8 Type of Research

8.1 Are you, as the Principal Investigator, a current USQ employee or student?

Yes

8.1.1 Will this project be undertaken predominately in a student capacity?

Yes

8.1.1.1 Program level:

Doctoral

8.1.1.2 Program name:

Doctor of Education

8.1.2 Will this project be undertaken as a USQ Course project?

No

8.2 Type of research - 2 Tick all that apply.

Qualitative

8.2 Type of research - 2 Tick all that apply.

Case study

9 Conflict of Interest

9.1 Do any of the investigators on this project have an actual, perceived, or potential personal or financial conflict of interest in the outcomes of this research, or in any of the organisations involved with, or funding this project?

No

10 Funding

10.1 Has funding been obtained for this project?

No

10.1.1 Are you applying for funding for this project?

No

11 Data Access and Security

11.1 Outline the minimum recommended Research Data storage options (i.e. 1 x primary and 2 x back-up) that you will utilise for the duration of your research project and beyond. Refer to the University's Research Data Management Policy and Research Data Management Procedure to ensure your proposed practice is suitable.

The dataset will be stored primarily on Microsoft OneDrive and on two secondary back-up services (Google Drive and Nextcloud). The data collected will be qualitative in nature from a variety of sources. The data collection will involve focus groups, interviews, document analysis, and observations. There will be a normal amount of data volume including audio recordings, transcripts, and analysis of the data. It is estimated that there will be no cost to the storage of the data since it will be stored on existing devices, authorised by USQ. All data stored will be considered sensitive or confidential and protected accordingly.

11.2 Will any individual or organisation external to the University of Southern Queensland (i.e. a third party) have access to the Research Data during the conduct of this research?

No

11.3 Do you plan to make available (or share) all, or part, of the Research Data via open access, restricted access, mediated access or as metadata only? Note: It is recommended that unless your data can not be shared for ethical, privacy or confidentiality matters, that you incorporate the future use of data in your research design and include a statement within the participant information sheet/explanatory statement to this effect.

No

*11.3.2 Outline the ethical reason/s for why the research data will not be shared or made openly or publicly available. **

The research project relies heavily on participants sharing their thoughts, feelings, and opinions on the said phenomenon. Some of this sharing may be about their superiors or the education system. If the participants know their data is to be shared, this may result in participant anxiety and hinder the quality of their response.

11.4 Are the data access and security arrangements detailed in the Participant Information Sheet or explanatory statement?

Yes

11.5 Will the Research Data be securely retained indefinitely for future use?

No

11.5.2 Outline the process of how the research data will be confidentially disposed after the minimum retention period has elapsed. Note: Different Research Data items may be required to be retained for different retention periods, e.g. general research data versus signed informed consent documentation. Refer to the Queensland Government General Retention and Disposal Schedule (GRDS) for further information.

All data will be deleted after 5 years as outlined by Disposal Authorisation 1047. Further, any signed consent forms will be retained for the minimum retention period of 15 years after project conclusion (Queensland State Archives University Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule (801.2/C111)).

12 Communication of Research Findings to Participants and Dissemination of Project Outputs

12.1 Indicate in which format/s the research findings will be communicated to participants and research outputs disseminated Tick all that apply.

Thesis

12.2 How will the identity of participants be disclosed in the dissemination of research outputs?

non-identifiable data

12.3 Describe how participants and/or other interested stakeholders will be able to access the research findings and/or request a copy of a summary of the results Note: Provision of a theses/dissertation/exegesis to a participant is not considered to be timely and appropriate summary of the research findings or results.

The thesis will be disseminated to all key stakeholders and there is potential for the findings to be published in a research journal. Furthermore, the thesis will be placed on eprints as a digital document for public access. Participants will be able to request a summary of the research results by emailing the researcher directly.

12.4 Will participants be subjected to any physiological or psychological testing during this project?

No

Participant Group Recruitment

PG - How many groups of participants will you be recruiting and/or observing for this research project?

3

G1 - Participant Overview

PG1.1 Participant group 1 working title. (e.g. student focus group; teacher survey)

Curriculum leader focus group and interviews

PG1.2 How many participants are expected to be recruited in this group?

5

PG1.3 Describe who the participants in this group are.

These participants will be a selection of three curriculum leaders at the case study school, for, example, Head of Mathematics, Head of Science, and Head of English, or a similar combination.

PG1.4 Where will this group of participants be recruited from?

The case study school

PG1.5 Are the participants in this group likely to be under 18 years of age?

No

PG1.6 Is there a pre-existing (unequal) relationship between the participants and anyone involved in recruiting and/or collecting data from this group of participants? (e.g. teachers and/or lecturers/students, doctors/patients, employers/employees, etc.)

