AN EXPLORATION OF THE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF LEADERSHIP BY TEACHERS AND THEIR OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Submitted by

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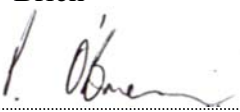Locked Bag 4115,

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STATEMENT OF SOURCES

I, Patricia Anne O'Brien, declare that this thesis is wholly my own work. Any material written by another person that has been used in this thesis is duly sourced and acknowledged. The thesis has not been submitted for the award of any other degree in any university.

All research procedures reported in this thesis received the approval of the Australian Catholic University Human Research Ethics Committee, Register Number: V2002.03-18.

Patricia Anne O'Brien

Signature: ....

Date: ....11/02/05...............

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This thesis is the outcome of a long period of commitment by the author to further academic study. It is the fruition of an area of interest, one upon which the author has frequently reflected during almost three decades of teaching, that teachers are leaders and influencers in schools. As the research is concluded, there are a number of people I wish to thank and to acknowledge their support.

I thank all dedicated teachers with whom I have worked over the years and the many who have inspired me in some small or significant way in my professional practice.

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ABSTRACT

Leadership in schools is equated principally with those who hold formal or designated positions of leadership. However, the general leadership literature asserts that leadership in the post-corporate world of the organisation is not solely position-based, nor does it belong to any one person. Rather, leadership is shared and collaborative, is distributive and multi-dimensional, and is open to all members of an organisation.

This study explored the perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers and their opportunities for leadership development, in the context of the study of the Catholic school. A key assumption that underpinned the study was that teachers, by virtue of their professional practice and professional learning, exercise leadership. It was argued in the study that the educational philosophy of a Catholic school provides a suitable context for teachers to exercise leadership.

The conceptual framework for the study was derived from an exploration of the research literature which focused on the general field of leadership, educational leadership and the genre of teacher leadership. The empirical study involved qualitative inquiry situated within an interpretative paradigm and oriented to providing in-depth and detailed descriptions and interpretations of the phenomenon of leadership. Data were gathered through four focus group interviews conducted with teachers in two Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, Australia. A fifth focus group interview was conducted with an 'expert' group of teachers to verify a first summary of the findings. Data were analysed through an iterative process of data reduction, data display and verification. The data produced rich descriptions of leadership as perceived and experienced by teachers and were displayed in key themes within the framework of the research questions.

The findings of the study revealed that teachers in the sample had well-developed understandings of leadership, of the nature of leadership in a Catholic school, and of their personal, interpersonal and professional capacity to exercise leadership in their professional practice and professional learning. However, these conceptual understandings did not always translate into practice. Leadership by teachers and leadership development of teachers were hindered by a number of factors, namely, a perceived lack of identity of

teaching as a profession; the association of leadership with formal leadership structures within the school, and limited access to professional learning programs.

The recommendations arising from the study have implications for system and school leaders and for policymakers and practitioners alike. In particular, the development of policy and practice that articulates the multi-dimensional perspective of leadership, and the leadership and professional role of teachers within this perspective, are highlighted. In light of the study's findings, future research relating to the area of teacher leadership is recommended.

Although the genre, teacher leadership, is well established in educational literature, there has been limited empirical research undertaken in this field in the Australian education context. This study makes a small but significant contribution to the ongoing development of knowledge in the field.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACU	Australian Catholic University
CCE	Congregation for Catholic Education
CECV	Catholic Education Commission of Victoria
CEOM	Catholic Education Office of Melbourne
IDEAS	Innovative Design for Enhancing Achievement in Schools
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment Training and Youth Affairs
NCSL	National College for School Leadership
NIQTSL	National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership
PAVOT	Perspective and voice of the teacher

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"All teachers are leaders. I think that's why teachers go into teaching."
(Teacher in a Catholic school, 2002)

CHAPTER ONE

The nature and scope of the study

Introduction

A re-imagining of the nature, role and function of leadership often accompanies the response of organisations to change and developments occurring in the broader world context. For the 'post-corporate' organisation (Limerick, Cunnington & Crowther, 1998), changes and developments have brought about a redefining of leadership, with particular emphasis on its connective nature, its collaborative function and its ethical and values dimensions; and have resulted in new configurations of leadership structures and processes. Leadership is no longer considered to be the prerogative or responsibility of a selected few, but is being distributed more widely and shared by many who are empowered in their own capacity to lead.

In schools, the nature, role and function of leadership are also subject to change. Emphasis on developing effective leadership for school improvement has been a key feature of school reform. Schools, however, are complex in their structures and processes and the transformation is slow. There is no single leadership model which can provide a blueprint for an effective school, and a conceptualisation of leadership that is distributed beyond positional and designated leadership to teachers as key stakeholders, is yet to become accepted practice.

As key stakeholders in effective schools, teachers are central to maintaining standards of excellence in teaching and learning. Teachers are key influencers (Harris & Muijs, 2002b), and have the capacity to lead and influence student learning and to build school capacity (Frost & Durrant, 2002). They undertake initiatives and assume responsibility for innumerable curricula and co-curricula activities, and in the course of their duties, exercise leadership (Ash & Persall, 2000; Harrison & Lembeck, 1996). While teachers might widely exercise leadership in their professional practice, anecdotal evidence drawn from the researcher's professional experience, suggests that leadership by teachers, who are not in formal or designated positions of leadership, is not recognised in any formal capacity. The extent to which teachers are perceived as leaders, and might perceive themselves as exercising leadership, is the issue at hand. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore teachers' understandings and experiences of leadership and whether they perceive themselves to be leaders in their professional practice.

The study focused on exploring leadership from three perspectives: leadership in a general context, educational leadership in the context of schools, and leadership by teachers in Catholic schools. This chapter details background information to the research problem, the context in which the research problem is situated, the purpose of the study and the identification of the research questions, the conceptual framework and its design, and the significance of the study.

Background to the research problem

Research in leadership has been documented throughout the 20th century and more extensively during the last thirty or so years. However, despite the abundance of literature, understandings of leadership are still problematic. According to Reser and Sarros (2000)

there is no precise meaning, definition, or understanding that can be attributed to the term. The problematic nature of leadership in terms of terminology and definition was an underlying factor throughout the study. The emphasis in the study was on exploring understandings of leadership rather than attempting to define leadership precisely.

As a construct, leadership has moved through a number of paradigms, theories and models, and in each context, writers have devised a range of terms to identify and describe the properties or characteristics of leadership from their particular perspective. Properties of leadership were commonly referenced, in the first half of the 20th century, as leadership traits, which referred to the characteristics of a leader as documented in the seminal work of Stogdill (1974). Rost (1993) declared that such leadership models reflected the hierarchy of an industrial model of work in which leadership and management were seen to be synonymous, and the focus was on the person who was the leader. Beyond trait theory, leadership has developed through a number of paradigms. Reser and Sarros (2000) claimed that there was no one dominant paradigm. They cited nine exemplars of leadership paradigms, of which transactional, transformational and relational leadership are relevant to the context of this study. An exploration of leadership within these paradigms was undertaken in the study.

The study sought to explore leadership in the general leadership literature in order to illumine various understandings and approaches to leadership. These understandings of leadership helped to identify key aspects of educational leadership in schools. An initial reading of general leadership literature revealed that in the course of the last decade new leadership processes emerged in organisations in response to societal changes. Organisations began to develop structures and processes that were horizontal rather than

hierarchical, and cultures that encouraged networking and collaborative practice (Limerick et al., 1998). Within this context there was an emergence of multiple leadership that were shared and distributed throughout the organisation.

Although distributed forms of leadership have been developed and applied in schools (Lambert, 2002; Gronn, 2002a, 2002b; Handy, 1996; Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001), the equation of leadership with positional leadership, and the status and authority that come with the position, still dominates school leadership literature (Muijs & Harris, 2003). In contrast, organisations with new configurations of structures, strategies and culture (Limerick et al., 1998) have emerged. In response to a fast-moving technological age and new communications systems, organisations are developing more flexible structures based on networks and alliances, and in which all members are empowered to exercise leadership in some capacity (Limerick et al.; Lipman-Blumen, 2000). Leadership is seen to function through shared decision-making (Senge, 1997) and collaborative networks (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003), and is characterised by diverse and multiple leadership roles, as shown by Limerick et al. These insights highlighted the capacity of organisations to develop new approaches to leadership, and they provided a new lens for exploring leadership in the school.

Over the last three decades, some significant changes have occurred in school leadership through educational reforms and have resulted in a more democratic understanding of leadership (Leithwood, Tomlinson & Genge, 1996). Although there was wide-ranging literature to support the developments, there was little evidence of empirical research on leadership in Catholic schools in Australia. This study sought to explore understandings of

leadership in Catholic schools through the perceptions and experiences of teachers employed in Catholic schools.

The teacher is viewed in the literature as a central figure in bringing about school improvement (Frost & Durrant, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2004; Harris & Muijs, 2002b). As never before, teachers are required to demonstrate high professional standards in knowledge and competency (Andrews, Lewis & Crowther, 2001; Ash & Persall, 2000), to be discerning, and moral and ethical in their decision-making (Duignan, 1997; Fullan, 2003b), and to work in close collaboration with their colleagues (Jarzabkowski, 2000; Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Such practices were evident in the general leadership literature as revealed by Limerick et al. (1998) and Lipman-Blumen (2000). Consequently, an exploration of leadership by teachers in their professional practice became a key aspect of the study in light of new approaches to leadership that were detailed in the general leadership literature.

A particular challenge in the study was to explore the extent to which teachers viewed leadership regardless of any position or notion of formal leadership. This view was supported in some cases by the researcher's experience that teachers equated leadership principally with persons who hold formal positions of authority more than leadership as a function in its own right. One of the challenges in the study was to address the conjecture and apparent confusion surrounding the exercise of leadership by teachers in their professional practice as distinct from formal leadership.

Various conceptions of leadership exercised by teachers have emerged in literature relating to the genre of teacher leadership. These include 'lead teacher' (Ash & Persall, 2000),

'teacher leader' and 'teacher as leader' (Ash & Persall; Childs-Bowen, Moller & Scrivner, 2000), and 'teacher leadership' (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996). While there are common aspects to the terms, each brings a particular perspective that assists in understanding the nature and practice of leadership by teachers. In this study 'leadership by teachers' was the term used in the framing of the research questions. It encompassed meanings equated with the various terms and, in this sense, was a fluid rather than a fixed construct (Gronn, 2000). The term denoted that teachers, who are not in a formal position of authority, have the capacity to lead and influence students and colleagues in their professional practice. Leadership in this context assumes an understanding that different leadership roles can be undertaken by teachers at different times and can be exercised by all teachers rather than by a designated few who assume formal leadership positions. Whilst there has been some valuable research in Australia on teacher leadership undertaken by Cranston (2000), and Crowther and colleagues (Andrews & Crowther, 2002; Crowther, 1996; Crowther, Kaagan, Fergusan & Hann, 2002), it is not extensive. This study might contribute to the field, and its findings should be pertinent to teachers in government, Catholic and independent schools.

The context of the study

The particular context of the study was the Catholic school in Australia. Catholic schools in Australia are regulated by the diocesan bishops of the Catholic Church in Australia and operate on principles set by the National Catholic Education Commission. Catholic schools have *"distinctive goals and features which derive from a core of philosophical and theological truths which are central to their character and mission"* (National Catholic Education Commission, 2002, Preamble). The study aimed to explore teachers'

perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers in the particular context of the Catholic school.

The educational philosophy of a Catholic school reflects the broader educational mission of the Catholic Church. Its theological perspective is grounded in the nature of personhood and gospel values (Groome, 1996; D. McLaughlin, 2000). The person is made in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1: 26 - 7), is created to live in relationship with God and with others, and is called to embrace the life and teachings of Jesus Christ (Groome). An educational philosophy underpinning Catholic schools was promulgated principally out of a model of church, the people of God as a Christian community (Declaration on Christian Education, 1965), as developed by the Council Fathers of the Second Vatican Council which occurred from 1962 to 1965. Shimabukuro (1998) succinctly identified a Catholic educational community as one in which members "*share faith, hope, and love*" (p. 11) emanating from key values embedded in the gospels.

The prime task of a Catholic school is the Christian formation of the human, religious and spiritual dimensions of the person through the integration of the person's culture, faith and life (Congregation for Catholic Education [CCE], 1977, par. 37). Catholic schools are urged to be exemplars of a Christian community and moral integrity. More recently, the document, *A Catholic school on the threshold of the third* millennium (CCE, 1998), declared that a Catholic school needed to challenge the counter-cultural values of a pluralistic society. It is argued in the document that a Catholic school lies at the very heart of the church's educational mission and that it must maintain its central character of the integral formation of the person in relationship with Jesus Christ.

Beyond the foundational principles expressed in Church documents, Catholic schools exercise some independence in articulating their religious, educational and social dimensions. T. McLaughlin (1996) asserted that there is yet to emerge a distinctive Catholic understanding of the nature and role of education. Hence, it is acknowledged in this study that there is no generic prescription for a Catholic school. Catholic schools have an international profile. They exist in many countries and provide education for students of diverse social, cultural and economic backgrounds. They are similar, and at the same time distinctive, in terms of their mission, identity and culture, and the communities that they serve (Hutton, 2002).

In Australia, the *National Catholic Education Commission* (2002) identified the distinctive contribution of the Catholic school in shaping and developing Australian society, specifically, through the work of educating young people. Among other goals, it lists the following as its distinctive work: promoting a view of the person, centred on the person and teachings of Jesus Christ, in the context of community, the nation and the world; critiquing the culture of Australian society and challenging its values in light of the gospel values, and promoting values that specifically espouse a commitment to social justice and to social action.

Recent research in the Australian Catholic education setting addressed the problem of leadership succession in Catholic schools (Carlin, d'Arbon, Dorman, Duignan & Neidhart, 2003; d'Arbon, Duignan, Duncan & Goodwin, 2001). Other research focused on the development of a leadership framework in Queensland Catholic schools (Spry, Duignan & Skelly, 2004). These studies have implications for leadership in the Australian Catholic school setting. However, in these cases the emphasis was on developing strategies for leadership succession in schools ultimately to prepare leaders who will occupy formal

leadership positions within Catholic schools. While acknowledging the importance of the role of formal leadership in Catholic schools, the main focus of this study was on leadership exercised by teachers in their professional role as teachers in Catholic schools.

Identification of the research problem and research questions

As outlined earlier in this chapter, there is a lack of extensive research on leadership by teachers in Australia and, specifically, in Catholic schools in Australia. Consequently, the purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers in Catholic schools. The term, 'perceptions', was used to draw upon teachers' understanding of leadership formed by intuition and insights but not necessarily experienced, whilst the term, 'experiences' was used to draw upon teachers' direct experiences of leadership.

The following research questions were framed to guide the research:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of leadership in general?
2. What are teachers' perceptions and experiences of leadership in Catholic schools?
3. What are teachers' perceptions of leadership by teachers in Catholic schools?
4. What are teachers' experiences of leadership by teachers in Catholic schools?
5. What are the opportunities for leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools?

The focus of the study was located in the following domains: the general field of leadership, educational leadership with a specific focus on leadership in schools, and leadership by teachers in Catholic schools.

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework underpinning the study was based on an examination of

leadership literature including the general field of leadership; educational leadership with a

specific focus on leadership in schools, and the genre of teacher leadership.

Figure 1.1

A schematic representation of the conceptual framework
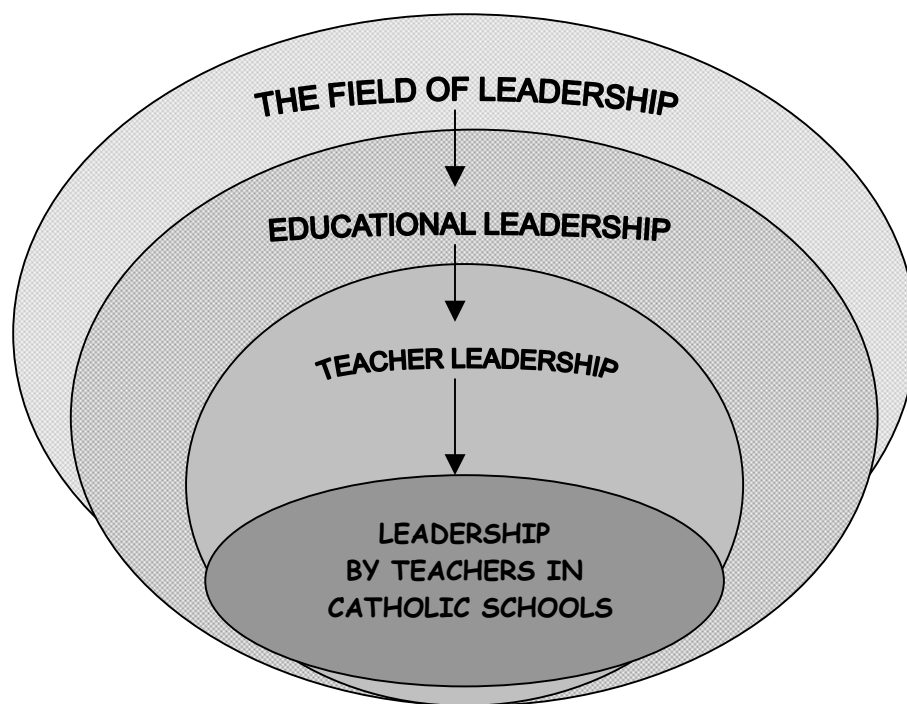
Figure 1.1 presents a schematic representation of the three key conceptual areas in the

study. The conceptual framework has been informed by literature that illuminates

understandings about the phenomenon of leadership and its function in relation to people

and their contextual setting. Literature from the general field of leadership reveals generic

understandings of leadership. Literature relating to leadership in the particular setting of

post-corporate organisations reveals a new mindset of leadership, one that is connective

and collaborative in nature, and shared and distributed throughout the organisation. Findings from the general leadership literature provide a lens through which to view new understandings of educational leadership in the context of schools. Literature pertaining to the particular genre of teacher leadership highlights emerging approaches to leadership in schools, in particular, leadership exercised by teachers in their professional practice. Specific to this study is an understanding of the theory and practice of teacher leadership in Catholic schools. The conceptual framework provides the basis for an exploration of the perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers in Catholic schools and their opportunities for leadership development.

Design of the research

The nature of the study was qualitative inquiry. Qualitative research is about understanding social phenomena and emphasises a holistic interpretation of the phenomena studied (Wiersma, 1995). According to Patton (2002) qualitative methods help to *"…inductively and holistically understand human experience and constructed meanings in context-specific settings"* (p. 69). Patton emphasised that qualitative methods provide a depth of understanding, detail and openness about phenomena studied in a particular context in contrast to quantitative methods that measure and categorise responses into predetermined categories.

As a qualitative inquiry, the research design was guided by principles and procedures derived from an interpretative understanding of human experience (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). Educational research that was once situated predominantly in the natural sciences has included a more interpretative view that operates out of the social sciences (Cohen et al.). Social science inquiry emerges from a phenomenological perspective that

claims the world is not an objective reality. Rather, it is a function of personal interaction and perception (Burns, 1997), and deals with the experiences of people and how they perceive their reality to be shaped in particular contexts (Cohen et al.). A phenomenological approach looks at the meaning that lived experiences about a phenomenon hold for people, individually or collectively (Cresswell, 1998). In this study the phenomenon that was explored was leadership within the lifeworld of teachers in Catholic schools. From this premise an exploration of the perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers was conducted within an interpretivist paradigm and utilising elements of a phenomenological approach (Cresswell, 1998).

The principal aim of the research was to produce interpretative accounts of information through an exploration of teachers' perceptions and experiences of leadership. The literature established that teachers exercise a wide range of leadership functions in their professional practice in and beyond the classroom (Ash & Persall, 2000; Fullan, 1994; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996). The literature further established that it is through teachers' professional practice that opportunities for leadership development might emerge for the individual (Crowther et al., 2002; Frost & Durrant, 2002, 2004; Frost & Harris, 2003). The interpretivist paradigm allows the teachers in the research to evaluate and articulate their perceptions and experiences of leadership.

As an interpretative inquiry, an exploration of the perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers was undertaken through the conduct of four focus group interviews (Patton, 2002) with teachers in two Catholic secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. There were two categories of teachers involved, namely, teachers who had teaching experience less than, and including ten years, and teachers with

teaching experience greater than, and including, eleven years. In addition, an 'expert' focus group interview was conducted with teachers who were members of the Professional/Staff Development Coordinators' Network (7-12) in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. A further source of data collection was the researcher's journal. Data were analysed through the process of data reduction, data display and verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A more detailed discussion of the research approach and design is contained in Chapter Four.