Yes

PG1.6.1 Describe the nature of the pre-existing relationship and whom this involves.

The principal investigator will be a teacher of the case study school; therefore, there is potential for them to be collecting data from their direct line managers.

PG1.6.2 Outline what special precautions have been implemented to preserve the rights of those participants who decline to take part or withdraw from the research once the project has begun.

The participants have a choice to partake in the project therefore there is no issue for the preservation of rights in this scenario. In the case of interviews, if someone withdraws from the study once it has begun, then they will have the choice as to whether they would still like to contribute any of the preexisting data collected until this point. If they choose not to contribute any prior data then it will be immediately destroyed. The option for withdrawing data does not include the focus groups due to the complexities involving the combination of multiple participant responses.

PG1.7 Do these participants have any cultural needs? (e.g., specific consent arrangements or sensitivities, etc.)

No

G1 - Recruitment Method

PG1.8 Do you have any criteria for the selection, inclusion or exclusion of participants for this group to take part in the research? (e.g. minimum age requirements)

Yes

PG1.8.1 Describe the criteria for selection, inclusion or exclusion and outline why you require this for your research design.

Focus group 1 - Must be a Head of Department implementing the new QCE system in the case study school
Focus group 2 - Must have participated in focus group 1
Interviews - Must have participated in focus group 1

PG1.9 Indicate which method/s you will use to recruit these participants:

Participants approached in person by research team

PG1.9 Indicate which method/s you will use to recruit these participants:

Email

PG1.10 Indicate how you will obtain the contact details of these participants.

From the participants themselves

PG1.11 Explain who will invite these participants to be involved in this project.

The principal investigator will arrange an unconnected person, such as a school administrator, to disseminate invitations to participate. This will help mitigate against risk of concern.

PG1.12 Will you be offering payment or any other incentives to this group of participants?

No

G1 - Data Collection Methods

PG1.13 Will you collect data via questionnaires / surveys?

No

PG1.14 Will you collect data via interviews or focus groups?

Yes

PG1.14.1 Provide further detail about the interviews or focus groups, including: how many sessions will be held; where and at approximately what time (or timeframe) will the sessions be held; who will be present from the research team; how many participants will be present at each session; who will conduct or facilitate the session; will there be a debriefing process (and if yes, what will this involve)? Attach a copy of your interview or focus group questions (if known) or broad topics in the document upload section.

Focus Group x 2 There will be two focus groups between the participants and the principal investigator. It will occur at an agreed location and time, indicated by the participants, at the beginning (before phase 1) and end of the study (during phase 3). The approximate time for the meeting will be 20-30 minutes. The aim for the first focus group will be to expand the set parameters of the study and challenge the principal investigator's assumptions before entering phase one of the data collection. The aim for the second will be the clarification of any emerging factors from the preceding data collection phases. Interviews - 1 x Semi-structured interviews - During phase two of the data collection - The principal investigator will conduct the interviews directly - Only one participant will be present at any one time - The participants will be given the choice to choose a location where they feel most comfortable

PG1.14.2 Will your interview or focus group session be audio or video recorded?

Yes

PG1.14.3 Will you arrange for transcription of the audio or video recording?

Yes

PG1.14.3.1 Provide detail on how you will handle the transcription process of the audio or video recording, including who will be involved in transcribing the data, whether the participants will be provided an opportunity to review and/or edit the transcribed document, and how you will safely manage the data transfer process.

The audio will be transcribed by an external company, Pacific Solutions, and stored on a password secured storage device. Each participant will be presented with the full transcript and be given the option to clarify any misrepresentations of the data. This will be disseminated through email and participants given the choice to either track changes within the document or give verbal feedback directly to the principal investigator.

PG1.15 Will you collect data via observation?

No

PG1.16 Will you collect data via photography / videography?

No

PG1.17 Will you collect data via psychological inventories or any other published, standardised test?

No

PG1.18 Will you collect data via collection of human biospecimens?

No

PG1.19 Will you collect data via responses to tasks, stimuli or simulations?

No

PG1.20 Will you collect data via administration of a substance?

No

PG1.21 Will you collect data via any other procedure not outlined above?

No

G1 - Data Collection Procedure and Competence

PG1.23 Provide details about what you are asking participants in this group to do or what is to be done to them. Include a step-by-step description of what participants will experience if they choose to take part in this project.

Focus group 1. Participants will be invited and given the written consent form to sign. 2. A focus group information sheet will be given to the participants, with the consent form, so they know what to expect from the meeting. 3. The principal investigator will negotiate a time for the focus group to take place. 4. The participants meet at the agreed time and location to discuss the research project. 5. Reliance will be on the interactions between the participants, rather than with the principal investigator. The principal investigator will guide the conversation to ensure it stays on track and keeps within the designated time frame. 6. Participants will be required to reflect on their own values and perceptions to help define any themes. 7. The principal investigator will observe the participants' discussion, and make connections through compare and contrast. 8. The principal investigator will allow the discussions to evolve naturally so the participants interact as they do in their daily work. Interview 1. Participants will be invited and given the written consent form and an information sheet so they know what to expect from the interviews. 2. Upon agreement, the participants will be given an interview guide with indicative topics so they can come prepared to the interview. 3. Semi-structured interviews will be used to gather evidence on how the new QCE system has impacted teachers' pedagogical practice. 4. An informal nature will be used to allow the participants to take on the role of expert. 5. Open-ended questions will be used to allow the researcher to prompt and probe the respondents to seek more depth. 6. A supportive and empathetic environment will be maintained at all times, and the participant told they can stop the interview if they feel uncomfortable. 7. Each participant will be given the transcript and give feedback on any misrepresentations.

PG1.24 How much time are you asking of participants in this group and when will this time be required? (e.g. 30 minutes after class).

Interview: 20-30 minutes per interviewee at a time negotiated and agreed upon by the participants
Focus group: 60 minutes (30 minutes per focus group before phases one and during phase three) at a time negotiated and agreed upon by the participants

PG1.25 Where will the data be collected (venue and geographical location)? (e.g. front of 'venue')

At a location negotiated and agreed upon by the participants, or if COVID-19 restrictions continue then participants will be invited to an online platform, such as Microsoft Teams, to engage in data collection.

PG1.26 Does the research involve the administration of any tests or procedures that require particular qualifications?

No

PG1.27 Does the research involve measures or procedures that are diagnostic or indicative of any medical or clinical condition, or any other situation of concern? (e.g. anaemia, bulimia, anorexia, anxiety, suicidal tendencies, aggressive behaviours, etc.)

No

G1 - Consent Method

PG1.28 Are these participants able to consent for themselves?

Yes

PG1.29 Will you use a written Participant Information Sheet or Explanatory Statement to inform participants about this project?

Yes

PG1.30 Will these participants be fully informed about the true nature of the research?

Yes

PG1.31 Indicate how you will obtain consent from this group of participants.

Consent form (must be attached with this application)

PG1.31.2 Outline the process by which the participants will give consent and how they return the consent form to the researchers.

The participants will be approached by someone unconnected with the research, such as a school administrator, and given a consent form informing the subject about his or her rights, the purpose of the study, the procedures to be undergone, and the potential risks and benefits of participation. The participants will be given time to decide whether they would like to be part of the study and asked to return the form either by post or email. If they choose to email, and they accept the offer, then they will be asked to return the original copy at the focus group meeting.

G2 - Participant Overview

PG2.1 Participant group 2 working title. (e.g. student focus group; teacher survey)

Teacher interviews and focus group

PG2.2 How many participants are expected to be recruited in this group?

9

PG2.3 Describe who the participants in this group are.

- There will be three groups of teachers - Each group will consist of 3 teachers - Each group of 3 teachers will be within one curriculum area - The curriculum area will be directly related to the curriculum leader participants

PG2.4 Where will this group of participants be recruited from?

This group will be recruited from within the case being studied.

PG2.5 Are the participants in this group likely to be under 18 years of age?

No

PG2.6 Is there a pre-existing (unequal) relationship between the participants and anyone involved in recruiting and/or collecting data from this group of participants? (e.g. teachers and/or lecturers/students, doctors/patients, employers/employees, etc.)

No

PG2.7 Do these participants have any cultural needs? (e.g., specific consent arrangements or sensitivities, etc.)

No

G2 - Recruitment Method

PG2.8 Do you have any criteria for the selection, inclusion or exclusion of participants for this group to take part in the research? (e.g. minimum age requirements)

Yes

PG2.8.1 Describe the criteria for selection, inclusion or exclusion and outline why you require this for your research design.

- Within a curriculum area of participant group 1 - Experienced teacher, two years or more, of the OP system - Teacher of a general subject, during the QCE system's development, implementation, and current years (2018, 2019, 2020)

PG2.9 Indicate which method/s you will use to recruit these participants:

Participants approached in person by research team

PG2.9 Indicate which method/s you will use to recruit these participants:

Email

PG2.10 Indicate how you will obtain the contact details of these participants.

Other

PG2.10.2 Clarify how you will obtain these contact details.

From the principal/governing body of the school being studied.