Significance of the study

This study has particular significance at a number of levels. New conceptions of leadership in schools continue to be a key focus area for school improvement (Frost & Harris, 2003; D. Hargreaves, 2003; Muijs & Harris, 2003) and in particular, building leadership capacity development for teachers (Harris, 2002b, 2003b; Harris & Muijs, 2002a; Lambert, 2000, 2002).

The findings should provide insights for educators, at both the system and school level, and at the national and international level, into teachers' understandings of leadership in schools, in particular, Catholic schools. Further, the findings should reveal the extent to, and ways in, which teachers exercise leadership in Catholic schools.

The findings of the study might be of particular interest to educators in education systems in Australia. As the literature review attested, with the exception of the findings of research undertaken by Cranston (2000) and Crowther and colleagues (Andrews & Crowther, 2002; Crowther et al., 2002), there is limited research on the genre of teacher leadership in the Australian education setting. The findings might provide valuable data for education

policymakers to identify and facilitate ways in which leadership by teachers can be incorporated in school leadership, and to promote further research in this important area.

As the particular context of the study was the Catholic school, its findings should be of interest to educators in the Catholic education systems in Australia, including system authorities, policymakers, personnel in formal leadership and all teachers. The findings might hold some significance for the authors of research in the area of leadership succession in Catholic schools (Carlin et al., 2003; d'Arbon et al., 2001; Spry et al., 2004). While the focus of these authors was principally on the leadership succession of principals, their research highlighted the need for some development of processes for enhancing leadership in Catholic schools.

The study was undertaken to explore the perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers in Catholic schools. Hence, there will clearly be a number of professional implications for teachers. An important outcome of the study is likely to be the extent to which the findings impact on the professional role of teachers who are principally not in a position of formal leadership. From sustained reflection on the findings, teachers might be alerted to their capacity to exercise leadership in their professional practice and professional learning, and of the need to seek opportunities for leadership development in their schools.

Finally, the findings of the study might also be helpful for personnel involved in pre-service teacher education. A focus on aspects of the theory and practice of leadership by teachers in the design and conduct of courses for pre-service education students would

benefit all pre-service educators, pre-service students, and their professional experience supervisors.

Overview of the thesis

Following the Introductory chapter, the literature review is presented in Chapters Two and Three. In Chapter Two, the review considers literature in the field of leadership and leadership in the context of the school. In Chapter Three, the focus is on a review of literature relating to teacher leadership. As the specific context for the research is the Catholic school, literature relating to leadership in the context of a Catholic school is reviewed.

Chapter Four outlines the research design with details of the processes involved in the collection and analysis of the data. The findings that emerged from the data are described in Chapter Five. A discussion of the findings, recommendations arising from the findings, and the conclusions are then presented in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER TWO

Leadership

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers in the particular context of the Catholic school. An outline of the nature and scope of the study, and the conceptual framework that underpins the study, was presented in Chapter One. The conceptual framework focuses on three areas of leadership: the field of leadership, educational leadership and teacher leadership. A review of literature pertaining to two of these areas, general leadership literature and educational leadership literature, specifically leadership in schools, is critiqued in this chapter. The chapter also includes the identification and evaluation of key dimensions of leadership in Catholic schools, the specific context of the study. Chapter Three presents a review of literature relating to the third conceptual area: teacher leadership and leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools.

Section One: Leadership

Leadership: the general context

In this section key aspects of leadership literature are explored to provide insights into how leadership functions within the dynamics of people working together. Second, as culture helps people to define their identity and function within a group or organisation (Bolman & Deal, 2003), the function of leadership within its cultural context is also examined and evaluated. Third, in light of new approaches to leadership that have emerged in organisations (Limerick et al., 1998), literature is reviewed to explore ways in which

leadership is organised and experienced in organisations in the post-corporate era. Understandings of leadership gleaned from the literature will provide a broad lens for viewing leadership in schools.

Key factors that were seen by Dubrin (2001) to contribute to the nature and function of leadership in any given group were its organisational and cultural fabrics, and the role of individuals within the group. Stogdill (1974) conceptualised leadership as a process. In his seminal work on leadership Stogdill defined leadership as "*the initiation and maintenance of structure in expectation and interaction."* (p. 411). The notion of leadership as a process highlighted its dynamic and interactive function. Kouzes (1999) described the process of leadership as a characteristic of the organisation, involving skills and practices that are grounded within the organisational structure and which are available to, and attainable by, people at any level within the organisation. Leadership as a process was seen to have a specific function in determining organisational goals and performance (Bolman & Deal, 2003). It was also seen as a process through which an individual could bring about change (Yukl, 2002). A key factor to be explored in this study was whether teachers perceived leadership as a process in its own right with particular functions, independent of the person or persons exercising leadership.

As the process of leadership involves people, it has a strong relational content (Daft, 1999; Kouzes & Posner, 2002) and is seen to be dependent on social interactions and networks of influence (Fletcher & Kaufer 2003). Bolman and Deal (2003) situated the relational and contextual nature of leadership within a human resource framework and emphasised the relationship of people with the organisation. Their premise was that there was a reciprocal influence between people and organisations**.** They also perceived that a 'good fit' between

people and the organisation occurred when both the people and the organisation benefited. However, in his conceptualisation of teaming within a human resource framework Gronn (1998) argued that an underlying tension might occur between the people and the collective dynamic of the organisation. In Gronn's concept, the 'good fit' notion is challenged.

The relationship between leaders and followers was seen as integral to understanding leadership as a reciprocal process (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). In particular, the quality of relationships and the power position between the leader and the target persons as responsive followers were emphasised by Beckhard (1996). Research by Brown and Thornburrow (1996) revealed that a successful organisation pays attention to the quality of its followers as well as its leaders. Daft (1999) asserted that leaders needed to learn to follow if they were to successfully lead and that the leader-follower equation was interchangeable. Conversely, Gronn (2003b) and Russell (2003) challenged the notion of 'follower' in relation to leadership on the premise that it might not be applicable to the changing nature and structures of organisations that are characterised by networks and alliances, and in which leaders and followers are interdependent.

In this study the notion of leadership as a relational and influence process has implications for exploring leadership in Catholic schools. A key feature of Catholic schools is the strength of its relational and communal dimensions (Sultmann & McLaughlin, 2000). However, counter to this principle is a view that leadership in Catholic schools might still be grounded to some extent in conventional structures that reflect a hierarchical model of the Catholic church (D. McLaughlin, 2000). The extent to which leadership in Catholic schools is perceived and experienced as a relational process is explored in the study.

Leadership is also described in the leadership literature as an influencing relationship among leaders and followers, with the intention to bring about change that reflected a mutual purpose (Rost, 1993). In this sense the leadership relationship is multi-directional. Bradford and Cohen (1998) described mutual influence as involving a shift in expertise from person to person. They asserted that mutual influence encouraged more honest communication, higher quality decision-making, a greater commitment, and increased responsibility; whilst Bray (1999) suggested that different people within a group would lead at particular times and would exert the most influence in a given context. Yukl (2002) identified three distinct outcomes to the process of influence: commitment, compliance or resistance. His premise was that the influence process between a leader and followers could work in both directions depending on the degree of reciprocity with the target person who was being influenced. Pearce & Conger (2003) argued that leadership as an influence process was effective in distributing leadership in the organisation beyond the power of one person or position.

Power was explored in relation to leadership as influence. Power derived from formal authority was seen to be a legitimate use of power (Handy, 1993; Zand, 1997). Zand perceived that leaders relied on legitimate power as, *"their fundamental source of power"* (p. 137). Handy categorized legitimate power as authoritarian and autocratic when it was used in a coercive way to control, manipulate and dominate target persons within an organisation. Gronn (2003a) noted tensions between the notions of power and authority when the authority legitimised and governed a person's conduct. Gronn's critique of the equation of leadership with the processes of power and influence provided a sound argument for the practice of distributed leadership in an organisation.

Power was seen to be grounded within relationships between people (Hatch, 1997). Helgesen (1996) suggested that an effective organisation nurtured power that was derived from expertise in knowledge and skills and the power of relationships rather than from rank. Limerick et al. (1998) provided a holistic description of the relationship of power and leadership. They asserted that in post-corporate organisations all members have power and exercise democratic power in working both collaboratively and interdependently. In light of the literature, the influence of power in school leadership was an important factor to explore in this study. Bradford and Cohen (1998) argued that power determined by formal authority was still a model out of which schools operated. Teachers' views of leadership might reveal whether power is an influencing factor in leadership in Catholic schools and whether it is perceived by teachers to be exercised legitimately.

The notion of leadership as a process, its relational context, and the exercise of leadership as influence and power have direct implications for the nature and function of leadership in schools. All are important factors of the nature and function of leadership. The question at hand in this study is whether teachers perceive leadership in Catholic schools in light of these factors. An additional factor that was considered in the study was leadership in its cultural context. The particular aspect explored in the literature was the extent to which leadership might be determined and influenced by the cultural setting in which it is exercised. However, despite the extensive literature written on leadership and culture, there was no simple explanation of its interrelationship.

Leadership: the cultural context

Culture brings meanings to the lives of people and to organisations. Alvesson (2002) described culture as including *"values and assumptions about social reality and systems of*

common symbols and meaning." (p.3). Schein's (1992) schema of culture, within the framework of organisational culture, comprised three levels. They were: visible and tangible behaviours, for example, language and routines at the first level; values and norms that expressed the intrinsic worth of an organisation at the second level; and at the third and deepest level, core beliefs and assumptions about the way in which an organisation functions. For Bolman and Deal (2003) it is these interwoven elements that help members to define who they are and how they function within an organisation. Bolman and Deal perceived culture as a product, which embodied the accumulated wisdom or collective knowledge of its members, and as a process, which was continually renewed and re-created by its members.

The intricate nature of culture and the organisation requires some understanding of the particular cultural elements that influence, and are influenced by, leadership within an organisation. In this study, elements of culture were perceived principally as the traditions, beliefs, values and assumptions that grow out of the shared meanings of people (Alvesson, 2002) and that, in turn, shape their understandings and behaviours (Schein, 1992, 2004). In an earlier reference, culture was described in terms of 'character' (Timm & Peterson, 1993). They observed that trust, support, openness, listening and participative decision-making were essential elements of culture and that an organisation's culture or 'character' was developed from the shared vision of its members, reflecting their competencies and commitment.

Leadership was seen to shape organisational culture (Schein, 1992, 2004; Yukl, 2002). Alvesson (2002) discussed the interplay of leadership and culture in terms of both "*leader-driven organisational cultures*" (p. 105) and the "*culture-driven nature of leadership*" (p.

108). Alvesson acknowledged that leaders have the capacity to shape an organisation through their personal charisma and consequently influence many dimensions within an organisation. However, Alvesson also held the view that leadership was an outcome of culture. Because leadership occurred within the life of an organisation and specifically through the behaviours, understandings and perceptions of the members, culture in this sense was seen to determine leadership. Yukl (2002) argued that leaders have the power to either change or strengthen the culture of an organisation because of their direct influence on the motivation and behaviour of the members.

The leadership literature revealed that vision was also interrelated with culture and thus with leadership. Vision has both a personal and organisational perspective. Senge (1992) spoke of the importance of personal vision in relation to the organisation's vision: *"leaders must listen carefully to others' vision then they can begin to see that their personal vision is a part of something larger…"* (p. 352). Senge (1999) envisioned leadership as a shared vision that connected people bound by a common purpose and a desire to fulfil common aspirations. He emphasised the importance of a "*common caring"* (p.36) that drove a shared vision and gave meaning to the organisation. However, Shtogren (1999) countered Senge's argument with the view that an organisation's vision can often be the vision of only one person or one group and not a vision that is shared by the majority of members of an organisation. Literature relating to the post-corporate organisation referred to the notion of multiple visions that emerge as an integrated vision from many members within the organisation (Lipman-Blumen, 2000).

The literature revealed the integral and influencing connection between leadership, culture and vision. The study will further explore these interrelating forces in literature pertaining

to leadership in schools. The general leadership literature also revealed new approaches to leadership that provided a basis on which to explore and evaluate leadership in schools.

Leadership: new approaches

Insights were gleaned from the literature that highlighted how leadership is constructed in the contextual setting of the post-corporate organisation. Key factors that have contributed to the changing face of leadership include the formation of networks and alliances, a culture of collaboration, an action learning approach, and leadership diversity.

Leadership in the setting of the post-corporate organisation has been subject to widespread change as organisations seek new configurations to adapt to a rapidly changing society. Limerick et al. (1998) described the post-corporate organisation as one that has emerged during the 1990s as a result of discontinuous change at the economic, social and interpersonal levels in the western world. It is characterised by connective and collaborative perspectives, and functional purposes in which leadership is not identified with the qualities of an individual but as *"…behaviour that facilitates collective action towards a common goal*." (Limerick et al., p. 222).

The formation of networks and alliances

A characteristic of the post-corporate organisation is the boundaryless network organisation in which conventional structures and practices are being replaced by networks and alliances that are fluid, flexible, and interdependent, and with emphasis on processes rather than structures (Hesselbein, Goldsmith and Somerville 1999; Limerick et al. 1998).

Connective leadership

Lipman-Blumen (2000) described leadership within this environment as 'connective leadership' that promotes multiple visions yet encourages leaders to connect to the organisation's vision; creates community yet recognises diversity; exercises ethical principles, authenticity, and accountability; and is about entrusting, enabling and ennobling self and others. Within this environment the individual leader is no longer the exclusive source of knowledge and information. Rather, leadership can emerge from any individual who has the skills and knowledge to deal with complexity and change (Bradford & Cohen, 1997; Brown, 2003).

A culture of collaboration

Limerick et al. (1998) described a post-corporate organisation in terms of shared values, goals and beliefs that are represented in a corporate vision and mission of the organisation. Shtogren (1999) identified open and informal communication networks that encourage the dissemination and sharing of information among members of the organisation. Limerick et al. spoke of a culture of *"collaborative individualism"* (p.116) that focused on leadership which embraces both individualism and collaboration and involves individuals working collaboratively towards a common vision and mission. They recognised the autonomy of the individual and the individual's capacity for empowerment. The individual does not rely on structure and role as a definition of identity, rather self-definition provides a sense of continuity.

The particular focus on self-definition for the individual has implications for teachers. In this study it is considered that teachers' professional identity is foundational to leadership,

at the same time the study acknowledges that effective leadership requires a collaborative focus.

Emphasis on the autonomy of the individual in the concept of 'collaborative individualism' has implications for the notion of teams and teamwork in collaborative cultures. In the view of Limerick et al. (1998), foundational to the function of the post-corporate organisation was the recognition of individual differences and the development of *"mature proactive individuals who had the capacity to act on and transform systems"* (Limerick et al., p. 43). While Gronn (1998) advocated the collaborative nature of the workplace and the importance of teaming, like Limerick et al. he also stressed the importance for individuals to maintain a self-managing approach. Other writings placed value on teamwork (Shtogren, 1999) and team influence (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Pearce and Conger spoke in terms of the cross-functional team in which leadership is enacted by the capacity of any individual within the team to influence team members. In this study the notion of teaming provides an appropriate process for teacher collaborative practice through which teachers exercise and develop leadership

An action-learning approach

Limerick et al. (1998) viewed the post-corporate organisation as an action-learning organisation which, among other strategies, critiques its effectiveness through constant reflection on the mission, vision and values of the organisation; empowers individuals to be autonomous and to take action; and promotes a shared vision. Such strategies are considered in this study to be effective strategies that empower teachers in their professional practice and in exercising leadership. Shtogren's (1999) model of six leadership value enablers identified empowerment and self-determination as essential to

the function of leadership within an organisation. According to Shtogren, leaders who assist others toward competency and confidence in turn, promote *"cooperation, commitment, and community"* (p. 259).

Leadership diversity

According to Limerick et al. (1998), the post-corporate organisation does not rely on one leader, rather, it is characterised by "*a high density of diverse multiple leadership roles that together are able to sustain and transform the organisation*" (p. 45). In this sense, leadership is distributed among diverse individuals and teams within the organisation who in turn share responsibility for the organisation's growth and productivity, and all members share in the decision-making process (Senge, 1997) and work both collaboratively and interdependently (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003). Gronn (1998) asserted that the emphasis on distributed leadership was part of a broad global movement to reconstruct organisational systems.

Organisations that encourage individuals to work collaboratively towards a common vision and mission, yet at the same time, have a strong self-definition, and that distribute leadership to a diverse range of members, provide an environment that is conducive to effective leadership. In this environment, leadership is not dependent on 'positional' leadership that is exercised by the few who are designated to a position. Rather, it is distributed throughout the organisation and is shared by a wide range of members who work collaboratively, are connected to the vision of the organisation, and are empowered to share in decision-making. New approaches to leadership in this environment provide a lens for viewing leadership in the context of the school.

Leadership: principal elements

Although effective leadership might be one that is distributed and shared among a diverse range of members, there were some principal elements that were considered in the study to be critical to the integrity of leadership. Reser and Sarros (2000) identified ethics and morality as being key principles that underpin the integrity of leadership. Literature relating to leadership and values, and moral and ethical principles, is now examined.

Values and leadership

Values are identified in this study as internalised beliefs and attitudes which establish standards for behaviour and which influence and guide a person, group or organisation (Brown & Trevino, 2003; Hill, 1991). Hodgkinson's (1978) hierarchy of values framework provided a foundation for understanding the interrelationship between personal and organisational values. The framework highlighted the varying layers of values of individual and group value-stances. These include: values that reflect an individual's sense of what is 'good' in one's personal preferences; values that reflect a collective consensus of cognitive and social orientations such as mores and customs; and values that reflect beliefs and ideals which form the core values of the organisation. According to Hodgkinson, both organisational and personal values contribute to decision-making and vision within an organisation. Limerick et al. (1998) argued that core values lie at the very heart of an organisation and are formed by the members whose behaviour in turn, is defined and directed by those values.

Fairholm (1991) developed a model for leadership grounded in the values of the individual within the organisation. His model emphasised leadership that modelled values of caring, excellence, and stewardship; values that upheld justice, liberty, unity and happiness; values

of quality, service and innovation; values that upheld excellence; and leadership that modelled autonomy and productivity. Fairholm's model highlighted the capacity of an individual's values to influence and bring about change within an organisation.

Morals and leadership

In his work on leadership Burns (1979) asserted that the test of moral leadership was the capacity of the person to transcend situations and problems. As a result of a six year research on moral leaders, Colby & Damon (1992) concluded that moral leadership was most usefully understood in terms of the following elements: a long-term commitment to moral ideals, for example, a general respect for humanity; the exercise of discernment in pursuing moral goals; a willingness to risk self-interest for the sake of moral goals; a capacity to inspire others and having a balanced perspective about themselves. Moral leadership is thus the exercise of good judgment that is built upon the ideals, values and ethical principles upheld by an individual or organisation. Reser and Sarros (2000) suggested that by the very nature of decision-making, leaders reflect standards of morality in their function of leadership.

Ethics and leadership

Bass & Steidlmeier (1998) described ethical leadership in relation to the transformational nature of leadership, arguing that there was an expectation for human behaviour to be transformed. Bass & Steidlmeier declared that ethical leadership was determined by the presence of three key elements: a leader's moral character, the values embedded in a leader's vision, and the morality of social ethical choice and action of a leader. Research by Brown and Trevino (2003) identified the following personal traits as exemplars of ethical leadership: *"honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, showing concern and respect for*

people, being open, listening to the input of others and leading by example." (p.163). According to Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy (1999) one of the challenges for effective leadership in an organisation is to provide a code of ethical principles and values that reflects the nature and function of the organisation yet also acknowledge the varying value systems that its members bring to the organisation.

An investigation of the relevant literature has helped to establish the significance of personal and shared values in influencing leadership, and the importance of moral and ethical principles in upholding the integrity of leadership. These three elements will be explored further in literature pertaining to leadership in Catholic schools in section three in this chapter.

Section summary

In section one, a review of general leadership literature has revealed some key aspects of leadership that provide a broad lens for viewing leadership in the context of the school. These included: the notion of leadership as being contextual; a view of leadership as a process with a specific function; the significance of its relational and influence-based dimensions, and its integral relationship to culture and vision. New approaches to leadership that were collaborative-based and distributed widely among people within a given context were identified and considered to have direct implications for leadership in schools. Although leadership was seen to be flexible and contextual, the review also identified principal elements that uphold the integrity of leadership in any given context. In section two, literature pertaining to educational leadership in schools is reviewed in light of these understandings.

Section Two: Leadership in schools

In this section literature concerning two key aspects of school leadership is explored, namely, leadership in its cultural context, and leadership which emerged through school reforms. The literature is reviewed in light of key understandings revealed in section one.

Leadership and school culture

Schools are considered by Garrett (1997) to be highly structured organisations that reflect categories of formal organisations in terms of their structure, operational processes, philosophy and purpose; and informal organisations in terms of their cultural dimension. As leadership in schools was seen by Sultmann and McLaughlin (2000) to be integrally connected to all that happens within the school, relevant literature in this area was evaluated.

Traditionally, leadership in schools was invested in hierarchy and authority (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1989, Hoy & Miskel, 1996). During the past two decades writers and policy makers in the educational field have debated new conceptions and understandings of leadership to address the changes brought about by the school reform movement. However, a definitive understanding of leadership in schools continues to be problematic. Leadership cannot be defined precisely but is understood best within the context in which it is exercised (Beare et al.). According to West-Burnham (1997b), one of the problems pertaining to leadership is that individuals might be employed for their professional skills and abilities rather than for particular leadership competencies. Further, that unless their behaviour influences others in the organisation then their leadership will not take effect.

Ogawa and Bossert (1997) described leadership as an 'organisational quality'. Their understanding was based on its function in influencing organisation performance; its relationship to organisational roles; its emphasis on an individual's attributes; and its interrelationship with the culture of the organisation. As culture is integrally linked to organisational processes, it is important to consider culture as an influencing factor on leadership in schools.

As established in section one of this chapter, culture is integrally linked to all that happens within an organisation. In writing about effective educational leadership Bennett (2003) asserted that culture could determine and shape, and be determined and shaped by, structural change within the organisation.

Schein's (1992, 2004) concept of culture in the organisational context is reflected in key educational writings (Bennett, 2003; Deal & Peterson, 1999; Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999). According to these authors, culture encompasses beliefs, values, behaviours, symbols, assumptions, patterns and rules that underpin, guide, shape and characterise the life of a school and that have been developed over time by the key stakeholders in schools: teachers, students and parents.

 Leithwood, et al. (1999) suggested that strong, collaborative school cultures contributed substantially to school leadership. In earlier research Leithwood et al. (1996), identified behaviours aimed at the formation of school culture through sharing power and responsibility with others; working to eliminate boundaries between administrators and teachers; and providing opportunities and resources for collaborative staff work. In their collation of theoretical views on leadership in diverse contexts and cultures, Riley and

MacBeath (2003) acknowledged that leadership could be bound within the context of a school culture but it could also transcend the specific cultural context.

Within the cultural context of a school, leadership was seen by Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1997) as a demonstrated commitment to the school's vision and values and a capacity to bring about change. Beare et al. drew upon the transformational model of leadership of Sergiovanni (1990) which comprised a set of five forces that help to shape the organisation's culture: technical, human, educational, symbolic and cultural forces. Sergiovanni's premise was that leaders needed to attend first to technical and human forces, whilst the more transforming experiences would occur at levels in which the educational, symbolic and cultural forces were influential. His rationale was that the cultural and symbolic aspects of leadership often determined the outcome of leadership decisions more than the formal management controls and bureaucratic procedures, and that the leader's behavioural style was not as important as the values that the leader communicated.

The culture of a Catholic school is characterised by an ethos that is grounded in the values, attitudes and nuances of the participating members of the local school community and from which their lives derive meaning. Longitudinal research by Flynn (1993) and Flynn and Mok (2002) provided insights into the culture of Catholic schools in Australia. The findings revealed that the key characteristics of a Catholic school's culture included "*core beliefs, values, traditions, symbols and patterns of behaviour which provide meaning to the school community and which help to shape the lives of students, teachers and parents.*" (Flynn, 1993 p. 8). However, Duncan (1998) posed the question of the relevance of the cultural patterns of a Catholic school and their capacity to address the broader cultural

influences of post-corporate society. Duncan emphasised the need for the school to discern the influence of the competing cultures at work both from within and beyond the school community in order to find meaning from the school's core values.

Flynn and Mok (2002) drew upon Schein's (1992) view of culture to argue that leadership was interrelated with culture: *"Leaders create cultures when they draw groups of people together. Once cultures come together, they tend to determine the criteria for leadership of the groups."* (p. 166). Flynn's (1993) research identified five dimensions of leadership of principals in Catholic schools that set the tone of the school and shaped its culture: religious leadership; educational leadership; community builder; pastoral leadership, and school leadership. Grace (1995) and Duncan (1998) emphasised that the cultural characteristics of a Catholic school were crucial to, and influenced, the function of leadership in the school.

The review has established the integral relationship between leadership and school culture, in particular, leadership in the cultural setting of a Catholic school. Highlighted was the influence of culture in both shaping and influencing leadership. In light of the influencing factor of culture, changes that have occurred in schools as a result of school reforms and that have impacted on how leadership is constructed in schools are now evaluated in the relevant literature.

Leadership emerging from school reforms

School reforms, and the broader educational reforms, refer to the process in which policy makers and educators review the nature and purpose of education in terms of school renewal in order to enhance student learning and student outcomes (Mai, 2004). In this discussion the period of reform from the 1980s through to 2004 was considered, although

it is acknowledged that the process of school reform is ongoing. Reforms have emerged out of broader economic, cultural and scientific factors that created new constructions for learning, and that in turn, impacted on the function and efficiency of schools (Starratt, 1999). School reforms were considered to be a central context for the changes that have occurred in leadership in schools and in the resultant leadership approaches that have impacted on the professional practice of teachers.

Until the educational reforms of the 1980s, leadership in schools assumed the placement of designated individuals in formal positions of authoritative leadership and who exercised a top-down approach (Sergiovanni, 1992). In this approach a leader was designated with power and ultimate responsibility for administering and managing the organisation (Boles & Troen, 1996). However, as schools undertook more responsibility for their governance, policy and pedagogy standards there was a shift in power, authority and decision-making (Caldwell, 1998; Leithwood et al., 1999). Leadership thus began to be separated from the role and status of the individual to an approach that was based on collaborative relationships and empowerment (Muijs & Harris (2003).

Across the globe, various leadership approaches were enacted in schools during this period of reform. A brief review of two competing approaches, transactional leadership and transformational leadership which have been dominant in educational practices, helped to highlight distinctive characteristics that are considered in this study to be foundational to the exercise of leadership by teachers.

Transactional leadership developed out of a paradigm of transaction-exchange between leader and follower (Burns 1979) and focused on the relational qualities that existed

between leaders and followers. The leader was seen by Leithwood (1992) and Miller and Miller (2001) to give direction, vision and recognition in return for high performance from the follower. Leadership in schools has focused on elements of transactional leadership. A leader's principal task was to set specific goals for teachers and students with an emphasis on the accomplishment of tasks and over which the leader had formal control. Both the principal as leader and teachers as followers were in pursuit of a common purpose (Leithwood). Research by Day, Harris and Hadfield (2001) provided evidence that leaders in schools adopted elements of both a transactional and transformational approach. Although the literature revealed that a transactional style was an efficient process in achieving the school's goals, a factor for consideration in this study was whether characteristics of transactional leadership were evident in, and significantly influenced, leadership in Catholic schools, in particular, leadership by teachers.

In contrast to a transactional approach in which expectations were explicitly transparent and understood between leaders and followers, transformational leadership emerged as an appropriate leadership approach for schools experiencing change in policy and other organisational reforms. Based on Burn's (1979) understanding of leadership, in a transformational leadership model the individual, as leader or follower, is empowered to transcend self-interests and focus on the broader needs of the organisation. Burns' understanding of transformational leadership was further conceptualised by Bass (1985) and Avolio and Bass (1991). In Bass's construct, transformational strategies relied somewhat on the transforming nature of charisma, persuasion, idealism, and intellectual stimulation on the part of the leader, and elements of transactional leadership. Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (2003) identified key characteristics as being foundational to transformational leadership in schools. These included: building school vision and

establishing school goals; providing intellectual stimulation and offering individualised support; modelling best practices and important organisational values; demonstrating high performance expectations; creating a productive school culture; and developing structures to foster participation in school decisions.

Although considerable focus in the literature has been given to the value of transformational leadership in educational circles, there was criticism of the model from academics in Australian educational circles. Criticism by Gronn (1995, 1996) was levelled at the model's particular focus on the charismatic nature of the leader and the inadequacy of the model to make causal effects of leadership transparent, specifically, the qualities and the moment in time that determined the transformational character of the leader (Gronn, 1996). Gronn suggested that the model offered no value in its capacity to further democratise leadership. Lakomski (1995, 1996) argued that, although the model advocated the transformational role of the leader in bringing about change within the organisation and the members, the model did not reflect a sufficient understanding of the influence of organisational structures on learning. Lakomski proposed a model based on organisational learning and in which the school *becomes its own transforming agent and the notion of leadership of the one becomes leadership of the many"* (1995, p. 211). In response to the views of Gronn (1995) and Lakomski (1995), Gurr (1996a) advocated the value of the model, specifically in relation to principal leadership. Findings from research on principal leadership (Gurr, 1996a) revealed that a number of key elements of transformational leadership were perceived by members of schools to be exercised by principal leaders, namely, support for teachers, democratic decision-making processes, the importance of values, and symbolic and cultural awareness. Gurr (1996a, 1996b) suggested that a transformational leadership model provided a sound basis for the further exploration,

dialogue on, and development of, leadership conceptions for schools. Findings in research undertaken by Gurr, Drysdale, Di Natale, Ford, Hardy and Swann (2003) revealed that principal leadership comprised elements of transformational leadership in the work of principal intervention including the areas of school capacity, teaching and learning and student outcomes.

Characteristics of transformational leadership such as a shared vision, shared values and shared decision-making, and building school capacity, were considered in the literature to be foundational to leadership approaches that emerged and developed as a result of school reforms. As schools developed new approaches to teaching and learning for school effectiveness and improvement (Riley, 1998; Riley & MacBeath, 2003), new approaches to leadership promoted a more democratic and participative leadership by members other than those who were in a formal or designated leadership position (Leithwood et al., 1999). A factor to be addressed in this study was whether Catholic schools practise and promote a distributed and participative leadership that is inclusive of teachers in their professional practice, or whether leadership in Catholic schools continues to be equated with position, status and authority.

The distributive nature of leadership

A wide range of noted authors have contributed to the literature pertaining to a distributed approach to leadership in schools. Leadership approaches have been conceptualised as 'shared leadership' (Barth, 1990; Lambert, 2002; Leithwood et al., 1996; Sergiovanni, 1996), as 'distributed leadership' (Gronn 2002a, 2002b, 2003a; Spillane et al., 2001), and as 'parallel leadership' (Andrews & Crowther, 2002; Crowther et al., 2002). Collectively these leadership approaches uphold the principle that leadership is participative and

collaborative and is not necessarily equated with those who hold formal positions of leadership.

'Shared leadership' emphasises shared decision-making among members of staff. Sergiovanni (1996) termed it a shared responsibility that requires particular communication skills and interpersonal skills. However, in this approach, Barth (1990) suggested that the principal as the school leader might be seen to exercise the right to make the ultimate decisions. Research by Leithwood et al. (1996) identified a number of practices that supported shared leadership and decision-making. These were: distributing the responsibility and power of leadership widely throughout the school; sharing decision-making power with staff; providing autonomy for teachers in their decisions; altering work conditions so that staff have collaborative planning time; and creating opportunities for staff development.

Synonymous with 'shared leadership' is a participative leadership approach that focuses on the process of shared decision-making and commitment. As a democratic process, the participation and commitment of a wide range of school members in school decision-making, are seen by Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999) to bring about a positive impact on school As with shared leadership, a participative leadership approach was synonymous with distributed leadership (Bennett, Harvey, Woods & Wise, 2003). There is more than one interpretation of the concept of 'distributed leadership'. Australian educator Gronn (2000, 2002a, 2002b, 2003a, 2003b) has been a prominent author in contributing to a conceptualisation of the term. Underpinning Gronn's perspective is his notion of the 'division of labour' in creating interdependent leadership in the workplace (2003b). Gronn's premise was that while recognising the role and authority of a headteacher,

leadership in schools can be distributed throughout the school to any teacher whose ideas and views influence others. In this capacity teachers become "…*autonomous leaders*" (2000, p. 333). However, there is evidence of research to counter this argument. Research by Moore, George and Halpin (2002) revealed that headteachers could use their influence to subordinate such leadership to a managerial status and authority, therefore polarising teachers and headteachers.

Recent literature from Britain argued that leadership which is distributed within the school helps to promote and develop leadership capacity, ultimately to improve the learning outcomes of students (Frost & Harris, 2003; Lambert, 2000). Frost and Harris highlighted the benefits of the approach to be the blurring of the boundaries between followers and leaders, and the possibility for "*all teachers to become leaders in various ways, to a variable extent and at various times.*" (p. 480) The function of the group in which members "pool" their expertise is emphasised above the contribution of the individual (Bennett et al., 2003). However, Harris (2002a) suggested that distributive leadership should not necessarily preclude formal leadership roles. Harris asserted that those who are in formal leadership roles have a responsibility to ultimately oversee the function of the organisation and to create a culture of right relationships in order to empower others within the organisation. Millwater, Yarrow and Short (2000) referred to this capacity in terms of 'human agency'. They suggested that leadership in schools for the third millennium needed to pay due recognition to the authority of human agency and to embrace the notion of "*all members of the school community having a sense of control over the schooling agenda.*" (p. 5).

In Australia, Crowther and colleagues (Andrews & Crowther, 2002; Crowther et al., 2002) developed an alternative leadership concept, namely, 'parallel leadership'. It is collaborative in action and based on a recognition that teachers in their professional capacity make a parallel contribution to school improvement along with principals. Parallel leadership emphasises the linkage between, and collective action of, teachers and principals in building school capacity. Teachers and principals work collaboratively towards a shared purpose and in mutual respect for individual expression. Within the model three intersecting processes: *"professional learning, culture building, and school-wide approaches to pedagogy"* (Crowther et al., p. 39) are seen to enhance student learning and outcomes. Parallel leadership has provided a conceptual framework for the further development of teacher leadership.

Cheng (2002) identified a variation to a distributed leadership approach. He proposed self-leadership. Cheng advocated the need to reconceptualise school leadership into multi-leaders at multi-levels. His argument was that *"all major constituencies are potential leaders and that leadership is seldom limited to an individual."* (p. 113). He further recommended the need for self-leadership in schools at the individual, group and school-based level, to ensure the effective functioning of the school. However, more recently, Australian educators, Spry et al. (2004), argued that promoting a culture of shared leadership in educational systems was not easily or readily achievable, and required a mindset change in relation to leadership. They suggested the creation of a leadership framework that recognised the capacity of all members in the organisation to be leaders and to promote leadership development. This is relevant for the study, which explores the extent to which shared and participative leadership in Catholic schools is promoted and exercised. It might also help to establish whether schools, and teachers in particular, have

developed a new mindset for viewing leadership in light of a distributive approach to leadership.

Three key aspects of the distributive nature of leadership in schools are highlighted in the following paragraphs. These are empowerment and leadership, capacity-building and leadership, and learning communities and leadership.

Leadership and empowerment

Empowerment incorporates a relational dimension. In essence, empowerment involves delegation and shared decision-making and equipping people with the knowledge, resources and skills that are necessary for good decision-making (Hughes, Ginnett & Curphy, 1999). According to Starratt (1994), empowerment is ideally a relational process in that administrators and teachers work together in the exercise of mutual respect, dialogue and recognition of the particular qualities of the individual that can be used positively and creatively for the benefit of the school community. Sergiovanni (1995) further developed the concept by linking empowerment with accountability. He perceived that a person is empowered to make responsible decisions and so accepts the responsibility to achieve. For Sergiovanni, empowerment was linked to purposes and intents. In this capacity when teachers are empowered to undertake greater involvement and power in the decision-making processes in a school, they are in a position to transform the life of the school. A particular challenge in this study was to ascertain whether teachers felt empowered to exercise leadership in their professional practice and, subsequently, whether they contributed to transforming the life of the school.

Leadership and capacity-building

The need to build 'leadership capacity' for school improvement is a dominant theme in literature on leadership in schools (Harris & Muijs, 2002a; Harris, 2002b, 2003b; Lambert, 2000, 2002). Capacity-building occurs when leaders develop the school's resources, structures, culture and the professional skills of staff at the levels of the individual, whole team and whole school, and in turn, generate change for school improvement (Hadfield, 2003).

The term, 'leadership capacity' denotes particular synergies at work. Hopkins and Jackson (2003) defined 'leadership capacity' as, *"the route to generating the moral purpose, shared values, social cohesion and trust to make this happen and to create impetus and alignment."* (p. 89). According to Harris (2003a), building 'leadership capacity' emphasises the integral relationship between the function of leadership and school improvement in teaching and learning. Lambert's (2000) perspective was that the function of leadership is integrated with learning and professional practice and consequently becomes the professional work of all members of the school. According to Lambert, schools that are intent on building leadership capacity in their members will demonstrate collaboration, vision, a high level of inquiry, and reflection, resulting in student achievement. These findings are especially relevant as one of the purposes of this study was to explore the extent to which leadership is exercised by teachers in Catholic schools and is integrated with teachers' professional practice and learning.

Leadership and learning communities

One aspect of building leadership capacity involved developing schools as learning communities (Leithwood et al., 1999). A view of the school as a learning organisation that

is built upon collaboration, communication, professional growth and leadership that encourages learning, was a key factor in defining schools as learning communities (Caldwell, 1998).

Research conducted by Stoll, Bolam and Collarbone (2002) revealed that leadership in schools needed to focus on building a capacity for learning at all levels. This included the level of both students and teachers and the organisational level. It also included building a capacity for learning which promoted inquiry and research; developed a professional community of students, teachers and parents, extended beyond the school community, and that interfaced with the extended community and the wider school system.

In research undertaken in the secondary school context as part of a Leadership for Organisational Learning and Student Outcomes (LOLSO) Project, Silins and Mulford (2000) conceptualised six dimensions of leadership practice that promoted organisational learning. These included: communicating vision and goals; creating a culture of care; creating a structure that distributes leadership, promotes shared decision-making and encourages teacher autonomy; facilitating opportunities for intellectual stimulation; providing moral support to individuals; and setting high performance expectations. These key characteristics highlight the empowering relationship between leadership and its capacity to build a learning community. An issue for exploration in this study was the extent to which teachers contribute to building learning communities through the exercise of leadership in their professional practice and learning.

Section Summary

In section two, literature pertaining to leadership in schools was reviewed. The review

identified and evaluated leadership in relation to school culture with a specific focus on the

cultural context of Catholic schools. Literature on the development of leadership

approaches emerging as a result of school reforms was reviewed and evaluated. These

findings provided a foundation for exploring key dimensions of leadership in the context of

Catholic schools in the final section of this chapter.

Section Three: Leadership in Catholic schools

In this section themes that highlighted key aspects of leadership in Catholic schools were

identified in the literature. These themes were categorised and evaluated as key dimensions

of leadership in Catholic schools.

Key dimensions of leadership in Catholic schools

The themes include the authentic nature of leadership, the relational, communal and social

justice dimensions of leadership, and the vision, values, moral, spiritual, and ethical

dimensions of the Catholic school. They are evaluated as key dimensions that underpin and

influence leadership in a Catholic school.

The authentic nature of leadership in Catholic schools

The notion of authenticity implies a sense of being true to oneself and to one's

relationships (Duignan & Bhindi, 1997; Terry, 1993). Authenticity is deeply embedded in

each of the themes discussed in this section. Duignan (1997) identified elements of an

authentic leadership that are embedded in the mind, heart and soul of the person: integrity,

credibility, trust, a commitment to moral and ethical values, the capacity to empower,

inspire and nurture others, and a sense of service. Duignan's view was that an authentic leadership approach held the capacity to replace conventional leadership approaches by nurturing the spiritual and human dimensions of relationships in the workplace. According to Duignan, authentic leaders ... *help nurture, inspire and empower others."* (p. 30).

Duignan and Bhindi (1998) and Sultmann and McLaughlin (2000) proposed an authentic leadership for Catholic schools that was congruent with the shared vision, values, and ethical, moral and spiritual dimensions of the school. Sultmann and McLaughlin added a further dimension by identifying authentic leadership as a function of kingdom values within the Catholic tradition.