PG2.11 Explain who will invite these participants to be involved in this project.

The principal investigator will arrange an unconnected person, such as a school administrator, to disseminate invitations to participate. This will help mitigate against risk of concern.

PG2.12 Will you be offering payment or any other incentives to this group of participants?

No

G2 - Data Collection Methods

PG2.13 Will you collect data via questionnaires / surveys?

No

PG2.14 Will you collect data via interviews or focus groups?

Yes

PG2.14.1 Provide further detail about the interviews or focus groups, including: how many sessions will be held; where and at approximately what time (or timeframe) will the sessions be held; who will be present from the research team; how many participants will be present at each session; who will conduct or facilitate the session; will there be a debriefing process (and if yes, what will this involve)? Attach a copy of your interview or focus group questions (if known) or broad topics in the document upload section.

Interviews - 1 x Semi-structured interviews per participant - During phase one of the data collection - The principal investigator will conduct the interviews directly - Only one participant will be present at any one time - The participants will be given the choice to choose a location where they feel most comfortable Focus Group There will be one focus groups between the participants and the principal investigator. It will occur at an agreed location and time, indicated by the participants, at the end of the study (during phase 3). The approximate time for the meeting will be 20-30 minutes. The aim of the focus group will be the clarification of any emerging factors from the preceding data collection phases.

PG2.14.2 Will your interview or focus group session be audio or video recorded?

Yes

PG2.14.3 Will you arrange for transcription of the audio or video recording?

Yes

PG2.14.3.1 Provide detail on how you will handle the transcription process of the audio or video recording, including who will be involved in transcribing the data, whether the participants will be provided an opportunity to review and/or edit the transcribed document, and how you will safely manage the data transfer process.

The audio will be transcribed by an external company, Pacific Solutions, and stored on a password secured storage device. Each participant will be presented with the full transcript and be given the option to clarify any misrepresentations of the data. This will be disseminated through email and participants given the choice to either track changes within the document or give verbal feedback directly to the principal investigator.

PG2.15 Will you collect data via observation?

No

PG2.16 Will you collect data via photography / videography?

No

PG2.17 Will you collect data via psychological inventories or any other published, standardised test?

No

PG2.18 Will you collect data via collection of human biospecimens?

No

PG2.19 Will you collect data via responses to tasks, stimuli or simulations?

No

PG2.20 Will you collect data via administration of a substance?

No

PG2.21 Will you collect data via any other procedure not outlined above?

No

G2 - Data Collection Procedure and Competence

PG2.23 Provide details about what you are asking participants in this group to do or what is to be done to them. Include a step-by-step description of what participants will experience if they choose to take part in this project.

Focus group 1. Participants will be invited and given the written consent form to sign. 2. A focus group information sheet will be given to the participants, with the consent form, so they know what to expect from the meeting. 3. The principal investigator will negotiate a time for the focus group to take place. 4. The participants meet at the agreed time and location to discuss the research project. 5. Reliance will be on the interactions between the participants, rather than with the principal investigator. The principal investigator will guide the conversation to ensure it stays on track and keeps within the designated time frame. 6. Participants will be required to reflect on their own values and perceptions to help define any themes. 7. The principal investigator will observe the participants discussion, and make connections through compare and contrast. 8. The principal investigator will

allow the discussions to evolve naturally so the participants interact as they do in their daily work
Interview 1. Participants will be invited and given the written consent form and an information sheet so they know what to expect from the interviews 2. Upon agreement, the participants will be given an interview guide with indicative topics so they can come prepared to the interview 3. Semi-structured interviews will be used to gather evidence on how the new QCE system has impacted teachers pedagogical practice 4. An informal nature will be used to allow the participants to take on the role of expert 5. Open-ended questions will be used to allow the researcher to prompt and probe the respondents to seek more depth 6. A supportive and empathetic environment will be maintained at all times, and the participant told they can stop the interview if they feel uncomfortable 7. Each participant will be given the transcript and give feedback on any misrepresentations.

PG2.24 How much time are you asking of participants in this group and when will this time be required? (e.g. 30 minutes after class).

Interview: 20-30 minutes per interviewee, during phase one, at a time negotiated and agreed upon by the participants Focus group: 30 minutes, during phase three, at a time negotiated and agreed upon by the participants

PG2.25 Where will the data be collected (venue and geographical location)? (e.g. front of 'venue')

Wherever the participant chooses so they are most comfortable, or if COVID-19 restrictions continue then participants will be invited to an online platform, such as Microsoft Teams, to engage in data collection.

PG2.26 Does the research involve the administration of any tests or procedures that require particular qualifications?

No

PG2.27 Does the research involve measures or procedures that are diagnostic or indicative of any medical or clinical condition, or any other situation of concern? (e.g. anaemia, bulimia, anorexia, anxiety, suicidal tendencies, aggressive behaviours, etc.)

No

G2 - Consent Method

PG2.28 Are these participants able to consent for themselves?

Yes

PG2.29 Will you use a written Participant Information Sheet or Explanatory Statement to inform participants about this project?

Yes

PG2.30 Will these participants be fully informed about the true nature of the research?

Yes

PG2.31 Indicate how you will obtain consent from this group of participants.

Consent form (must be attached with this application)

PG2.31.2 Outline the process by which the participants will give consent and how they return the consent form to the researchers.

The participants will be approached by someone unconnected with the research, such as a school administrator, and given a consent form informing the subject about his or her rights, the purpose of

the study, the procedures to be undergone, and the potential risks and benefits of participation. The participants will be given time to decide whether they would like to be part of the study and asked to return the form either by post or email. If they choose to email, and they accept the offer, then they will be asked to return the original copy at the first interview.

G3 - Participant Overview

PG3.1 Participant group 3 working title. (e.g. student focus group; teacher survey)

Senior leadership team interviews and focus group

PG3.2 How many participants are expected to be recruited in this group?

3

PG3.3 Describe who the participants in this group are.

- The principal of the case study school - 2 out of 4 Deputy principals from the case study school

PG3.4 Where will this group of participants be recruited from?

The case study school

PG3.5 Are the participants in this group likely to be under 18 years of age?

No

PG3.6 Is there a pre-existing (unequal) relationship between the participants and anyone involved in recruiting and/or collecting data from this group of participants? (e.g. teachers and/or lecturers/students, doctors/patients, employers/employees, etc.)

Yes

PG3.6.1 Describe the nature of the pre-existing relationship and whom this involves.

The principal investigator will be a teacher of the case study school; therefore, they will be interviewing their superiors

PG3.6.2 Outline what special precautions have been implemented to preserve the rights of those participants who decline to take part or withdraw from the research once the project has begun.

The participants have a choice to partake in the project therefore there is no issue for the preservation of rights in this scenario. Each participant will be provided with a transcript of the interview for member checking of any misinterpretations. In the case of interviews, if someone withdraws from the study once it has begun, then they will have the choice as to whether they would still like to contribute any of the preexisting data collected until this point. If they choose not to contribute any prior data then it will be immediately destroyed. The exception is the focus groups due to the complexities involving the combination of multiple participant responses. Please note, it is expected that the Principal will not withdraw as she has encouraged this study. The school will not be identified.

PG3.7 Do these participants have any cultural needs? (e.g. specific consent arrangements or sensitivities, etc.)

No

G3 - Recruitment Method

PG3.8 Do you have any criteria for the selection, inclusion or exclusion of participants for this group to take part in the research? (e.g. minimum age requirements)

No

PG3.9 Indicate which method/s you will use to recruit these participants:

Participants approached in person by research team

PG3.9 Indicate which method/s you will use to recruit these participants:

Email

PG3.10 Indicate how you will obtain the contact details of these participants.

From the participants themselves

PG3.11 Explain who will invite these participants to be involved in this project.

The principal investigator will arrange an unconnected person, such as a school administrator, to disseminate invitations to participate. This will help mitigate against risk of concern.

PG3.12 Will you be offering payment or any other incentives to this group of participants?

No

G3 - Data Collection Methods

PG3.13 Will you collect data via questionnaires / surveys?

No

PG3.14 Will you collect data via interviews or focus groups?

Yes

PG3.14.1 Provide further detail about the interviews or focus groups, including: how many sessions will be held; where and at approximately what time (or timeframe) will the sessions be held; who will be present from the research team; how many participants will be present at each session; who will conduct or facilitate the session; will there be a debriefing process (and if yes, what will this involve)? Attach a copy of your interview or focus group questions (if known) or broad topics in the document upload section.

Focus Group There one focus group between the participants and the principal investigator. It will occur at an agreed location and time, indicated by the participants, at the end of the study (during phase 3). The approximate time for the meeting will be 20-30 minutes. The aim will be the clarification of any emerging factors from the preceding data collection phases. Interviews - 1 x Semi-structured interviews - During phase two of the data collection - The principal investigator will conduct the interviews directly - Only one participant will be present at any one time - The participants will be given the choice to choose a location where they feel most comfortable

PG3.14.2 Will your interview or focus group session be audio or video recorded?

Yes

PG3.14.3 Will you arrange for transcription of the audio or video recording?