Authentic leadership in Catholic schools emerges from, and builds upon, the experience of community and the development of 'right relationships' among members within the school community. Sergiovanni (1996) argued that schools need to develop communities in which members are bonded by a sense of belonging and a common commitment to shared goals, ideals and common purposes. A school community built upon a network of relationships influences and strengthens school leadership (Riley & Seashore-Louis, 2000) The differing types of relationships that are formed among people within a school help to shape the various leadership styles which emerge (Ryan, 2002). This is relevant for this study as an exploration of teachers' perceptions and experiences of leadership in Catholic schools might illumine ways in which authentic leadership is discerned and exercised in the context of the Catholic school.

The relational and communal dimensions of leadership in Catholic schools

The relational and communal dimensions of Catholic schools are interrelating forces, as a sense of community built on right relationships is considered to be at the heart of a Catholic school (Sultmann & McLaughin, 2000). Sultmann and McLaughlin described the spirit of leadership in Catholic schools as a dynamic force working within the community of the Kingdom of God and promoting the holistic development of the person; right relationships; a sense of service; and a society marked by justice, love and peace. Duignan (1998) also promoted an authentic leadership for Catholic schools that is based on building quality relationships within a community. His perception of community as "*...relationships based on shared mind-sets that promote and celebrate belonging, acceptance, affirmation, caring and love*" (p. 47), reflects the essence of an authentic community.

The service dimension of leadership in Catholic schools

Authentic leadership in Catholic schools requires a firm commitment to the gospel vision and gospel action that is at the heart of the educational mission of Catholic schools. Commitment to the principles of social justice in promoting the 'common good' and in creating a more just society, reflects the authenticity of Catholic schools (Declaration on Christian Education, 1965; CCE, 1977, 1998). Bryk, Lee and Holland (1993) and Hollenbach (1996) emphasised that Catholic schools make a valuable contribution to the 'common good' of society. The term 'common good' derives from the tradition of Catholic social thought and upholds a social justice perspective. D. McLaughlin (1998) reiterated the need for Catholic schools to be committed to the principles of social justice that are in turn built upon the gospel values of the Kingdom of God.

A service approach is drawn from the servant-leadership model which has a strong biblical foundation (Isaiah 42:1– 4; 53: 1–12) and is congruent with Christian values. Greenleaf developed this servant model of leadership as a philosophy which *"…supports people who choose to serve first, and then lead as a way of expanding service to individuals and institutions …Servant-leadership encourages collaboration, trust, foresight, listening and the ethical use of power and empowerment."* (Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership, n.d.). Spears (1995) described Greenleaf's model as one that attempted to enhance the personal growth of the individual and improve the quality of the organisation through teamwork and community, decision-making and the exercise of ethical and caring behaviour. In Greenleaf's model the servant-leader does not necessarily hold a formal leadership position. Tatum (1995) perceived the model as one existing for all individuals in an organisation enabling them to become people of quality whose skills of listening, consensus-making, ethical decision-making and conflict resolution will contribute to the distinctiveness of the organisation.

D. McLaughlin (1997) claimed that there was no dichotomy between the exercise of servant-leadership and leadership in Catholic schools based on Christian service. As a professional, the teacher is constantly exercising collaboration, trust, intent listening and consensus-making, in dialogue with both colleagues and students. The study will seek to ascertain whether Christian service is discerned and exercised in leadership in Catholic schools, in particular, whether a sense of Christian service underpins leadership that is exercised by teachers in their professional practice.

The spiritual dimension of leadership in Catholic schools

In the context of Catholic schools, the spiritual dimension of leadership assumes significance. Neidhart (1998) wrote of a spirituality of ministry that is "*holistic, integrated and Gospel-centred*" (p. 88), with Christ as the exemplary model of a leader. According to Neidhart, school leaders need to be reflective and discerning, and to have time for solitude as a way of sustaining their spirituality. Sultmann and McLaughlin (2000) contextualised leadership in Catholic schools as a spirit force emanating from a *"kingdom vision of Christ"* (p. 171) which is expressed in the Catholic sacramental nature of communion and service.

According to Joseph (2002) the spiritual dimension of leadership is juxtaposed with faith, pastoral and ministerial leadership within the Catholic tradition. Joseph reported on research that conceptualised leadership in Catholic schools. This included faith leadership that emphasises the Catholic mission of the school (Wallace, cited in Joseph); pastoral leadership that fosters the spiritual and moral growth of the person (Manno, cited in Joseph), and ministerial leadership in terms of attending to the spiritual formation of members of the school community (Compagnone, cited in Joseph). It is acknowledged that the spiritual formation of the person is integral to the educational mission of a Catholic school. Specifically, an authentic spirituality that is faith-filled and has integrity and commitment is crucial to the function of leadership in a Catholic school. A key consideration in the exploration of teachers' perceptions and experiences of leadership was the influence of the spiritual dimension on leadership in Catholic schools and, in particular, on leadership exercised by teachers.

The vision dimension of leadership in Catholic schools

As stated in section one, vision is integral to leadership at both a personal and organisational level. This chapter has a particular focus on the integral nature of vision and leadership in the context of Catholic schools and the extent to which teachers claim to exercise vision in their professional practice.

Vision and vision-building were seen by leadership Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1989) and Duignan, 1997) to be central to school. With the distributive nature of leadership, vision-building in schools came to be referred to as a collaborative process of 'shared vision'. Hallinger & Heck (2002) argued that it is a shared vision that ultimately defines, and in turn is defined by, a school's culture and particular ethos. These authors also asserted that a personal vision was a powerful force in motivating those who exercise leadership to envision new ways of thinking and learning, and dealing with change.

In researching effective school leadership in English and Danish schools, Moos (2000) emphasised that the power of vision is within the domain of all teachers and not just school leaders. Moos advocated the need for school leaders to create shared visions and shared values through shared dialogue with teachers. He suggested that flatter structures in schools resulted in teachers having a greater share in establishing the vision of the school. Sleegers, Geijsel and van den Berg (2003) reported on research undertaken by Geijsel, Sleegers, Voeten, van den Berg and Kelchtermans, which revealed that vision-building was integral to the professional practice of teachers. It was proven to have a positive effect on teacher collaboration; participation in decision-making; teachers' feelings of uncertainty; and teacher professional development activities.

A Catholic school's vision articulates its educational mission and provides meaning and direction for its policies and practices. For example, policies formulated by the *Catholic Education Commission* of Victoria provide a 'blueprint' vision for Catholic schools in the State of Victoria where this study was conducted.

Leadership in Catholic schools is challenged to build a vision that encapsulates the spirit of its core beliefs and values; to share this vision among all members; and to be visionary in its educational endeavours (Duignan, 1997). Building on Duignan's view, a leadership vision for Catholic schools was considered in this study to be one that can be created, shared and exercised by teachers in their professional practice. The task of the study was to ascertain whether teachers have a personal and/or shared vision that is informed by the school's core beliefs and values, and whether their vision, personal or shared, influences and shapes leadership in the school, specifically, leadership exercised by teachers in their professional practice.

The values dimension of leadership in Catholic schools

As identified in section one of this chapter, core values lie at the heart of an organisation (Limerick et al., 1998). According to Duncan (1998) it is the values dimension of a school which defines its intrinsic character. However, as schools become more diverse in terms of their social and cultural dimensions, and their administration and decision-making processes, there is an increasing need for a school to identify and centre its values, and to recognise the influence of the personal values of individuals within the school (Begley, 1999).

Begley (1999) endorsed Hodgkinson's (1978) hierarchy of values as a framework for exploring the personal values of school leaders and the place of value processes in school leadership. Begley cited research findings by Begley and Johnansson which revealed that school leaders rely on core values in times of urgency or ambiguity to guide them in their decision-making, and that leaders use a value process that incorporates both personal and collective values within the organisation.

Leadership in schools is thus reliant on two dimensions, the personal values-stance of the individual and the collective values of the organisation. In research on school leaders in England and Wales, Day et al. (2001) revealed that effective school leaders communicate a set of personal and educational values that in turn underpin the moral dimension of the school. In their research for the *National College for School Leadership* Harris and Chapman (2002) concluded that schools that were faced with challenging circumstances required a form of leadership that was grounded in a value-system and a strong moral purpose.

A Catholic school's core values emanate from gospel values, define what the school community holds to be important and desirable, and shape the policies and practices that direct and influence all that occurs within the school (Flynn & Mok, 2002). It is these core values that inform leadership in a Catholic school (Sultmann & McLaughlin 2000). In section one, Fairholm's (1991) values of caring, excellence and stewardship, justice, liberty, unity and happiness, quality, service and innovation, excellence, autonomy and productivity were identified as key determinants of effective leadership practice in an organisation. In this study values identified by Fairholm are considered to be values that

are consistent with Catholic teaching and are hence, integral to authentic leadership in a Catholic school.

The moral and ethical dimensions of leadership in Catholic schools.

As identified in section one, the moral dimension of leadership is an organisational imperative. The values that underpin leadership in a school influence the moral dimension and moral purpose of educational leadership. Greenfield (1995) asserted that schools are uniquely moral enterprises because of their responsibility in attending to the fundamental and lawful needs of their students. School leaders and teachers are morally obliged to provide the best learning environment and resources for students.

Sergiovanni (1996) promoted the view that schools were moral communities built upon the moral connections of their members, and that the ultimate purpose of school leadership was to create a moral community. Sergiovanni argued that schools required a moral leadership whose moral connections and moral authority were grounded in a cultural context of a shared vision, goals and values. These form the essence of a community in which its members work cooperatively towards the shared goals.

Writers have stressed the spiritual dimension of moral leadership (Duignan, 1997). Leadership from this perspective is characterised by particular meanings and a self-awareness that heightens the individual or group's sense of moral purpose. West-Burnham (1997a) referred to leadership in the capacity of exercising a sense of moral confidence. Such leaders apply moral and ethical principles confidently and consistently in their professional practice.

Leadership in Catholic schools requires a commitment to *"significant values and ethical and moral behaviour"* (Duignan & Bhindi, 1998, p. 93). According to Duignan and Bhindi, authentic leadership is guided by an ethical and moral understanding of *"what is right and what is worthwhile"* (p. 96). In the light of Sergiovanni's (1996, 2000) view that moral authority and moral communities are grounded in a school's shared vision, goals and values, it is imperative that moral leadership in a Catholic school is grounded in the core beliefs and values of the Catholic tradition.

The moral and values dimension of leadership is integrally connected to ethical principles. As education involves the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, ethics is both implicitly and explicitly embedded in the school environment and its leadership (Walker, 1998). Starratt (1994, 2004) highlighted the important task of schools in building and nurturing an ethical school environment. He argued that schools are challenged to engage in ongoing reflective critique of their sense of social responsibility, their capacity to create a just social order, and their sense of care and respect for the individual. Further, Starratt emphasised that leadership in the 'post-corporate school' needed to be ethical-principled in its ethics of critique, justice and care, and to set exemplary standards of behaviour. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2001) expanded Starratt's framework to include the ethic of the profession as part of a multi-paradigm approach to ethical issues. As discussed in section one in this chapter ethical leaders help to set the tone, develop the vision, and shape the behaviour of all those who are involved in the organisation (Fairholm, 1994).

Walker (1998) identified the need for school leaders to exercise ethical discernment, ethical determination, ethical deliberation and ethical diligence, in creating an ethical school environment as part of their everyday work. He advocated that an ethical leader

should be: particularly sensitive and responsive to situations that arise; pro-active and committed to challenging difficult situations; deliberate in improving both personal ethical behaviour and the school's ethical standards; and able to sustain an ethical integrity at all times. Walker developed a model of school leadership roles and core commitments and emphasised that an ethical leader's role needs to be grounded in a sound commitment: *"to common ethical values; to the voice of professional convictions; to your personal conscience; and to your professional and social codes"* (p. 12).

Duignan (1997) and Burford (2001) emphasised the importance of the ethical dimension of leadership in Catholic schools. Duignan's notion of an authentic leader is one who is *"ethical and people-centred"* (p. 3). Duncan (1998) and Burford have drawn on Starratt's (1994) concept of the ethics of critique, justice and care, to urge leaders in Catholic schools to be ethical-principled. Burford declared that the *"ethical bonding between teachers, students and leaders"* (p. 12) influenced a school's culture and, in particular, its core beliefs and values.

As moral and ethical principles are considered to be critical to leadership in Catholic schools, an exploration of teachers' perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers might help to reveal whether teachers identify and exercise moral and ethical principles in their professional practice and ultimately in their leadership.

Section summary

In this section, key themes relating to leadership in Catholic schools were identified. The themes were evaluated as key dimensions that underpin and influence the nature and function of leadership in Catholic schools. Although there is evidence that these

dimensions of leadership help to characterise the nature and function of leadership in Catholic schools, the problem of attempting to definitively describe leadership in a Catholic school is acknowledged. A task of the study was to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of leadership in Catholic schools.

Chapter summary

In this chapter, leadership literature was reviewed. In section one the review established that leadership has particular characteristics which can be exercised in any given context, namely, its quality as a process, its strong relational context and its capacity to exert influence and power. Leadership was also evaluated in relation to culture. Cultural elements, namely, the power of shared and personal vision, both determine, and are determined by, leadership. New approaches to leadership were also identified. Literature pertaining to leadership in the context of the post-corporate organisation highlighted leadership as being connective, collaborative, empowering, flexible, participant-centred, action-centred, and driven by shared and multiple visions. Leadership was also reviewed in relation to key values and moral and ethical principles that are considered in this study to underpin the integrity of leadership.

In section two, literature on leadership in schools was reviewed. Leadership in its cultural context and leadership approaches that emerged through school reforms were evaluated in light of the key understandings of leadership revealed in section one. New approaches to leadership in the school were identified, reflecting leadership as perceived and experienced in the context of the post-corporate organisation. These included its relational, transforming and distributive nature, and its cultural and visionary dimensions. The

literature on leadership in schools also emphasised an integral connection between leadership and empowerment, building leadership capacity and learning communities.

Literature pertaining to leadership in Catholic schools was reviewed in section three. Key themes that were drawn from the literature were evaluated in light of their influence on the nature and function of leadership in Catholic schools. These included: the authentic nature of leadership; the relational, communal and social justice dimensions of leadership, and the vision, values, moral, spiritual, and ethical dimensions of Catholic schools.

In Chapter Three, literature pertaining to leadership by teachers and the opportunities for leadership development by teachers in Catholic schools, is critiqued.

CHAPTER THREE

Teacher leadership

Introduction

In this chapter, literature pertaining to the genre of teacher leadership is explored. A brief review of some developments in the professional nature and status of teaching, principally in Australia, is conducted to establish a professional context for reviewing teacher leadership. Literature relating to the professional expectations of teachers in Catholic schools, the specific context of the study, is also explored. Theoretical and empirical research relating to teacher leadership, principally from North America, Britain and Australia, is then evaluated. It is argued in this study that it is in teachers' professional practice and professional learning that teacher leadership in a Catholic school might be realised. Key aspects of teacher professional practice are identified and evaluated to ascertain the extent to which such practices might develop leadership in teachers. Literature relating to teacher professional learning is also reviewed to establish whether the professional learning of teachers supports leadership development in teachers. Finally, literature pertaining to leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools, the particular context for the study, is reviewed.

Section one: Teacher leadership: the professional perspective

In this section literature relating to the professional nature of teaching and literature relating to the professional requirements of teachers in Catholic schools is explored and evaluated.

The professional nature of teaching

An understanding of the professional nature of teaching through a review of some key

developments in teacher professionalism, principally in Australia, provides the educational

setting for this study. Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) established that teacher

professionalism brought together *"the personal, professional and political dimensions of*

teachers' professional lives" (p. 24). The focus in this chapter is on exploring some aspects

of teacher professionalism. It is beyond the scope of the review to consider the more

complex political dimensions of teacher professionalism.

The emergence of teacher professionalism as a body of literature has occurred

predominantly within the context of the school reform movement, which highlighted the

need for teaching bodies and authorities to attain professional status for teachers.

Australian educator Sachs (1999) identified two forms of teacher professionalism, namely,

democratic and managerial professionalism. According to Sachs, democratic

professionalism emerged from the discourse that occurs within the profession while

managerial professionalism comprises the standards of professionalism that are set in

policies and that ensure teacher accountability and effectiveness.

Writers such as M. McLaughlin (1997) and Day (1999) spoke of a new professionalism.

The essence of the professional nature of teaching in this sense shifted from the individual

to group participation and encompassed elements of participation in decision-making and

professional interaction involving collaborative work with peers, teamwork and

partnership. Teachers possess the capacity to exercise responsibility and leadership both

within and beyond the boundaries of the classroom and to make a valuable contribution to

the wider community (Biddle, Good & Goodson, 1997). However, previous to these

authors, and in Australia, Robertson (1996) expressed the view that the reorganisation of teachers' work to achieve teacher autonomy, *"in the name of a 'new professionalism'"* (p. 50), had not resulted in professional autonomy for teachers. Rather, it was more the authority of economic imperatives that controlled the work of teachers. Robertson argued that only at such times as teachers take control over their work will their sense of professional autonomy be realised. Smyth (2001) expressed a similar concern about the politicisation of teachers' work in Australia. His perspective was that recentralisation, and not decentralisation, was occurring in education and impacting on the work of teachers. Consequently, teachers were being marginalised, and the notion of teacher collegiality and participation was tokenistic.

According to Hargreaves and Goodson (1996), the creation of professional bodies for teachers has helped to advance the status of teacher professionalism. In Australia, the *Australian Joint Council of Professional Teaching Associations* (n.d.) comprises state and territory joint councils of teacher professional associations. Such associations provide a voice for teachers in education forums and a link to a wide range of professional development activities and materials.

In the state of Victoria, Australia, the geographical location for this research, an independent statutory authority, the *Victorian Institute of Teaching* (n.d.) was established in 2001 to regulate and to promote the teaching profession. According to Emmett (2002) the formation of such a body provides a coherent approach to the teaching profession across government, Catholic and Independent schools in Victoria, and a greater assurance of promoting and maintaining professional standards. Emmett maintained that the greatest

challenge for the Institute is its role in sustaining a standard and professional learning framework.

Other teaching bodies and associations, for example the *Australian Education Union* (n.d.), have made a substantial contribution to the teaching profession and teacher professionalism in all Australian states and the two territories. Although such bodies and associations share a similar focus on improving standards in teaching and learning, teacher leadership has not been their specific focus.

At the outset of the 21st century the Australian Federal Government acknowledged the need to establish a national body to promote quality teaching and learning. In 2004, a *National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership* (NIQTSL) (n.d.) was established in Canberra to improve the status of teacher professionalism and leadership in schools. Although it is in an embryonic stage, a key factor in the formation of the NIQTSL is its emphasis on leadership. According to the *Implementation Strategy for the Establishment of the National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership* (n.d.) its functions will potentially cover five areas: school leadership capabilities; professional standards; provision and coordination of professional development; quality assurance; and research. As there has been minimal research on teacher leadership and developing leadership in teachers in Australian Catholic schools, this study might contribute to the body of knowledge on the developing genre of teacher leadership, specifically, understandings that teachers in the Catholic school sector hold in relation to teacher leadership.

Moves to establish the NIQTSL reflect educational trends on the broader international scene. Both the *National Staff Development Council* (n.d.) in the U.S. and the *National College for School leadership* (NCSL) (n.d.) in Britain are committed to promoting quality teaching and professional learning through school improvement and staff development, with a focus on developing leadership at all levels. The conceptualisation of teacher leadership and the importance of leadership development for teachers are gaining momentum at both the national and international levels. Given that the context for this study is the Catholic school, an examination of the professional expectations required of teachers who are employed in Catholic schools is now detailed.

The professional requirements of teachers in Catholic schools

Catholic Church documents concerning education, which emerged from, and since, the Second Vatican Council, declare that teachers play a prime role in the educational mission of the church and specifically in the Catholic school. The documents present an image of the teacher as a model of Christian values, a witness to Jesus Christ (CCE, 1977, par. 43), and moral exemplar (CCE, 1998, par. 19). The teacher is seen to have a distinctive role in bringing to fruition the goals of the Catholic school (Declaration on Christian Education, 1965, par. 8) and in contributing to a unique Christian school climate (CCE, 1988, par. 26; 1998, par. 19).