Yes

PG3.14.3.1 Provide detail on how you will handle the transcription process of the audio or video recording, including who will be involved in transcribing the data, whether the participants will be provided an opportunity to review and/or edit the transcribed document, and how you will safely manage the data transfer process.

The audio will be transcribed by an external company, Pacific Solutions, and stored on a password secured storage device. Each participant will be presented with the full transcript and be given the option to clarify any misrepresentations of the data. This will be disseminated through email and

participants given the choice to either track changes within the document or give verbal feedback directly to the principal investigator.

PG3.15 Will you collect data via observation?

No

PG3.16 Will you collect data via photography / videography?

No

PG3.17 Will you collect data via psychological inventories or any other published, standardised test?

No

PG3.18 Will you collect data via collection of human biospecimens?

No

PG3.19 Will you collect data via responses to tasks, stimuli or simulations?

No

PG3.20 Will you collect data via administration of a substance?

No

PG3.21 Will you collect data via any other procedure not outlined above?

No

G3 - Data Collection Procedure and Competence

PG3.23 Provide details about what you are asking participants in this group to do or what is to be done to them. Include a step-by-step description of what participants will experience if they choose to take part in this project.

Focus group 1. Participants will be invited and given the written consent form to sign. 2. A focus group information sheet will be given to the participants, with the consent form, so they know what to expect from the meeting. 3. The principal investigator will negotiate a time for the focus group to take place. 4. The participants meet at the agreed time and location to discuss the research project. 5. Reliance will be on the interactions between the participants, rather than with the principal investigator. The principal investigator will guide the conversation to ensure it stays on track and keeps within the designated time frame. 6. Participants will be required to reflect on their own values and perceptions to help define any themes. 7. The principal investigator will observe the participants' discussion, and make connections through compare and contrast. 8. The principal investigator will allow the discussions to evolve naturally so the participants interact as they do in their daily work. Interview 1. Participants will be invited and given the written consent form and an information sheet so they know what to expect from the interviews. 2. Upon agreement, the participants will be given an interview guide with indicative topics so they can come prepared to the interview. 3. Semi-structured interviews will be used to gather evidence on how the new QCE system has impacted teachers' pedagogical practice. 4. An informal nature will be used to allow the participants to take on the role of expert. 5. Open-ended questions will be used to allow the researcher to prompt and probe the respondents to seek more depth. 6. A supportive and empathetic environment will be maintained at all times, and the participant told they can stop the interview if they feel uncomfortable. 7. Each participant will be given the transcript and give feedback on any misrepresentations.

PG3.24 How much time are you asking of participants in this group and when will this time be required? (e.g. 30 minutes after class).

Interview: 20-30 minutes per interviewee, during phase two, at a time negotiated and agreed upon by the participants Focus group: 30 minutes, during phase three, at a time negotiated and agreed upon by the participants

PG3.25 Where will the data be collected (venue and geographical location)? (e.g. front of 'venue')

Wherever the participant feels most comfortable, or if COVID-19 restrictions continue then participants will be invited to an online platform, such as Microsoft Teams, to engage in data collection.

PG3.26 Does the research involve the administration of any tests or procedures that require particular qualifications?

No

PG3.27 Does the research involve measures or procedures that are diagnostic or indicative of any medical or clinical condition, or any other situation of concern? (e.g. anaemia, bulimia, anorexia, anxiety, suicidal tendencies, aggressive behaviours, etc.)

No

G3 - Consent Method

PG3.28 Are these participants able to consent for themselves?

Yes

PG3.29 Will you use a written Participant Information Sheet or Explanatory Statement to inform participants about this project?

Yes

PG3.30 Will these participants be fully informed about the true nature of the research?

Yes

PG3.31 Indicate how you will obtain consent from this group of participants.

Consent form (must be attached with this application)

PG3.31.2 Outline the process by which the participants will give consent and how they return the consent form to the researchers.

The participants will be approached by someone unconnected with the research, such as a school administrator, and given a consent form informing the subject about his or her rights, the purpose of the study, the procedures to be undergone, and the potential risks and benefits of participation. The participants will be given time to decide whether they would like to be part of the study and asked to return the form either by post or email. If they choose to email, and they accept the offer, then they will be asked to return the original copy at the first interview.

APPENDIX B



University of Southern
Queensland

Participant Information for USQ Research Project Focus Group

Project Details

Title of Project: **The impact of externally imposed change on teachers' pedagogical practice: A Queensland secondary school study**

Human Research

Ethics Approval

Number:

Research Team Contact Details

Principal Investigator Details

Mr Michael Simpson

Email: [REDACTED]

Telephone:

Mobile: [REDACTED]

Description

This project is being undertaken as part of Doctor of Education program. Queensland secondary schools are experiencing the most significant externally imposed change to its senior education system in around 50 years. This change entails the introduction of an external exam component to senior assessment replacing the Overall Position (OP) system with an Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR). The new approach is a significant change to the previous system, which traditionally relied solely on internal school-based assessment to judge student achievement. The purpose of this project is to use the current changes to Queensland's senior assessment system to investigate the impact of the externally imposed change on Queensland teachers' pedagogical practice. The research team requests your assistance because you are currently leading the change in your school and it is anticipated that you will have first-hand insights regarding the research topic.

Participation

Your participation will involve contributing your thoughts and ideas in a group discussion (focus group) that will take approximately 20-30 minutes of your time.

The focus group will take place at time and place negotiated by you with the principal investigator.

Questions will include:

- i. How have teachers of a Queensland secondary school conceptualised the new QCE system concerning their pedagogical practice?
- ii. How have the school leaders of a Queensland secondary school conceptualised and prioritised the new QCE system concerning teachers' pedagogical practice?
- iii. What factors have contributed to the impact of the new QCE system on teachers' pedagogical practice in a Queensland secondary school?

The focus group will be audio recorded.

There are no costs associated with participating in this research project, nor will you be paid for participation.

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you are not obliged to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage.

Your decision whether you take part, do not take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will in no way impact your current or future relationship with the University of Southern Queensland.

Expected Benefits

It is expected that this project will directly benefit you as it may give insight into understanding how your school has received the new senior assessment system. Further, it may strengthen your understanding of the areas, which impact teacher's pedagogical practice when negotiating externally imposed changes to education.

Risks

In participating in the focus group, there are minimal risks such as a commitment of your time and its associated effects. To minimise this the principal supervisor is allowing you to negotiate a time, which is convenient for you to engage in the focus group. In addition, the transcript will be shared via email so you are able to check for misrepresentations without a further meeting time.

Privacy and Confidentiality

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially unless required by law. You will be asked to indicate permission for the focus group dialogue to be recorded. If it is recorded, the audio will be transcribed by an external company called Pacific Solutions. In the first instance of the principal investigator receiving the transcript, it will be emailed to all participants so you can check for misinterpretations. You will be given the choice of either tracking changes within the document and emailing it back to the principal investigator, or give verbal feedback directly to the principal investigator. You will be given 21 days to complete this process.

Please be advised that although the research team will take every precaution to maintain the confidentiality of the data, the nature of focus groups prevent the research team from guaranteeing confidentiality. Please respect the privacy of other participants and not repeat what is said during the focus group to others.

Your data will not be used for any other research projects and all the data will be non-identifiable with pseudonyms being used in place of names.

At the completion of the project, the thesis will be disseminated to you directly.

Any data collected as a part of this project will be stored securely as per University of Southern Queensland's [Research Data Management policy](#).

Consent to Participate

We would like to ask you to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate in this project. Please return your signed consent form to a member of the Research Team prior to participating in your focus group.

Questions or Further Information about the Project

Please refer to the Research Team Contact Details at the top of the form to have any questions answered or to request further information about this project.

Concerns or Complaints Regarding the Conduct of the Project

If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project, you may contact the University of Southern Queensland Manager of Research Integrity and Ethics on +61 7 4631 1839 or email researchintegrity@usq.edu.au. The Manager of Research Integrity and Ethics is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an unbiased manner.

Thank you for taking the time to help with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.

APPENDIX C



University of Southern
Queensland

Consent Form for USQ Research Project Focus Group

Project Details

Title of Project: **The impact of externally imposed change on teachers' pedagogical practice: A Queensland secondary school study**

Human Research

Ethics Approval

Number:

Research Team Contact Details

Principal Investigator Details

Mr Michael Simpson

Email: [REDACTED]

Telephone:

Mobile: [REDACTED]

Statement of Consent

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- Have read and understood the information document regarding this project.

☐ Yes / ☐
No

- Have had any questions answered to your satisfaction. ☐Yes / ☐No
- Understand that if you have any additional questions, you can contact the research team. ☐Yes / ☐No
- Understand that the interview will be audio recorded. ☐Yes / ☐No
- Understand that you can participate in the interview without being audio recorded. ☐Yes / ☐No
- If you **do not want** to be audio recorded during the interview, please initial here: _____
_____.
- Are over 18 years of age. ☐Yes / ☐No
- Agree to maintain the confidentiality of the information discussed by other participants and researchers during the focus group ☐Yes / ☐No
- Agree to participate in the project. ☐Yes / ☒No

Participant Name

Participant
Signature

Date

Please return this sheet to a Research Team member prior to undertaking the focus group.