In the documents, emphasis is placed on the integral nature of the faith and life of the teacher. The document *The Catholic School* (CCE, 1977) declared that the extent to which the integration of culture and faith will occur in the Catholic school relies on the integration of faith and life in the person of the teacher. Teachers are seen to have a dual role in exercising professional competence and expertise as educators, and demonstrating a

personal commitment to the school's vision as determined by the conditions of their employment status (Catholic Education Office, Melbourne [CEOM], 2002, Policy, 2.2). However, it was also acknowledged in the Policy *Accreditation to teach in a Catholic school* that: *"In striving to fulfil their vocation, teachers may experience a degree of tension between the demands of their professional lives and the commitments and responsibilities of their personal lives. The challenge lies in striking a balance between the two areas."* (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria [CECV], 1997, Policy 1.6, par. 7).

Some authors, such as Duminuco (1999), Feheney (1998) and Tinsey (1998) have supported this view and have argued that the capacity for teachers in Catholic schools to strike the balance is problematic. Research conducted by Tinsey revealed that many teachers do not accept the broader implications of Catholic theology for their work. Rather, they work principally in an educational context and don't always understand ecclesial language, the language of the theology of the Catholic Church. Duminuco argued that teachers are emerging from a church context that is diverse and confusing. He perceived that they bring to the school their own experiences and perspectives on life which are often in contrast to an ecclesial environment of a generation ago, one that was distinctive and certain. Feheney emphasised that the majority of Catholic schools were founded in a period of virtual universal religious practice when religious values were taken for granted. Therefore it cannot always be assumed that teachers today make a conscious decision to associate themselves with the mission of a Catholic school.

Teachers in general are perceived to be highly educated and committed to the profession (Sergiovanni, 1995). However, as Shimabukuro (1998) declared, in order to be an effective

educator, the teacher in a Catholic school is challenged to be cognizant of the societal trends that impact on the lives of young people. Shimabukuro referred to such pressures as *"technological advances, cultural diversity, an endangered ecology, moral relativism, decline of the family"* (p. 3). According to Shimabukuro's (1999) research, key areas of teacher commitment that are intrinsic to teachers in Catholic schools include a commitment to community-building; to lifelong spiritual and religious growth; to ongoing professional development; to the formation of students' spirituality; and to students' holistic and human development. Shimabukuro emphasised the experience of connectedness, mutuality, and compassion as the lived reality of a commitment to community-building. Duignan (1997) wrote of the need for both individuals and groups within a community to experience a sense of their interdependence and connectedness to something greater than the self. Shimabukuro claimed that a teacher's commitment required the ongoing formation of a teacher's inner growth toward wholeness. She spoke of the need for teachers to perceive learning as an intrinsic aspect of Catholic pedagogy and to embrace a process of lifelong learning. Shimabukuro expressed a vision for the authentic formation of both teachers and students as a way of attaining wholeness for teachers in Catholic schools. In light of a review of the relevant literature, it is argued in this study that the lived mission, ethos, sense of community and commitment experienced by teachers in a Catholic school provide an ideal climate for teacher leadership. The matter to be addressed in the research is whether the perceptions and experiences of teacher leadership in Catholic schools reflect the same ideals.

Section summary

In section one, literature pertaining to the professional nature of teaching and to the professional requirements of teachers in Catholic schools was reviewed. In the following section, literature on the theory and practice of teacher leadership is explored.

Section two: Teacher leadership: the theory and practice

In this section, literature pertaining to the theory and practice of teacher leadership principally from North America, Britain and Australia is explored and evaluated. The three principal fields of thought highlighted include the concept that leadership is not role-specific and that all teachers are leaders; that teacher leaders assume particular roles and responsibilities within schools, and that teacher leadership is an essential element of capacity-building for school improvement.

Teacher leadership: exploring the theory

Literature on teacher leadership has been emerging since the school reforms of the 1980s. However, whilst there are shared understandings of the concept among educational writers, the theoretical frameworks that are being developed reflect the different contexts of the authors. The discourse continues at both a national and international level. The literature was sourced principally from three educational contexts: the North American, British and Australian educational fields. The literature revealed that educators are constantly reviewing the functions of leadership in schools. They are seeking ways in which the facilitation of teacher leadership and leadership development for teachers can be achieved.

Teacher leadership: the North American context

A significant development towards a conceptual understanding of teacher leadership occurred in North American educational literature as a result of the findings of the Carnegie Task Force on *Teaching as a Profession* (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986). The findings revealed that teaching was perceived to be an isolated practice. Teachers were reluctant to think of themselves as leaders, and the organisational structure of schools did not allow teachers to assume leadership roles in either a formal position or in an informal way. Key recommendations from the report included the reform of the workplace based upon the principle of a philosophy of collaboration and risk-taking (Kruse, 2001), and the restructuring of schools to provide a professional environment for teachers as career professionals (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996). Subsequent studies supported the need for teachers to participate as leaders in order to enact school change (Urbanski & Nickolaou, 1997; Conley & Muncey, 1999). A focus on teachers assuming leadership, which functioned beyond the traditional practice of designated leadership, emerged. Teachers were seen to have the capacity to lead by assisting and influencing fellow colleagues in educational practice within the classroom, and beyond the classroom, to include additional roles and functions that would normally be performed by senior management (Barth, 1999).

According to Ash and Persall (2000), the key terms 'lead teacher', 'teacher leader' and 'teacher as leader' were grounded in the principles of formative leadership theory that advocated the place and role of multiple leaders and multiple leadership possibilities at different times. The underlying premise was that leadership was not role-specific but belonged to both leader administrators and teachers alike. In Ash and Persall's view, the very process of teaching was a leadership function, as a formative leader possessed a wide

range and high level of abilities and facilitation skills that ultimately enhanced the learning of both the student and teacher. Key principles identified by Ash and Persall that helped to conceptualise the theory and promote quality teacher leadership included: the formation of network alliances; a team inquiry approach; the building of relationships; a culture of empowerment, trust and encouragement; and the capacity to manage change. This study explored whether any or all of these factors were perceived and experienced by teachers as leadership practices.

Within their framework, Ash and Persall (2000) advocated a range of new role expectations which they perceived to provide opportunities for teachers to emerge as leaders both within and beyond the classroom and, consequently, to make a vital contribution to restructuring the teaching and learning process. They identified specific fields which were complex and required the exercise of high quality leadership skills, including curriculum development, interdisciplinary teaching, student assessment, counselling, peer review and parental involvement, with an understanding that teachers can undertake such leadership roles in either a formal or informal capacity. An exploration of the perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers involved in the research might indicate whether these practices are exercised by teachers in Catholic schools and perceived by these teachers to demonstrate leadership.

Ash and Persall's (2000) principles and role expectations reflected the two key areas that constantly appear in the literature relating to the exercise of teacher leadership, namely, leadership exercised by teachers within their classroom practice and leadership exercised by teachers in activities that occur beyond their classroom practice. It was within these two areas that a further review of the literature relating to teacher leadership was

undertaken. However, as the professional practice of teaching is such an integral function, there is a considerable integration and overlapping of understandings throughout the discussion.

Katzenmeyer and Moller's (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996; Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996) concept of teacher leadership is grounded in their conviction that teachers have the professional knowledge, experience and capacity to directly effect school reform. They asserted that teachers have the capacity to lead and influence student learning; to lead and influence colleagues in effective educational practice; and ultimately to create a community of leaders. As a result of their work with teachers, Katzenmeyer and Moller articulated a number of key assumptions that they considered to be significant in understanding the nature and practice of teacher leadership. These included: all teachers have the capacity to engage in teacher leadership; teacher leadership entails both formal and informal roles; teacher leadership encourages teachers to lead in classroom practice; teachers, as leaders, have the capacity to direct their own professional practice as reflective practitioners, and that long-term teacher development is required. These assumptions underpinned this study, which was to ascertain whether teachers involved in the research perceived these same assumptions to be key indicators of teacher leadership.

Moller and Katzenmeyer (1996) regarded teacher leadership to be *"a critical competency for every teacher"* (p. 11) and declared that teacher leadership could either develop through the normal professional practice of teachers or be purposefully developed through long term planning. Research undertaken by Boles and Troen (1996), Harrison and Lembeck (1996) and Smylie (1997) revealed the integrative nature of professional learning and teaching. Boles and Troen's research was based on the premise that teachers' expertise

developed according to their particular interests. Their findings revealed that teachers had a preference for leading by developing their professional expertise rather than attaining a designated position of leadership. According to their criteria, teachers demonstrated leadership when they facilitated the development of others; they collaborated with colleagues in team teaching, and expanded their professional role and influence in educational circles beyond the school. Boles and Troen held the conviction that teachers who were empowered had the capacity to enact change in schools. Similarly, Smylie provided evidence that teachers aspired to and assumed leadership roles, when they considered the roles to be opportunities for professional growth and when there was an obvious connection to their classroom teaching practice. The opportunities for the exercise of teacher leadership and leadership development for teachers through collaborative professional practice and professional learning were a key area for exploration in this study. The question to be asked of teachers involved in this research was to what extent collaborative professional practice and professional learning facilitated leadership in teachers.

Research by Harrison and Lembeck (1996) focused on the emergence of teachers as leaders. Their research emphasised the importance of the role of informal teacher leaders who made a vital contribution to life in the school beyond the classroom in undertaking initiatives; in their commitment to voluntary activities and projects; and in accepting responsibility for their own professional development. They described teachers in this context as "*emergent teacher leaders*" (p. 101). From the research, Harrison and Lembeck identified key attributes of teacher leaders. They concluded that teachers are actively involved in enacting change; effectively communicating in a variety of contexts; and have a global understanding of the context of the school within the wider community and the

disposition to grow professionally. Their premise was that principals could identify

teachers who showed potential for leadership and support them in their development.

These insights highlighted the need for this study to focus on teacher leadership exercised

through teachers' professional practice, independent of leadership through a formal or

designated position of leadership.

Literature on teacher leadership in the North American context has provided wide-ranging

evidence that the concept of teacher leadership is established in both theory and practice

and is embedded in the key domain of teachers' professional practice and in the

professional growth of teachers. However, while the literature provided sound arguments

for the conceptualisation of a theory of teacher leadership, there were fewer examples of

literature which focused on specific leadership categories for teachers. Research by

Leithwood et al. (2003) was one exception. Their research illuminated some

understandings of leadership categories including traits, practices, capacities and outcomes

used to establish forms of teacher leadership valued by teachers**.** Leadership traits were

identified by teachers as values, personality, orientation to people, mood, responsibility

and physical characteristics. Leadership practices included the performance of

administrative tasks; modelling valued practices; the exercise of formal leadership

responsibilities; and supporting the work of other staff. The main leadership capacities

identified were knowledge, relationships with staff, problem-solving, communication

skills, and being visionary, whilst the main outcomes perceived to be associated with

leadership included gaining the respect of staff and students, implementing things well,

being considered a leader by staff, and enhancing staff comfort levels. Leithwood and his

colleagues observed that teachers who enacted these leadership capacities actively

contributed to both administration and leadership in their school. In this study leadership

attributes, leadership competencies and leadership approaches were particular leadership categories identified and included in the questions for the conduct of the focus group interviews.

Teacher leadership: the British context

As in North America, the professional stance of teachers in Britain and their capacity for leadership have been highlighted through government scrutiny of school reform. Emphasis was given to the development of leadership in subject and department heads as a result of the introduction of a national curriculum (Frost and Harris, 2003). As referred to in section one of this chapter, a major national initiative in Britain as a result of Government educational reforms in the late 1990s, was the establishment of the *National College for School Leadership* (NCSL) in 2000 to provide a national focus for school leadership development, research and innovation. Its focus is on both formal and structured, and informal and unstructured leadership programs in schools. A prime focus of the NCSL in leadership development is 'distributed leadership' as detailed in a *Summary Report* (Bennett et al., 2003). The report indicated that distributed leadership, in terms of network relationships and group activity occurring at different levels within the organisation, might provide key foundational principles on which teacher leadership can be further developed.

Research through the NCSL has focused on the nature of leadership development in teachers. However, it appears that the main focus of the research is on teacher leadership as a foundation for obtaining a headship rather than teacher leadership as a status in its own right and independent of formal leadership. In their research on the preparation of teachers for headship, Tomlinson and Holmes (2001) concluded that 'potential' teachers were likely to function effectively as headteachers through the exercise of specific leadership

characteristics. These included: a sense of mission in terms of the purpose and value of education; an understanding that authority stems from the responsibility they show to other people; the capacity to conceptualise ideals; the capacity to plan and follow things through to completion; strong communication; credibility; a sense of command and empathy; understanding and appreciating differences between people; an ability to raise morale through humour and personality; and an ability to address complex and conflicting demands. Harris and Muijs (2002a) reported that British research on effective schools still largely focused on the headteacher. In such cases, leadership in schools continues to be equated with position. Frost and Harris (2003) raised concern about debate that linked the construct of teacher leadership to *"instructional leadership"* (p. 484), which is essentially directive leadership from the top to raise standards. They declared that this approach had the potential to impose restrictions on the development of understandings of teacher leadership. The focus of this study was on leadership by teachers in their professional practice, independent of formal leadership. The leadership characteristics identified by Tomlinson and Holmes are relevant to the exercise of leadership by teachers. One of the purposes of this study was to enable teachers involved in the research to indicate specific leadership attributes, leadership competencies and leadership approaches which they perceived characterised leadership by teachers in Catholic schools.

A particular focus in the British research on teacher leadership is the linkage between teacher leadership and school improvement. As discussed in section two of Chapter Two, building leadership capacity for school improvement has been a dominant factor in the development of alternative approaches to leadership in schools. Harris (2002b) identified four key dimensions of teacher leadership which she perceived to ultimately promote school improvement:

- brokering - the way in which teachers translate principles of school improvement into their classroom practice;

- participating - the way in which teachers work with colleagues to enact change and improvement;

- mediating - the way in which teachers are sources of expertise; and

- relating - the way in which teachers foster collaborative practice and mutual learning with colleagues.

These four dimensions, collectively and discretely, highlight ways in which teachers' leadership in their professional practice can contribute to school improvement. The task in this study was to ascertain the extent to which teachers perceived their leadership exercised in their professional practice contributed to school improvement.

While Harris (2002b) connected the practice of teacher leadership to school improvement, Harris and Muijs (2002b) promoted the practice of teacher leadership in relation to sustaining school improvement through improved learning. Their premise was that teachers are the powerful influencers on school effectiveness, and that *"…sustaining improvement requires the leadership capability of the many rather than the few…"* (p. 1). Frost and Durrant's (2002) belief in teachers' capacity to re-professionalise the teaching community draws on the notion of teachers as powerful influencers in bringing about change in teaching and learning in schools. They asserted that emphasis needed to be given to *"…the capacity of individual teachers to make a real difference,…"* (p. 144) to their own professional practice and ultimately to student learning.

Underpinning the notion of developing teachers' capacity was a sense of the authority of

"human agency" (Frost and Durrant, 2004, p. 311). Frost and Durrant sourced Bruner

(1996) to emphasise the need for teachers to have a sense of their own agency by

understanding themselves and essentially taking control of their lives. This involved

making moral choices about actions and undertaking responsibility for these actions.

The authors sourced Mitchell and Sackney's (2000) concept of organisational capacity that

was grounded in the "*personal and interpersonal capacity of teachers*" (cited in Frost &

Durrant, 2004, p. 309). Frost and Durrant's view was that a school's organisational

capacity is dependent on the extent to which teachers are able to develop their professional

knowledge and skill, and build collaborative relationships with colleagues. Similarly, Frost

and Harris (2003) referred to the notion of agency in terms of teachers' understanding their

own personal capacity and their capacity to make a difference. They identified key factors

that might determine the nature of teacher leadership and the extent to which such

leadership can be exercised in schools. These factors were: an understanding of the

construction of teachers' professional role; the organisational environment of the school

including organisational structure, organisational culture and social capital; and teachers'

personal capacities including authority, knowledge, situational understanding and

interpersonal skills. These key factors provide an appropriate framework for exploring

leadership by teachers in this study.

As an integral part of building leadership capacity in teachers, Frost and Durrant (2002)

developed a conceptual framework that focused on teacher-led development work to

challenge teachers to evaluate their classroom practice, their personal and interpersonal

capacities, and the resultant impact that these capacities have on their professional

development. Subsequent sections of the framework require teachers to evaluate the impact

of their development work in relation to the school's structures, processes, culture and capacity, and beyond the school. The central part of the framework comprises a process for teachers' evaluation of their development work on students' learning under categories of attainment, disposition and metacognition. Frost and Durrant (2004) argued that their conceptual framework of teacher-led development might occur either independently within the school or through a supporting partnership arrangement with a university. Although this framework is not utilised in the conduct of this research, it highlights the direct engagement of teachers in leadership development evaluation and could be a vital reference for further research on leadership by teachers in Australian schools.

Teacher leadership: the Australian context

In Australia, research development on the concept of teacher leadership has been more limited than that in North America and Britain. Nevertheless, sustained research has been undertaken by a few. According to Crowther (1996) the concept of teacher leadership in Australia had its foundation in the "…*Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) classification…*" (Crowther, p. 304), developed in a number of Australian states in the previous two decades to improve the professional status of teachers. Although this initiative was not sustained, the concept of teacher leadership gained some recognition. Crowther's initial research with Olsen leadership, as reported by Crowther, addressed two key aspects that Crowther believed hindered the development of teacher leadership: the notion of lead teacher as a formal role and school leadership that was grounded in formal leadership roles. His premise was that educational leadership theories were grounded in authoritative leadership and did not focus on leadership that was exercised by teachers in their classroom practice.

In the ensuing years Crowther and his colleagues (Andrews & Crowther, 2002; Crowther et al., 2002) developed a *Teachers as Leaders* framework. The framework was underpinned by a vision of leadership that has its focus on building collaborative communities of teachers who can transform the teaching and learning process in a school. It was formulated from the outcomes of research conducted over five years which explored the work of exemplary teachers in schools where there was evidence of enhanced student achievement, and schools where there was evidence of principals nurturing teacher leadership. According to their research, six key capacities identify teacher leaders who exercise influence in their communities by:

- conveying convictions about a better world;
- striving for authenticity in their teaching, learning and assessment practices;
- facilitating communities of learning through organization-wide processes;
- confronting barriers in the school's culture and structures;
- translating ideas into sustainable systems of action; and
- nurturing a culture of success.

Crowther et al. (2002) acknowledged that teacher leaders might or might not demonstrate these six capacities in their entirety but that the essence of the model was in the value of "*ordinary people doing extraordinary things.*" (p. 16). Further, they noted that such a model sits comfortably with the mood of a post-corporate world as organisations attempt to de-structure leadership roles and encourage more participatory leadership models. From the research, five premises, which helped to conceptualise teacher leadership, were developed. They recommended that the premises serve as a guide for the teaching profession and educational policy-makers functioning in a post-corporate learning community. The premises promoted the idea that teacher leadership was real; that it was

grounded in authoritative theory; that it was both distinctive and diverse; and that it required nurturing.

Having established a sound educational philosophy for teacher leadership, Crowther and colleagues developed the concept of 'parallel leadership' wherein teachers and administrators work collaboratively to build school capacity as a "*shared professional responsibility*" (Crowther et al., 2002, p. 38). Parallel leadership is characterised by mutual respect and trust, a sense of shared purpose and the encouragement of individual expression. It facilitates the professional learning of teachers, the building of school culture and the development of a whole-school pedagogy.

The research of Crowther and colleagues has further contributed to the development of the concept of teacher leadership. While a principal focus in the North American literature was on the formal and informal role expectations of teachers as leaders, the British literature highlighted the integral nature of building leadership capacity in teachers for school improvement. The contribution of Australian writers is significant in providing a framework in which teachers and school leaders can work in a collaborative and parallel way to build school capacity. However, the notion that teacher leadership is grounded in authoritative theory (Crowther et al., 2002) highlights the problematic nature of formulating a framework for teacher leadership which can transcend educational leadership approaches. Cranston (2000) argued that the debate on teacher leadership needed to be conceptualised through some rethinking of the work of teachers, including "*the craft of teaching and skills, knowledge, competencies and attitudes of the individuals*" (p. 124) who are involved in the profession currently, and future teachers. As a result of research which focused on the increasing expectations and opportunities for teachers to demonstrate

leadership, Cranston attempted to conceptualise a *'teachers-as-leaders'* (2000, p. 123) framework through the development of a professional standards framework for teachers which also identified leadership competencies. One of the purposes of this study is to enable teachers involved in the research to identify and articulate specific leadership competencies they perceive themselves exercising in their professional practice.