APPENDIX D



University of Southern
Queensland

Participant Information for USQ Research Project Interview

Project Details

Title of Project: **The impact of externally imposed change on teachers' pedagogical practice: A Queensland secondary school study**

Human Research
Ethics Approval
Number:

Research Team Contact Details

Principal Investigator Details

Mr Michael Simpson

Email: [REDACTED]

Telephone:

Mobile: [REDACTED]

Description

This project is being undertaken as part of Doctor of Education program. Queensland secondary schools are experiencing the most significant externally imposed change to its senior education system in around 50 years. This change entails the introduction of an

external exam component to senior assessment replacing the Overall Position (OP) system with an Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR). The new approach is a significant change to the previous system, which traditionally relied solely on internal school-based assessment to judge student achievement. The purpose of this project is to use the current changes to Queensland's senior assessment system to investigate the impact of the externally imposed change on Queensland teachers' pedagogical practice. The research team requests your assistance because you are regarded as an experienced teacher in your field and it is anticipated that you will have quality insights regarding the research topic.

Participation

Your participation will involve contributing your thoughts and ideas during an interview that will take approximately 20-30 minutes.

The interview will take place at time and place negotiated by you with the principal investigator.

Questions will include, but are not limited to:

- i. What are your initial thoughts on how the new QCE system has affected teachers' pedagogical practice?
- ii. How has the school prioritized the new development and implementation of the new QCE system, as it relates to teacher's pedagogical practice?

The interviews will be audio recorded.

There are no costs associated with participating in this research project, nor will you be paid for participation.

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you are not obliged to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage. You may also request that any data collected about you be withdrawn and confidentially destroyed. If you do wish to withdraw from this project or withdraw data collected about you, please contact the principal investigator (contact details at the top of this form).

Your decision whether you take part, do not take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will in no way impact your current or future relationship with the University of Southern Queensland.

Expected Benefits

It is expected that this project will directly benefit you as it may give insight into understanding how your school has received the new senior assessment system. Further, it may strengthen your understanding of how the new QCE system has impacted your pedagogical practice.

Risks

In participating in the interviews, there are minimal risks such as a commitment of your time and its associated effects. To minimise this the principal investigator is allowing you to negotiate a time that is convenient for you to engage in the interviews. In addition, the transcript will be shared via email so you are able to check for misrepresentations without a further meeting being required.

Privacy and Confidentiality

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially unless required by law. You will be asked to indicate permission for the interviews to be recorded. If it is recorded, the audio will be transcribed by an external company called Pacific Solutions. In the first instance of the principal investigator receiving the transcript, it will be emailed to you. You will be given the choice of either tracking changes within the document and emailing it back to the principal investigator, or give verbal feedback directly to the principal investigator. You will be given 21 days to complete this process.

Your data will not be used for any other research projects and all the data will be non-identifiable with pseudonyms being used in place of names.

At the completion of the project, the thesis will be disseminated to you directly.

Any data collected as a part of this project will be stored securely as per University of Southern Queensland's [Research Data Management policy](#)

Consent to Participate

We would like to ask you to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate in this project. Please return your signed consent form to a member of the Research Team prior to participating in your interview.

Questions or Further Information about the Project

Please refer to the Research Team Contact Details at the top of the form to have any questions answered or to request further information about this project.

Concerns or Complaints Regarding the Conduct of the Project

If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project, you may contact the University of Southern Queensland Manager of Research Integrity and Ethics on +61 7 4631 1839 or email researchintegrity@usq.edu.au. The Manager of Research Integrity and Ethics is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an unbiased manner.

Thank you for taking the time to help with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.

APPENDIX E



University of Southern
Queensland

Consent Form for USQ Research Project Interview

Project Details

Title of Project: **The impact of externally imposed change on teachers' pedagogical practice: A Queensland secondary school study**

Human Research Ethics
Approval Number:

Research Team Contact Details

Principal Investigator Details

Mr Michael Simpson

Email: [REDACTED]

Telephone:

Mobile: [REDACTED]

Statement of Consent

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- Have read and understood the information document regarding this project. ☐Yes / ☐No
- Have had any questions answered to your satisfaction. ☐Yes / ☐No

- Understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team. ☐Yes / ☐No

- Understand that the interview will be audio ☐Yes / ☐No
 - Understand that you can participate in the interview without being audio/ video recorded. ☐Yes / ☐No

 - If you **do not want** to be audio/ video recorded during the interview, please initial here: _____
_____.

- Agree to participate in the project. ☐Yes / ☐No

Participant Name

Participant
Signature

Date

Please return this sheet to a Research Team member prior to undertaking the interview.