Silins and Mulford (2000) drew upon data collected in the *Leadership for Organisational Learning and Student Outcomes* (LOLSO) Project conducted in secondary schools in Australia to make a case for the influence of teacher leadership on student outcomes and organisational learning. The data revealed that the significant predictors of teacher leadership were teachers feeling a sense of being valued and being satisfied with how leadership functioned in their school. Their conclusions were that schools which operated as learning organisations developed a trusting and collaborative climate that promoted teacher leadership through informal strategies rather than formalised roles. Teachers were encouraged to take initiatives; to experiment with new ideas; to work collaboratively to influence activities within the school as well as taking into account the wider community; and to share in decision-making. It was the view of Silins and Mulford that teachers who have the opportunity to learn within the organisational learning context of a school will increase their own potential to exercise leadership both within and beyond the classroom. A challenge for this study is to ascertain whether teachers perceive that Catholic schools develop a collaborative climate which promotes leadership by teachers who, in turn, influence organisational learning and student outcomes.

In summary, an exploration of the literature principally from North America, Britain and Australia has revealed conceptual understandings that are similar yet distinctive in relation

to leadership as exercised by teachers. Leadership in schools is not necessarily role-specific and so all teachers have the capacity to be leaders.

While teacher leaders may assume particular roles and responsibilities within a school, teacher leadership is an informal process that occurs beyond formal leadership in a school, and it is embedded in the integrative nature of teaching and learning through teachers' professional practice, both in and beyond the classroom, and teachers' professional learning. Teacher leadership develops best in a collaborative and participatory working environment, and has the capacity to enhance student learning and ultimately to contribute to school improvement. While these key understandings have emerged from the literature in general, the specific focus of educational systems varies. Literature from North America established the initial conceptual understandings of teacher leadership and made a vital contribution to the development of the concept of teacher leadership as informal leadership that occurs within the professional practice and, ultimately the professional growth of teachers. Literature from Britain placed a greater emphasis on the need to establish professional structures in schools which supported teachers in leading through a focus on building leadership capacity for school improvement. Literature from Australia focused on developing frameworks in which teachers can recognise their particular leadership capacities and demonstrate some or all of these capacities in their everyday professional practice.

The findings arising from a review of literature pertaining to teacher leadership have significant implications for this study. They highlight principal concepts which have developed in relation to teacher leadership, and hence inform the main purpose of this

study which was to explore teachers' understandings of leadership exercised by teachers in Catholic schools.

As the exercise of teacher leadership is deeply embedded in teachers' professional practice, key aspects of teacher professional practice are now addressed.

Teacher leadership: exploring the practice

Effective professional practice has been a prime requirement for teachers in enacting leadership, as evidenced in literature since the early 1990s. Fullan (1994) identified six interrelated domains of commitment and knowledge as requirements for teacher leadership: knowledge of teaching and learning; knowledge of educational contexts; knowledge through continuous learning; knowledge of the change process; moral purpose; and collegiality. Fullan (2001; 2003a) further developed these concepts. According to Fullan, the ability of a teacher to exercise effective professional practice reflected a teacher's capacity to exercise leadership. Fullan's premise was that leadership is for all teachers. He asserted that until teachers conceptualised their role then the notion of teacher leadership would not be attainable. A challenge in this study was to ascertain whether teachers in Catholic schools have formed a conceptual understanding of leadership exercised by teachers.

In Australia, a *National Framework for Professional Standards for Teaching* (Ministerial Council On Education, Employment Training And Youth Affairs [MCEETYA], 2003) was formulated to enhance the status of the teaching profession and to promote quality teaching and learning. The emphasis was on establishing a range of standards for teachers which was broader than competencies. Attitudes and values were also included in the framework.

'Leadership' is one of four career dimensions identified for teachers in the framework. According to the descriptors, teachers achieve leadership when they demonstrate: knowledge in pedagogy; high level interpersonal skills; effective communication; critical analysis and skills in problem-solving; engagement in professional learning; and the promotion and encouragement of the professional learning of colleagues. These leadership standards as identified by MCEETYA reflect key understandings of leadership that were revealed in the general leadership literature and in educational literature which highlighted new approaches to leadership in schools. It is the task of this study to ascertain whether teachers involved in the research perceive that they apply these standards in their professional practice, and thereby ultimately exercise leadership.

The key professional practices which enable teacher leadership, as identified by Fullan (1994) and articulated in the *National Framework for Professional Standards for Teaching* (MCEETYA, 2003) are substantiated by other educational writers, as the following discussion demonstrates.

Knowledge of teaching and learning

Fullan (1994) argued that quality student learning will not occur until quality development and learning is attained and sustained by all teachers. The literature acknowledges that teachers require a depth of knowledge about their subject matter (Ash & Persall, 2000), knowledge of an effective pedagogy and learning theory (Tanck, 1994), and a capacity to generate knowledge (Andrews et al., 2001). Fullan's premise was that professional knowledge should be grounded in the individual's belief about what constitutes good teaching practice. Tanck claimed that a *"knowledge-based competence"* (p. 89) was foundational to education. He emphasised the capacity of an effective teacher to nurture a

style which can empower the teacher to integrate knowledge, pedagogy and learning theory into professional practice. Tanck perceived that this could be achieved through *"recognizing teachable moments, sensing student engagement, confirming comprehension, and developing meaningful applications of subject matter [which] require astute observation, subtle sensitivity, and informed decision making."* (p. 86). Andrews et al. (2001) referred to a *"process of knowledge-generation - combining practical and theoretical knowledge in their specific school context"* (p. 15). These authors also emphasised the importance of the *"theoretical, abstract and decontextualised knowledge"* (p. 19) obtained by teachers from sources beyond the school, but argued that this is not always contextual. They advocated for a collaborative approach by teachers to contextualising knowledge through the development of a schoolwide pedagogy. Their premise was that the collaborative engagement of teachers in knowledge creation helped to redefine the professional nature of teaching.

In his later writings Fullan emphasised the power of knowledge creation and knowledge-sharing in schools (2001) and the need for increased knowledge by teachers, administrators and policymakers in schools to improve and sustain the wider moral and social environment of society (2003a). The role of teachers in developing a 'knowledge economy' was emphasised in the writings of Kalantzis and Harvey (2003). Their premise was that teachers lead the way in reshaping the way knowledge is created and communicated.

Ways in which knowledge is created and communicated by teachers in their professional practice are an important consideration in this study. The study seeks to establish the

significance that teachers place on knowledge competency in the teaching and learning process.

Knowledge of educational contexts

Fullan (1994) argued that, for teachers to lead, they must understand and develop skills to connect with the broader educational context, that is, to forge partnerships with parents and other outside agencies in order to promote an educative community. In this sense teachers become the leaders in the community, a view promoted by Chapman (1997). Chapman suggested that schools needed to build collaborative relationships with the local community. Her argument was that schools must be re-conceptualised as centres of community learning for all. She acknowledged that this kind of provision would rely heavily on the competencies, skills and knowledge of the teaching profession.

Knowledge of continuous learning

Teachers demonstrate effective leadership when they participate in educational improvement (Childs-Bowen et al., 2000; Fullan, 1994). Fullan argued for teachers to become lifelong learners and to be continuously engaged in self-improvement. This argument is supported in the writings of Kalantzis and Harvey (2003), and Chapman, Toomey, McGilp, Walsh and Warren (2003), and educational institutions which promote the concept of lifelong learning through the formal establishment of courses and centres, for example, Australian Catholic University Research Centre.

Lifelong learning focuses on the continuous development of human potential through processes which support, stimulate and empower individuals to acquire and apply knowledge, skills and values in their lives (Chapman, 1997). Day (1999) argued that one of

the primary tasks of a teacher was to develop in students "*a disposition towards lifelong learning*" (p. 2). This study seeks to establish whether teachers perceive that knowledge of continuous learning is a key requirement for leadership by teachers.

Knowledge of the change process

Teachers need to understand and manage change in order to develop their thinking and practice (Fullan, 1994, 2001, 2003a; Harrison & Lembeck, 1996). Fullan (2001) defined leading in a culture of change as having the capacity to be critical and selective in the incorporation of ideas and practices. Fullan also spoke about developing a deeper sense of change as a process by *"accumulating insights and wisdom across situations."* (p. 48). Wideen, Mayer-Smith and Moon (1996) claimed that teachers respond to change when the control of change lies with them and not with other authorities. Resistance to change is one factor that can inhibit teacher leadership. Schon (1996) suggested that resistance will occur when the stable forces which shape and maintain a teacher's identity may be threatened.

The connection of teachers to the broader educational context, their engagement in continuous learning and their capacity to understand and manage change have been highlighted in the literature as key requirements for leadership by teachers. This study seeks to establish whether teachers recognise the significance of, and demonstrate, these requirements in their professional practice.

Moral purpose

Fullan (1994) argued that moral purpose is integral to teacher leadership as part of a teacher's moral responsibility. In recent writings Fullan (2003a) argued that "*teachers,*

administrators and policymakers alike" (p. 13) had a responsibility to make a difference in

students' lives, and that they could collectively achieve moral purpose by reducing the gap

between high and low performers in schools and ultimately contribute to improving

society. Fullan's emphasis on the collective moral purpose of teaching is foundational to

the practice of distributed leadership at many levels within the school. This study seeks to

ascertain whether teachers regard sense of moral purpose to be imperative to leadership.

Collegiality

Collegial sharing and interchange among teachers were seen by Fullan (1994) and

Jarzabkowski (2000) to lead to empowerment and a greater teacher commitment. Fullan

argued that teachers needed to develop and work within collaborative work cultures both

inside and outside the school. This argument is well supported by literature which

suggested that collegial sharing develops a stronger sense of teacher efficacy and creates a

positive professional learning culture for teachers (A. Hargreaves, 1995; Hargreaves &

Goodson, 1996). However, in his earlier writings A. Hargreaves (1994) presented a counter

view which he termed *"contrived collegiality"* (p. 195) and which, he perceived, was

mandated rather than development-oriented for teachers. Hargreaves' argument was that in

these mandated circumstances a teacher's professionalism is compromised. Frost and

Durrant (2003a) highlighted the need to emphasise collegiality in terms of a teacher's

capacity to exercise *"responsibility, mutual accountability and collaboration*." (p. 174).

The nature of collaborative practice is integrally linked with teacher collegiality.

Jarzabkowski (2000) regarded teacher collaboration as a subset of the broader context of

collegiality in the workplace. She perceived collaborative practice to entail the professional

activities of teachers conducted on a shared basis, whilst the notion of teacher collegiality

refers to both the professional and social dimensions of teacher interaction in the workplace. A key aspect of this study is to ascertain whether teacher collegiality and collaborative practice enhances teachers' capacity to exercise leadership.

Section summary

This section has identified key professional practices, which are considered in this study to be crucial to the exercise of teacher leadership. It is the task of this research to ascertain whether teachers who are employed in Catholic schools consider that such professional practices enable teacher leadership. Literature relating to the theory of teacher leadership has also highlighted the importance of the experience of teachers' professional learning in developing leadership in teachers. It is argued in this study that key aspects of teacher professional learning provide an appropriate context for leadership development in teachers, although Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) held the view that the development of leadership in teachers relied on teachers *examining their assumptions and practices within their own context."* (p. 31). Section three evaluates the extent to which key aspects of teacher professional learning by teachers enables leadership development.

Section three: Leadership development in teachers

Included in this section is a review of literature concerning leadership development in teachers through professional learning and literature pertaining to leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools.

Leadership development in teachers: professional learning

Ten years after identifying six interrelated domains of commitment and knowledge as requirements for teacher leadership, Fullan (2003b) outlined five interrelated themes which

he perceived promoted and sustained leadership initiatives in schools. Fullan's premise was that, given the right conditions, the characteristics of effective leadership were accessible to most teachers within the system and could be learned. Fullan advocated: opportunities for engagement in learning to lead and to achieve a depth of learning; policies for individual development which set standards for educational practice; learning that occurs in context such as mentoring and learning with other leaders; a focus on leadership succession and leaders at many levels and the role of effective leaders in improving the teaching profession.

In his framework Fullan (2003b) has heightened awareness of the integral connection between learning and leading, and the capacity of teachers to lead, factors also articulated in the British research and writings of Frost and Durrant (2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2004), Frost and Harris (2003) and Harris and Muijs (2002a). This study highlights the connection between leading and the professional learning of teachers. For the purpose of the study the term 'professional learning' is interchangeable with the term 'professional development' as both terms relate to the professional growth and improvement of teachers. Day (1999) described 'professional development' as comprising a number of complex processes through which teachers can review, renew and extend their commitment to teaching, and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice.

In their report to the Australian *Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training,* Downes et al. (2001) identified certain trends as key requirements for teachers' professional development. They perceived professional development as being directly linked to organisational development within the school, to student outcomes, and to the

teacher as a professional, a lifelong learner, and a member of a professional learning community. According to their report, effective professional development requires a sustained approach that: incorporates role modelling and collaborative practice; emphasises leadership and the intellectual development of teachers; is teacher-directed, incorporating principles of adult learning; engages teachers in the key aspects of teaching, observation and assessment; is inquiry based; and encourages ongoing reflective practice. These key requirements of professional development identified by Downes et al (2001) are considered in this study to develop leadership initiatives in teachers and are representative of key principles that underpin professional development policies, statements and programs developed for teachers by educational institutions and schools. For example, the policy: *Professional Development of Staff in Catholic Schools P-12* (CEOM Policy 2.18, 1995) formulated by the Catholic Education Office of the Archdiocese of Melbourne and the publication: *Criteria for Effective Professional Development* formulated by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (2002) emphasise the collaborative nature of learning and the value of reflective practice and mentoring, the ongoing process of learning and the development of leadership for the purpose of improved student learning outcomes.

While this study highlights the crucial role of schools and teachers in sustaining teachers' professional learning, the observations of Grundy and Robison (2004) are also considered. They observed that systemic expectations in improving student outcomes and quality teaching and learning were the principal driving forces in determining professional development structures and programs for teachers. The *Quality Teacher Program* conducted out of the *National Project on the Quality of Teaching and Learning* (n.d.) is one example of such a professional learning program. For teachers in Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, the Catholic Education Office of the Archdiocese of

Melbourne provides an extensive range of professional programs as a service to schools. However, such a service can only facilitate relevant professional programs for teachers. It cannot set the agenda for the individual school or individual teachers. Grundy and Robison emphasised that professional learning programs should be relevant to the needs of teachers as identified by teachers, have collegial and collaborative processes, and be based on action-learning principles.

This study builds on the premise that teacher professional learning ideally requires collaborative support structures which provide opportunities for teachers to engage in learning either individually or with colleagues. Further, the process of professional learning ideally should promote and sustain leadership initiatives by teachers. In recent years a professional learning culture centred on the formation of professional learning communities and networking among teachers, both within and beyond the school community, has become a focus for schools. In this study the function of a professional learning community is considered to be an appropriate context for leadership development in teachers. A challenge in the study is to explore teachers' understandings of the function of a professional learning community and its role in developing leadership in teachers.

Professional learning communities

Riel and Fulton (2001) stated that professional learning communities form when a group of people *"share a way of knowing, a set of practices, and the shared value of the knowledge"* (p. 519). Professional learning communities are seen by Kruse (2001) and Silins and Mulford (2000) to be important developments in schools for building a sense of professionalism and commitment in teachers by promoting critical reflection and professional discourse. Toole and Seashore Louis (2002) broadened the concept to include

the development of a collaborative school culture in which the focus was on the interconnection of teacher and student learning and improving student outcomes. Kruse highlighted the importance of making student learning a key focus of the professional learning community through developing shared norms and values about students, instruction, and learning, while A. Hargreaves (2003) perceived that the strength of a professional learning community was its capacity to *"bring together the knowledge, skills and dispositions of teachers in a school or across schools to promote shared learning and improvement."* (p. 185).

Classroom professional practice and collaborative learning among teachers were the foci of the *Innovative Design for Enhancing Achievement in Schools* (IDEAS) project in schools in the State of Queensland, Australia (Andrews et al., 2001). Through this project teachers experienced collective learning and, in the process, created a professional learning community based upon *"shared purpose, shared experiences and professional dialogue"* (p. 244). Central to the IDEAS project was the principle of parallel leadership with teachers and administrators working and learning collaboratively. Similarly, Hord (2004) and colleagues identified the characteristics of professional learning communities to be organised around the following dimensions that focus on the relationship between school principals and teachers: supportive and shared leadership; shared values and vision; collective learning and application of learning; supportive conditions; and shared practice. These dimensions indicate that professional learning communities provide a positive environment in which teachers share in the school leadership and become leaders in learning. Moller (2004) supported the need for such an environment for teacher leadership. She raised concerns relating to the complexity of building teacher leadership within

traditional school structures in which principals cannot relinquish control and involve teachers in leadership.

Recent research undertaken by Hollingsworth (2004) explored the key issues affecting leadership of professional learning communities in schools in Britain and Australia. The research revealed a number of key influences which underpin the function of the school as an effective professional learning community. These influences included: having a shared vision and a focus on teaching and learning; effective teamwork in providing a collaborative work experience; reflective practice as a means for self-improvement; and knowing and understanding the specific context of the school community. These influences are similar to the characteristics identified by Hord (2004). Hollingsworth also reported four major leadership themes which emerged during the project, namely, that a leader: required specific personal qualities to exercise a dynamic leadership; was committed to dispersed and distributed leadership; addressed the emotional well-being of all personnel in the school community and developed a sense of community. However, as the project involved leaders of schools, the themes that emerged reflected leadership from the perspective of designated school leaders rather than from the perspective of teachers.

A study by King, Youngs and Ladwig (2003) in the United States explored the relationship between a professional community, professional learning and building school capacity. The findings revealed that a professional community, which is collaborative and empowering, usually functions out of a distributive model of leadership. The authors advocated a similar distributive model for professional learning in order to build school capacity.

In evaluating the literature concerning professional learning communities it is suggested that professional learning communities are primarily about providing a collaborative environment in which teachers can reflect upon and debate issues relating to their professional practice rather than about providing a specific focus on leadership development in teachers. A task in this study is to ascertain whether teachers conceptualise a professional learning community and its significance in providing a collaborative environment to support their professional learning.

The broader network of professional learning

Increasing access by teachers to information and communication technologies has enabled professional learning to be conducted through electronic professional learning communities. An Internet search revealed innumerable online networks applicable to teachers in Australia. For example, *Education Network Australia* (n.d.) is a joint initiative of the State and Territory governments, and the Australian Government, through their education departments. It provides a range of services, both in the Australian and international context, which support teaching, learning and research. This network enables teacher professional learning through online discussion forums and involvement in collaborative research and projects.

Teaching bodies and professional associations, at the national, state and school levels in Australia, support the professional learning of teachers. Innovative links and partnerships between schools and universities offer professional programs and consultancy activities to meet the specific professional needs of schools and teachers. For example, in the State of Victoria, the context for this research, the *Faculty of Education* at Monash University is committed to offering services and advice that inform and lead professional practice in

schools, such as consultancy and research and development. Teachers in Victoria have access to a range of professional groups and networks.

It can be argued that teacher professional learning in Australia is dynamic and well supported in schools and by educational bodies and professional associations. In exploring the opportunities for leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools the study focuses on professional learning in practice as a context for developing leadership in teachers.

Leadership development in teachers: professional learning in practice

In considering teacher professional learning in practice as a context for developing leadership in teachers, this section evaluates literature pertaining to the teacher as a collaborative learner, reflective practitioner, researcher and mentor.

The teacher as a collaborative learner

The notion of the teacher as a collaborative learner is grounded in the collaborative nature of teacher professional practice and which is considered by Hopkins and Jackson (2003) to be central to teacher development and school improvement. The essence of collaborative practice is the engagement of teachers in professional dialogue and reflection with colleagues in the sharing and transformation of knowledge and skills (Tschannen-Moran, 2001) and in providing opportunities for teachers to reflect deeply and critically on their own teaching practice (Putnam & Borko, 1997). Harris and Muijs (2002) highlighted the power of collaborative practice in enacting change collectively by teachers for school improvement.

From her research of teacher collegiality at the primary level, Jarzabkowski (2000) concluded that there is a strong element of collaborative practice in schools, due to a large extent to the increasing expectations placed on teachers' professional practice. According to Jarzabkowski, teachers ought not perceive their professional practice as autonomous and in isolation from the work of their colleagues.

A significant factor in constructing a collaborative climate in schools is building trust and mutual respect in working with colleagues (Tschannen-Moran, 2001), thereby developing a climate in which teachers can engage in mutual decision-making (Kruse, 2001). Collaborative bodies such as professional learning communities, networks and teams are grounded in the mutual interest of teachers helping each other to move towards higher levels of professional practice (Boles & Troen, 1996).

Osler & Flack (2002) identified collaboration occurring at two levels, between "teacher-teacher; and teacher-academic" (p. 242). Through their collective efforts as teacher-researchers the authors concluded that working together established a working relationship, "built on trust, respect, common beliefs about teaching and learning, and a shared desire to become more effective classroom teachers." (p. 226). They perceived that the strength of teachers' experience derived from the daily interactions and the problem-solving discussions, and the ongoing support provided by external mentors.

In their research on teacher leadership Leithwood et al. (2003) identified the experience of teachers in an *"isolated professional culture common in schools"* (p. 198) as hindering the development of teacher leadership. They argued that positive collaborative cultures encouraged professional interaction and provided opportunities for teachers to develop

leadership capacities. Their view was also advocated by Lambert (2000) who claimed that collaborative learning is at the heart of constructing meaning and knowledge, and ultimately develops leadership capacities in teachers. Silins and Mulford (2000) also concluded that when teachers work collaboratively they increase their own potential to exercise leadership both within and beyond the classroom.

The literature suggests that a collaborative learning culture both develops and nurtures leadership in teachers. The task of this study is to establish whether teachers perceive and experience collaborative learning as a process that facilitates leadership development in teachers.

The teacher as a reflective practitioner

The literature upholds the idea that teachers are reflective practitioners. According to Groundwater-Smith, Cusworth and Dobbins (1998) foundational principles of reflective practice emerged from the work of Dewey who identified three attitudes as prerequisites for reflective teaching: namely open-mindedness, responsibility and wholeheartedness. Groundwater-Smith et al. emphasised that the focus in reflective practice for teachers was less on the transfer of knowledge and more on reflective learning.

Schon's (1996) notion of *"reflecting 'in' and 'on' action"* (Schon, cited in Day, 1999, p. 26) provides a transparent view of reflective practice. Day delineates between the two processes by asserting that reflection-in-action occurs in the active engagement of teaching activities while reflection-on-action will occur either before or after the teaching activities and provides a structure for critical reflection on the activities. The process of critical reflection, both individually or collaboratively, is central to the concept of reflective

practice and ultimately results in a greater understanding of the learning process (Bolam & McMahon, 2004).

Research by Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley and Beresford (2000) revealed that effective reflective practice underpinned successful leadership by headteachers. Day (2003) reported on the key reflective practices arising from the research. These included: holistic reflection with an emphasis on vision and culture-building; pedagogical reflection with an emphasis on achieving high quality teaching and learning; interpersonal reflection with an emphasis on knowing, understanding and empathetic interaction with colleagues; strategic reflection with an emphasis on critical judgement; and intrapersonal reflection with an emphasis on self-knowledge and self-development. Some of the characteristics of reflective practice, as identified by Day, et al. are considered in this study to be characteristics of leadership that are applicable to teachers, namely, the emphasis on vision and culture-building, and the notion of intrapersonal reflection. Such characteristics have been highlighted throughout the chapter as significant to the nature and practice of leadership.

In this study it is argued that collaborative reflective practice more so than individual reflective practice is a purposeful experience for leadership development in teachers. Collaborative reflective practice engages teachers in processes that potentially develop leadership capacities. The collaborative nature of reflective practice suggests a relational and influence process among the participants. A. Hargreaves (1995) stated a number of key requirements for collaborative reflective practice. He asserted that teachers needed to build on existing expertise; pool resources; create a climate of trust; provide moral support; and be a source of empowerment and assertiveness. In light of these understandings the task of

this study is to establish whether teachers perceive and experience collaborative reflective practice as a process that facilitates leadership development in teachers.

The teacher as a researcher

The teacher as a researcher is a form of reflective practice with a particular emphasis on research in practice (Loughran, 2002). According to Loughran, teacher researchers are identified as teachers who attempt to understand their teaching practice through research on the relationship between their specific focus area and teaching and learning.

Eames (1995) argued the need for individuals to know and articulate their personal education development through a systemic form of action-research. Action-research is an inquiry-based process that can be conducted on an individual or collaborative basis to examine existing practice and implement new practice (http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/). Dick (1999) described action research as a process, which pursues research and action simultaneously. Dick described the process as a cyclic or spiral one involving constant critical reflection on the research processes employed in the inquiry, with the participant's understanding both informing change and being informed by the change. In the process the action follows the reflection and the reflection follows the action.

The *Perspective and Voice of the Teacher* (PAVOT) project based at Monash Univeristy is a form of collaborative action-research which has emerged in the Australian education context. It is designed to bring together teachers and non-teaching participants for reflection on practice and decision-making regarding the nature and process of the research undertaken to enhance student learning. In his evaluation of the PAVOT project Loughran (2002) identified a number of key positive effects of the process of teacher-research on

teachers. They included: a developing capacity to take risks; an ability to articulate aspects of their practice; a developing perception of their role; a greater understanding of student learning; and the development of new understandings.

Day (1999) highlighted a number of key requirements for the conduct of effective action-research which are considered in this study as promoting a collegial and collaborative culture among the participants. They included the promotion of equitable relationships among participants, and possession of an understanding of change processes by the participants. Action-research has been instrumental among educators in conceptualising the nature of professional knowledge in education.

A task in this study is to ascertain whether teachers conceptualise the notion of the teacher as a researcher, engage in research, and place significance on this practice as enabling leadership development in teachers.

The teacher as a mentor

The teacher as a mentor is another key professional practice identified as professional learning for developing leadership in teachers. Much of the literature on mentoring focuses on mentoring programs for beginning teachers. According to Butcher & Prest (1999), the process may be experienced in both a formal mentoring program and an informal collegial mentoring relationship that can be conducted across sectors. However, for the purposes of this study, the focus in this chapter was on the benefits of a mentoring process, whether formal or informal, for teachers working together, talking together and supporting one another in the context of collaborative learning.

The concept of mentoring emerges from a culture of collegiality which is closely related to reflective practice (Smylie, 1997). According to Howard (1999), in whatever way the mentoring process is experienced, the process has the capacity to create a culture of collaboration. However, Howard cited A. Hargreaves's (1994) notion of contrived collegiality as a factor that may hinder the process rather than contribute to a culture of collaboration. Conversely, the benefits of the relational nature of the mentoring process are noted by Tomlinson (1995) who emphasised its capacity to build relationships based on trust and support.

Mentoring was seen by Wollman-Bonilla (1997) to be a two way process. According to Wollman-Bonilla the mentor for another teacher expands his or her own professional horizons and effective practice as well as enriching the person being mentored. The process provides teachers with opportunities to reflect on their professional practice, to question particular practices and to challenge some assumptions that may underpin these practices. Boreen, Johnson, Niday, and Potts (2000) highlighted its value for the beginning teacher, who through the process of mentoring, is encouraged to "*be an active participant, inquirer and critical thinker*" (p. 9).

The enabling and empowering experiences of mentoring have the capacity to develop leadership in teachers. Some of the findings of research on collegial mentoring relationships conducted by Butcher & Prest (1999) were that the process resulted in a sharing of insights, trust, empowerment, and the capacity to think into the future beyond current practices. In this sense, teacher mentors are building key attributes and competencies, which are considered in this study to be foundational to leadership.

A task in this study is to ascertain whether teachers regard the mentoring process as a professional learning practice which supports leadership development in teachers.

Section summary

In this section, literature relating to key professional learning practices, which enable leadership development in teachers, has been reviewed. Collectively, professional learning practices of the teacher as a collaborative learner, reflective practitioner, researcher, and mentor, highlight practices that have been identified in this chapter as characteristics of leadership. They included the relational and influencing nature of leadership; the collaborative and collegial nature of leadership; a sense of mutual interest, mutual trust and support; empowerment; the capacity to be reflective; and the capacity to engage in professional dialogue with fellow colleagues. In light of these factors it is now appropriate to review literature relating to ways in which leadership development for teachers in the specific context of Catholic schools has been addressed.

Leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools

The matter of leadership succession in the Catholic school system in Australia has raised considerable concern in recent years. The focus of this study is on leadership by teachers. However, given that the study sample is of teachers in Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, it is of some benefit to examine frameworks that are being developed to support leadership development in Catholic schools in the Australian setting.

Research undertaken in New South Wales by d'Arbon et al. (2001) and in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania by Carlin et al. (2003) identified factors which influenced leadership succession. Both studies made recommendations concerning the benefit of the

implementation of structured programs to support leadership development and leadership succession in Catholic schools. Such programs might provide opportunities for teachers to participate in programs, which will develop their leadership capacity.

Emphasis on the benefits of the development of leadership is reinforced in recent research on leadership in Queensland Catholic schools in Australia. *A Framework for Leadership in Queensland Catholic Schools* Project was undertaken by the Catholic Educational Leadership Flagship of Australian Catholic University during 2003-2004 (Spry et al. 2004). The framework represents a multi-dimensional understanding of leadership in terms of leadership dimensions and leadership capabilities which are couched in the vision and mission of Catholic education. The key dimensions of leadership identified as being at the heart of leadership were: inner leadership which helps to develop a sense of the authentic self; interpersonal leadership which focuses on building relationships and requires a commitment to the holistic development of the person; organisational leadership which focuses on management and organisational capacities to ensure levels of efficiency and effectiveness; educative leadership which requires the employment of professional capacities to envisage, develop and implement curriculum; community leadership which focuses on promoting the Common Good through right relationships and solidarity; and faith leadership which requires a capacity to nurture the Catholic faith tradition within the school community. These key dimensions incorporate characteristics similar to the key dimensions identified earlier in this review as underpinning leadership in a Catholic school, namely, the authentic, relational and communal, and service dimensions of leadership. These key dimensions of leadership in a Catholic school are relevant to this study which explores understandings of leadership held by teachers working in Catholic schools.

Spry et al. (2004) also identified particular leadership capabilities to be incorporated in the context of the leadership dimensions in their framework. They were categorised as personal capabilities, relational capabilities, professional capabilities and mission capabilities. Although the key dimensions and leadership capabilities appear to be discrete characteristics, they highlight the integrative nature of the properties of leadership and are appropriate indicators for the consideration of leadership development in teachers in this study.

This review has highlighted the integrative, yet varying, nature of the properties or characteristics of leadership. A particular challenge for this study is identifying appropriate categories and a terminology which are applicable in the conduct of the research. As stated in the review, authors have developed a range of terms to identify and describe the properties or characteristics of leadership. Duignan (cited in Spry et al., 2004) designated the following as leadership attributes: critical reflection; intellectual capabilities; professional commitment; marginal competence; strategic readiness; emotional maturity; and cultural sensitivity. While Duignan does not offer a rationale for the term 'leadership attributes', the examples reflect characteristics considered in this study to be leadership attributes. In this study the term 'leadership attributes' refers to those characteristics which may be intrinsic to the professional disposition of a teacher or may be developed, and which enable a teacher to exercise leadership. An exploration of the perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers involved in the research might illumine particular leadership attributes that they perceive themselves exercising in their professional practice and professional learning.

Duignan also identified competencies of educational leadership as the knowledge and skills, which come with decision-making, problem solving, analysis; planning, communication, interaction, change management and networking. Louden and Wildy (1999, cited in Spry et al., 2004) identified qualities for principals as a range of interpersonal skills and a set of moral dispositions including fairness, consistency, patience and persistence. Similarly, while Duignan does not offer a rationale for the selection of the term 'competencies of educational leadership', these educational competencies reflect characteristics which are considered in this research to be leadership competencies. In this study the term 'leadership competencies' refers to abilities and skills which may be acquired, developed and applied by a teacher in his or her professional practice. An exploration of the perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers involved in the research might illumine particular leadership competencies perceived to be exercised in teachers' professional practice and professional learning.

Chapter summary

This chapter provided insights into the professional nature of teaching and the theory and practice of teacher leadership through an examination of relevant theoretical and empirical literature set principally in North America, Britain and Australia.

The review examined literature relevant to the professional nature of teaching and, specifically, to the professional expectations required of teachers in a Catholic school. It can be concluded that, in Australia, key developments in the last decade through the formation of professional bodies have elevated the professional nature of teaching. For teachers who are employed in Catholic schools there are expressed ideals and professional expectations required of them, as articulated in Church documents. This study ascertains

the extent to which these expressed ideals determine the nature and function of leadership in a Catholic school, as perceived and experienced by teachers who are employed in Catholic schools.

From the review it can be concluded that the concept of teacher leadership is firmly embedded in the literature. However, in Katzenmeyer and Moller's (1996) terms this concept is a 'sleeping giant' yet to be fully awakened in teachers. The literature revealed that teacher leadership is exercised in an informal context rather than the formal context of a designated position. It occurs principally within teachers' professional practice, both in and beyond the classroom, and within teachers' professional learning. The literature also revealed that teacher leadership is exercised when teacher leaders assume particular roles and responsibilities within schools, however, to be effective, teacher leadership requires a collaborative and participatory environment. Finally, teacher leadership enacts change and improvement within a school through teachers leading in their own learning, leading and enhancing student learning, and leading colleagues in their learning.

The overall literature review in Chapters Two and Three has highlighted both the multi-dimensional and contextual nature and function of leadership. In particular, the review has established that although leadership in schools is still generally equated with positional leadership, alternative approaches to leadership that promote a more distributed and participative approach have developed. Such leadership is collegial-based and empowering and focuses on building leadership-capacity in all members of the school to bring about school improvement. It was the task of this study to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers in Catholic schools and their opportunities for

leadership development. An outline of the research design adopted for this investigation follows in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

Research Design

Introduction

This chapter describes and justifies the design and the conduct of the research. It details the research paradigm, the developmental stages of the research instrumentation, the pilot study, the research sample, research administration, data collection procedures and the techniques of data analysis. In addition, standards of quality and credibility, ethical considerations, and delimitations and limitations of the research are addressed.

The main focus of the research problem was an exploration of the perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers in Catholic schools. The perceptions and experiences of teaches who were employed in Catholic schools were explored through the following five research questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of leadership in general?

2. What are teachers' perceptions and experiences of leadership in Catholic schools?

3. What are teachers' perceptions of leadership by teachers in Catholic schools?

4. What are teachers' experiences of leadership by teachers in Catholic schools?

5. What are the opportunities for leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools?

Research paradigm

The research orientation was qualitative and was selected because of the interpretative nature of the study. According to Patton (2002), qualitative methods are oriented towards "exploration, discovery and inductive logic" (p. 55). They aim to produce interpretative

accounts of phenomena from the respondents without imposing pre-existing expectations on the phenomenon under study. In this study the interpretative paradigm was oriented to providing in-depth and detailed descriptions and interpretations of the phenomenon of leadership.

The nature of the qualitative inquiry comprised elements of phenomenology, including those identified by Cresswell (1998) who highlighted a number of factors that underpin a phenomenological approach. These are: first, emphasis on the meaning of the experience derived, by individuals or a group, from a particular phenomenon or concept; second, a formulation of research questions that explore the meaning of the experience with individuals or a group; third, the collection of data from individuals or a group, all of whom have experienced in some way the phenomenon that is investigated; fourth, the employment of a series of stages for the analysis of data, including themes, meanings and descriptions of the experience and fifth, a report of the findings that reflects a holistic understanding of the experience. These aspects of a phenomenological approach were incorporated into the study design for this research.

In this study the research questions were formulated to explore the phenomenon of leadership through the perceptions and experiences of teachers in Catholic schools. In particular, the study aimed to explore the motives and beliefs that shape teachers' perceptions and experiences of leadership and the meanings that they attached to the phenomenon (Sarantakos 1998). This approach was based on the assumption that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their everyday world and that this reality is constantly changing (Leedy, 1993). In this study the reality was the everyday world of a Catholic school. The data collected provided a rich description of the phenomenon,

leadership, and meanings were interpreted from these descriptions so as to gain a holistic understanding and interpretation of the perceptions and experiences of teachers within their particular context of the Catholic school (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

Research instrumentation

Given the nature of the study as qualitative inquiry, a range of appropriate qualitative methods for the data collection was considered. Methods such as interview techniques enable respondents *"to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their point of view"* (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 267). Initial methods selected were the interview schedule and the questionnaire, while the initial sample was planned to include up to ninety respondents from three schools. However, in response to professional advice and feedback, an alternative sample and method was considered to economise on time and to ensure that the volume of data collected was manageable.

The method selected for the data collection was the focus group interview (Cohen et al., 2000; Patton, 2002). Patton emphasised that "the power of focus groups *resides in their being focused*" (2002, p. 388). The focus group interview method was selected for the following reasons. First, for its capacity to produce a 'thick description' of data which takes the researcher into the realm of views that the respondents held on leadership (Patton). Second, it provides a framework for dynamic interaction and discussion among the respondents so that significant points of view might emerge regarding teachers' perceptions and experiences of leadership, specifically leadership by teachers, and the opportunity for leadership development (Sarantakos, 1998). Third, because teachers are considered to be typically a homogeneous group of people (Patton), it provides a way for

respondents to hear each other's responses and to open up pathways to new themes (Sarantakos). Finally**,** it is a way of gathering a large amount of data within a comparatively short period of time.

The components of the focus group interview are based on a group interview schedule, derived from Cohen et al. (2000). It includes an introduction to the topic with some background explanation of the overall research; an explanation of some key terms pertinent to the discussion; a brief statement outlining the purpose and benefits of a focus group interview; a set of key questions that contain the main research questions and a set of sub-questions for each key question that can serve as prompts and probes.

The instrument for the conduct of the focus group interviews was prepared as a powerpoint presentation and contained key questions that were germane to the research questions. Five questions were prepared to initiate and direct the discussion during the course of the interview. These questions were informed by, and developed from, the five research questions and the conceptual framework developed for the study. Each question had an additional set of prepared sub-questions to be used to prompt further discussion, if required.

The five key questions and sub-questions were:

Question 1: How would you define the term 'leadership' in general?

Sub-questions:

1.1   Do you perceive yourself as a leader?

1.2   Is there a particular type of person who becomes a leader?

1.3   Does the person need particular qualities?

1.4   Are leaders born or made?

1.5   Are there any other comments that you would like to make?

Question 2: What are your perceptions and experiences of leadership in an educational context, that is, in the context of a Catholic school?

Sub-questions:

2.1   Who exercises leadership?

2.2   What are some leadership approaches that are exercised?

2.3   Over the past five years what changes have you seen in leadership structures and practice in Catholic schools?

2.4   Are there particular qualities or leadership approaches that are desirable for leadership in Catholic schools?

2.5   Are there any other comments that you would like to make?

Question 3: What are your perceptions of leadership by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

Sub-questions:

3.1   What are some leadership attributes that you perceive are exercised by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

3.2   What are some leadership competencies that you perceive are exercised by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

3.3   What are some leadership approaches that you perceive to be exercised by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

3.4   Ideally, how do you perceive 'best practice' in leadership by teachers?

3.5   Are there any other comments that you would like to make?

Question 4: What are your experiences of leadership by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

Sub-questions:

4.1   What are your/the experiences (if any) of exercising leadership attributes by teachers?

4.2   What are your/the experiences (if any) of exercising leadership competencies by teachers?

4.3   What are your/the experiences (if any) of leadership approaches by a teacher?

4.4   Is there a gap between the perceived ideal of leadership by teachers and their experience of leadership practice?

4.5   Are there any other comments that you would like to make?

Question 5: What are the opportunities for leadership development for teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

Sub-questions:

5.1   What opportunities for leadership development are provided for teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

5.2   What professional development do you perceive to be essential for leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools?

5.3   How do current structures in Catholic schools enable leadership practice by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership?

5.4   Over the past five years what changes have you experienced in the opportunities for leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools?

5.5   Are there any other comments that you would like to make?

The instrument was trialled in the pilot study. As only minimal use was made of the sub-questions in the pilot, a key modification to the focus group instrument was a reduction in the number of sub-questions: sub-questions 1.4 and 1.5 were removed from the category of Question 1; sub-questions 2.2 and 2.5 were removed from the category of Question 2; sub-questions 3.4 and 3.5 were removed from the category of Question 3; and sub-questions 4.4 and 4.5 were removed from the category of Question 4. There were no sub-questions removed from the category of Question 5.

A summary sheet for completion by the respondents was prepared and served a twofold purpose. It was designed to collect demographic data that identified some characteristics of the respondents. These included: sex, status of employment in current school, years of teaching experience, and years of experience in a formal position of leadership. In addition, the summary sheet was designed to invite further comment from the respondents at the conclusion of the interview. It included key questions similar to the five key questions prepared for the focus group interview and the opportunity for respondents to give additional examples for each question (see Appendix A).

Triangulation was an important factor in the selection of the research methods. According to Patton (2002), in qualitative research more than one method helps to validate the inquiry approach and strengthen the study. Triangulation has particular relevance where a phenomenon requires illumination (Cohen et al., 2000). In this study the phenomenon of leadership required elucidation from more than one perspective. The conduct of a focus group interview with categories of teachers, the use of the summary sheet, the verification of data by an 'expert' group, and the use of a researcher's journal, were strategies employed to achieve triangulation. In qualitative research the credibility of the research

relies very much on the neutrality of the researcher (Patton, 2002). Throughout the course of the study the journal was used to diarise accounts, express concerns and articulate assumptions upfront to ensure authenticity and objectivity in the data analysis. Appendix B contains excerpts from the researcher's journal that highlight the researcher's initial interest in exploring teachers' views of leadership and concerns about the nature and structure of leadership in schools (see Appendix B excerpt dated March 13, 2002).

Pilot study

A pilot of the research methods was undertaken as a preparatory measure in the research design. The two instruments, the focus group interview and the summary sheet, were trialled on a group of teachers from a Catholic secondary school that was not involved in the research but available to the researcher. At this school, teachers were invited to participate in the pilot by an open invitation issued in a staff bulletin. Expressions of interest were received. An invitation letter outlining the nature and details of the pilot and the appropriate consent forms, were then issued to interested participants.

The pilot was conducted in two focus group interviews according to the following categories: focus group one comprising teachers with teaching experience less than, and including, ten years, and focus group two, comprising teachers with teaching experience greater than, and including, eleven years. Six teachers participated in focus group one and four teachers participated in focus group two. The two interviews were conducted independently after school hours and the duration of each interview was approximately one hour.

The questions prepared for the focus group interview and the summary sheet were trialled in the pilot. The two interviews were audiotaped. The pilot study provided some reflection on the conduct of the focus group interviews and the appropriateness of the instrumentation. In addition to the reduction of sub-questions in the focus group interview instrument, other modifications were considered. They were: the allocation of an approximate time interval for each key question; clearer explanations of terms, for example, of 'perceptions' and 'experiences', and 'leadership attributes', 'leadership competencies' and 'leadership approaches', in the context of the study; and an awareness of the need to employ strategies that ensured that all respondents would have an equal opportunity to contribute to the discussion.

Respondents were invited to take a summary sheet for the completion of demographic data and to add further responses, if desired, to the focus group questions. Five summary sheets were returned. A minor change to the summary sheet was made to the section requiring data on years of teaching experience in a Catholic secondary school and years of experience in a formal position of leadership in a Catholic secondary school. In both sections the categories were retained but the reference to 'Catholic secondary school' was deleted.

Research sample

The target population for this research was teachers in Catholic schools. The target sample was a 'convenience' sample of teachers (Cohen et al., 2000) who were employed in two Catholic secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. A third sample was drawn from teachers who were members of the Professional/Staff Development Coordinators'

Network (7-12) in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. This group was identified in the study as an 'expert' group.

Table 4.1

Teachers in the sample

Categories	Focus group one	Focus group two	'Expert' group
Description of category	teachers with teaching experience < =10 years	teachers with teaching experience > = 11 years	teachers who can offer an expert response
School A	7	2	
School B	2	2	
Members of Professional/ Staff Development Coordinators' Network			5

Table 4.1 indicates the categories of teachers involved in the sample and the number of respondents in the focus group interviews. Teachers in the category of focus group one had teaching experience less than, or equal to, ten years. Teachers in the category of focus group two had been teaching for a considerable time, that is, for eleven years or more. Teachers in the category of the 'expert' group were teachers who were members of the Professional/Staff Development Coordinators' Network (7-12) in the Archdiocese of Melbourne and who held a position of responsibility within the school for the professional development of teachers. By virtue of their positions these teachers were considered to be expert teachers who could offer expert opinions to validate the nature of the research. The three categories ensured that a range of perspectives on the research questions was obtained from the respondents. Although it could be argued that the sample was small, Patton (2002) stated that "There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry" (p.

244). Rather, the focus of qualitative inquiry is on the depth and richness of the information obtained (Patton).

The use of a convenience sample provided a practical way to access teachers within a reasonable geographic location and distance from the researcher's place of employment. In the selection of a 'convenience' sample the researcher was aware of the view of Patton (2002) who asserted that "*convenience sampling is neither purposeful nor strategic*" (p. 242), and that the sample could not represent other teachers and generalise about the wider population (Cohen et al., 2000).

Research administration

The Human Research Ethics Committee of Australian Catholic University granted approval for the conduct of the research (see Appendix C). Permission was sought from the Catholic Education Office of the Archdiocese of Melbourne to conduct the research within schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne (see Appendix D). Following this approval a formal letter was sent to the principals in twelve Catholic secondary schools that were located within a reasonable geographic distance from the researcher's place of employment. In the letter, the nature and conduct of the research was outlined and the principal's permission was sought by the researcher to conduct the research with teachers in the school (see Appendix E). An accompanying consent form was included seeking the approval of the principals for the research to be conducted (see Appendix F). The anonymity of the school and the confidentiality of the respondents were assured in the form.

During the following four weeks, five principals granted approval and returned the consent form to the principal supervisor. Two schools were then randomly selected. The researcher contacted the principals of the two selected schools by phone to make arrangements for the conduct of the research. This was followed by e-mail communication outlining a suggested process and particular strategy for inviting teachers to participate in the research. A letter of acknowledgment was sent to the principals of the schools that were not randomly selected in this part of the process (see Appendix G). The letter outlined the process of selection and the possibility of conducting research in the school at a later date if required.

Arrangements were made with the respective principals of the two schools in which the research was conducted for the researcher to attend a staff meeting to give a brief five-minute overview of the purpose of the research to staff and to invite teachers to participate in the research. A letter of invitation and a consent form were placed in a sealed envelope and taken to the meeting (see Appendices H and I). Following the staff meeting these were distributed by the researcher to teachers who expressed interest in participating in the research. Arrangements were made for additional letters and accompanying consent forms to be left with the school receptionist for other interested teachers. After a period of one week, numbers of interested respondents from each selected school were finalised. In the case of one school only one reply was forthcoming so a mutual decision was made to not proceed with the conduct of the research in this school. A replacement school was randomly selected from the remaining three schools. The procedures outlined previously, were followed in seeking the formal approval of the principal to conduct the research. The two participating schools are referred to in this study as School A and School B. Once the permission of the intended respondents in each school was obtained, the principal and the intended respondents consented for the researcher to obtain their e-mail addresses from

each school's administration. The person who was first listed alphabetically in each group

was selected as the group coordinator whose task was to arrange a mutually

convenient time between the respondents and the researcher for the data collection.

Data collection process

Figure 4.1

A schematic representation of the data collection process

Phase 1

School A
The conduct of
focus group interview one
focus group interview two

↓

ongoing data analysis

↓

School B
The conduct of
focus group interview one
focus group interview two

↓

ongoing data analysis

↓

Phase 2

formulation of first summary of the findings

↓

'Expert' group

the conduct of 'expert' focus group interview
using first summary of the findings

↓

ongoing data analysis
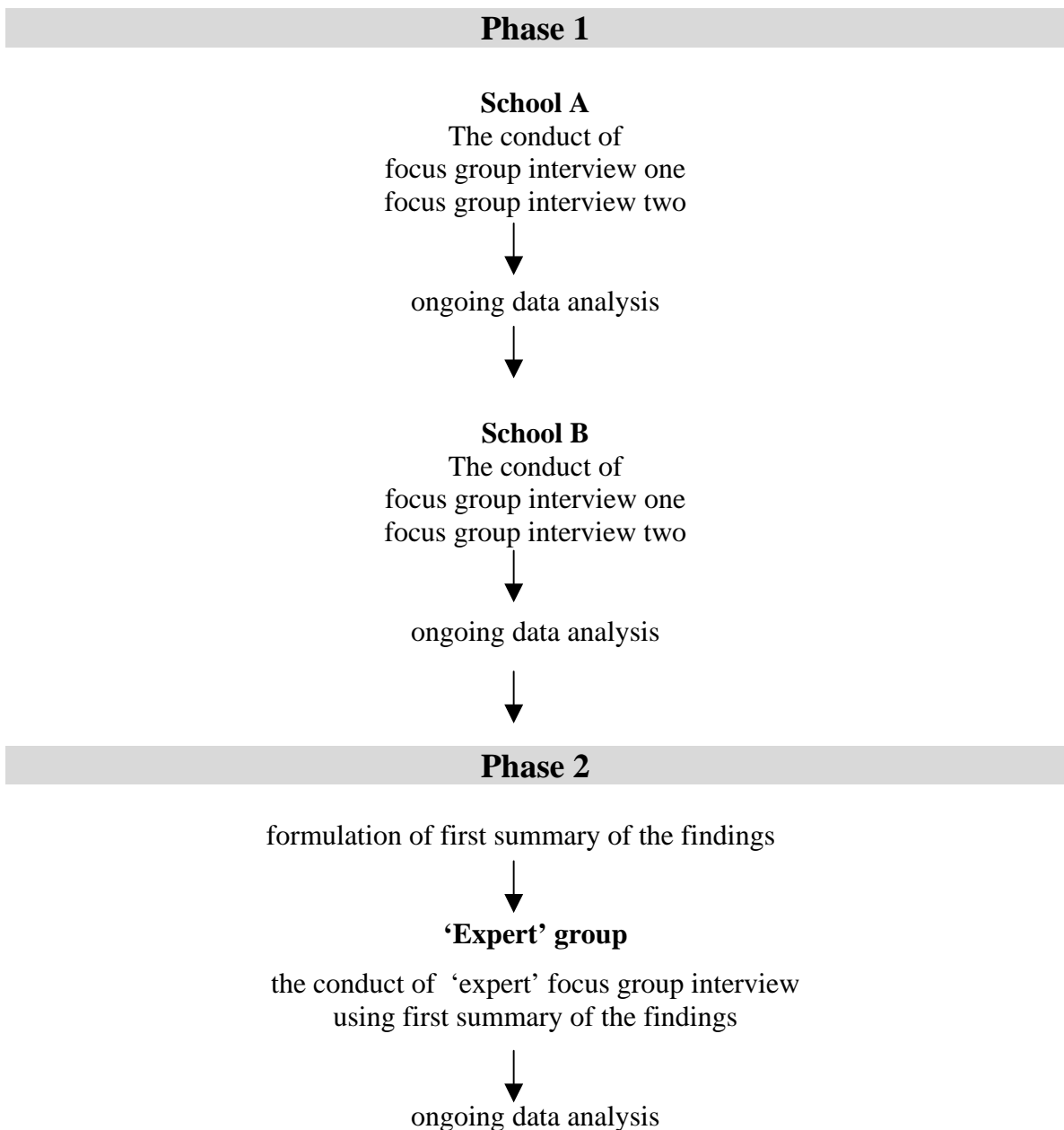
Figure 4.1 presents a schematic representation of the data collection process detailed in two phases. Phase one indicates the collection of the data through the conduct of four focus group interviews in the two schools. Phase two shows that the conduct of the focus group interview with the 'expert' group occurred after a first summary of the findings from the four focus groups was completed. In order to provide a first summary of findings the data reduction occurred through the two phases of the data collection (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Phase one

At the commencement of each focus group interview conducted in the two schools, the researcher explained that the discussion was audiotaped, if respondents granted permission, and that respondents were free to withdraw from the research at any time. Respondents were assured that anonymity and confidentiality would be observed in the transcription of the tape, the data analysis and the publication of the research findings.

Each focus group interview was initiated through a powerpoint presentation that contained the prepared questions. At the outset some brief background information on the research topic was provided and some appropriate references from the literature on leadership were cited. It was emphasised that the focus group interview gave the respondents an opportunity to dialogue with professional colleagues in exploring their perceptions and experiences of leadership and the opportunities that they have for leadership development in Catholic schools.

The capacity of respondents to be selective, either deliberately or unwittingly, in what was stated in the discussion (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and awareness that concepts might be

interpreted differently in each interview, were acknowledged. A prime concern was to give

attention to both "*content and process*" (Patton, 2002, p. 380) and to ensure that each

group focused on the key questions during the course of the interview. There was also the

need to uphold the nature of a focus group interview but at the same time to recognise the

right of the respondents to freely digress from the topic (Cohen et al., 2000) and for all

their opinions to be heard. Because the discussion took its own direction there was little

need for strict use of the sub-questions. In the conduct of the focus group interviews the

questions were applied flexibly to reflect the particular context of the respondents in the

interviews (Miles and Huberman).

Another concern resulting from the conduct of the focus group interviews in the schools

was the ineffective use of the summary sheet. In recognition of the time that the research

respondents had given in the data collection, they were not pressed for the completion of

the summary sheets at the conclusion of the focus group interview. In total, six summary

sheets were returned. Hence, there was insufficient demographic data to profile the

research respondents in total. The only reliable demographic data that could be used was

the category of respondents according to years of teaching experience and on which basis

the focus group interviews were conducted (see Table 4.1). The demographic data

gathered from the Summary sheets was of limited value. However, written responses from

the Summary sheets that were returned were incorporated in the findings. A matter arising

from the ineffective use of the Summary sheet was that the data could not be categorised

from the perspective of male or female respondents. Consequently, the gender of the

research was not used as a factor in the interpretation of the findings.

Phase two

At the completion of Phase one, the dominant themes that emerged in the data collected from the four focus group interviews, were identified and incorporated into a first summary of the findings. These findings were then presented to the third category of teachers in the sample, teachers from the members of Professional/Staff Development Coordinators' Network (7-12), who might offer an 'expert' response to the dominant emerging themes identified. Appendix B (see excerpt dated August 30, 2003) details the researcher's rationale for including an 'expert' group in the data collection. The researcher was aware that such a group could create bias in the data generation and collection. However, the value of the group lay in its capacity to provide insightful comment that was drawn from the broader professional knowledge and experience of individuals beyond the two schools involved in the data collection.

To instigate this phase, permission was sought from the executive committee of the Professional/Staff Development Coordinators' Network (7-12) to conduct the 'expert' focus group interview (see Appendix J). Information on the summary of the data that was to be presented to the 'expert' group was also forwarded for the committee's perusal (see Appendix K). Once permission was granted, the purpose of the focus group interview was then advertised to members of the network via e-mail communication. Five members indicated their interest in participating in the study. A letter outlining the purpose of the interview (see Appendix L), a reply form (see Appendix M) and a consent form (see Appendix N) were sent to each intended respondent. In addition, a summary sheet and a procedure sheet containing a first summary of the findings and a series of questions for reflection, were forwarded to the intended participants (see Appendices O and P).

Instructions for the conduct of the interview were the same as for the interviews conducted in Phase one.

Table 4.2

Demographic profile of teachers who participated in the 'expert' focus group interview

Position of formal leadership	Years of teaching experience		Years of formal leadership experience	
	< = 10 yrs	> = 11 yrs	< = 10 yrs	> = 11 yrs
Education Officer		*	x	
Education Officer		*		x
Director of Mission		*		x
Deputy Principal		*		x
Staff Enrichment Coordinator		*	x	

Note:
∗ denotes years of teaching
x denotes years of formal leadership experience

The demographic profile of teachers who participated in the 'expert' focus group interview, as depicted in Table 4.2, justifies the purpose of this group in offering expert opinions on a first summary of the findings. All of the respondents were experienced teachers and the majority had extensive experience in a position of formal leadership. All currently held a position of formal leadership in a school or in the Catholic education system as an educational consultant at the time of the conduct of the interview.

Data analysis methods

In qualitative research, data collection and data analysis are not seen as discrete stages, rather, from the moment the data are collected, the researcher begins the process of making sense of the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The analysis of data was a continuous process and occurred from the time of the first collection of data in the focus group

interview to the stages of data reduction and interpretation, and to the final report. Creswell (1998) described the process as a continuous and iterative spiral.

In this study the process of the data analysis followed the three stages identified by Miles and Huberman (1994). The three stages included:

  i. *data reduction* involving identifying, coding and classifying data into categories;

 ii. *data display* involving summarising and assembling the information so that the themes and patterns are displayed; and

iii. *verification* involving interpreting the data, drawing conclusions and verifying meanings.

Figure 4.2

Stages in the data analysis (adapted from Miles & Huberman, 1994)

Stage 1

Data Reduction

Transcription of data from focus group interviews in schools
Data organised as discrete units
Reflection on transcription of data

Stage 2

Reduction of data into categories organised around research questions
Data organised as four discrete units
Reflection on categorised data

Stage 3

First draft of data coding
Reflection on first draft of coded data
Second draft of data coding
Reflection on second draft of coded data

Stage 4

Data organised into a single unit of analysis
Data sources coded
Further drafts of coded data
Further reflection on themes

Stage 5

Data Display

Synthesis of data in thematic categories
Formulation of a first summary of findings
Transcription of data from 'expert' focus group interview and summary sheet
Addition of data from 'expert' group to thematic categories
Further reflection on thematic categories
Final synthesis of data for data display

Stage 6

Data Verification
Discussion of findings
Drawing conclusions
Recommendations for further research

Data reduction

According to Neuman (2000) the task of the qualitative researcher is to "*form new concepts or refine concepts that are grounded in the data*" (p. 420). In Miles and Huberman's (1994) schema this included classifying the data by themes or concepts into identifiable categories, and noting and isolating any common patterns and sequences, similarities and differences between the responses. Neuman also suggested that the qualitative researcher "*develops new concepts, formulates conceptual definitions, and examines the relationships among concepts*" (p. 420).

In stage one, data reduction involved first, the complete transcription, into four discrete text files in Microsoft Word, of the material gathered by audiotape recording from the four focus group interviews conducted in School A and School B (see Appendix Q for a sample of the transcription of data). The words of the respondents thus became "*the basic form in which the data are found*" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 51). Each transcription was completed within three days after the conduct of each interview. Once the information was fully transcribed into each text file, each transcription was visually checked against the audiotape. Some minor inaccuracies were corrected. Although time consuming, the transcription process enabled the researcher to become totally familiar with the views obtained from the respondents. Periodically, the tapes were listened to while reading the text files during the data analysis stages and, bearing in mind that researchers *"induce themes from the text itself"* (Ryan & Bernard, 2000, p. 780), notes were made on themes and patterns that emerged from the data.

In stage two, the data analysis process involved summarizing and reducing the data from the transcriptions of each focus group and the respective summary sheets into categories

that were organised under headings created from the five research questions. Appendix R contains a sample of the data reduction as a discrete unit.

A concern in each of the focus group interviews was to ensure that the respondents clearly differentiated between identifying 'perceptions' of leadership and 'experiences' of leadership. An understanding of key terms was given at appropriate intervals during the interviews. Upon an examination of the data, however, it became apparent that the respondents did not clearly differentiate between the two terms in relation to the nature of research questions two, three and four. As recorded in the researcher's journal (see Appendix B, excerpt dated November 23, 2002), the terms were used quite interchangeably: 'perceptions' assumed meaning not only for a knowledge, understanding or recognition of a particular topic discussed, but also for the experiences recalled by respondents in the discussion of a particular topic. Similarly, 'experiences' referred not only to the actual experience that was recalled, but also to what might have been perceived by the respondents but not necessarily experienced. It became difficult to distinguish between the two terms. Hence, the data relating to the respondents' 'perceptions' and 'experiences' of leadership were collapsed. This was justified on the grounds that the respondents' perceived understandings of leadership were very much drawn from their personal experiences of leadership. Thus, the four main categories formulated for the data analysis were:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of leadership in general?

2. What are teachers' perceptions and experiences of leadership in Catholic schools?

3. What are teachers' perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers in Catholic schools?

4. What are the opportunities for leadership development for teachers in Catholic
   schools?

During this stage the data from each of the four focus group interviews were considered as discrete units (Patton, 2002). This ensured that data could be later analysed for similarities and comparisons between teachers with teaching experience less than, and including, ten years, and teachers with teaching experience greater than, and including, eleven years. However, the strength of qualitative analysis is its holistic approach to data analysis (Patton) and was an influencing factor throughout the data analysis.

Stage three involved the coding of the data through a process of drafts. Themes that correlated with dominant themes that emerged in the leadership literature were identified to provide a conceptual orientation to the data (Miles and Huberman, 1994). According to Miles and Huberman, this stage comprised 'descriptive codes' which equate the text to a particular phenomenon, and 'pattern codes' that infer a particular phenomenon from meaning derived from the words, phrases and sentences identified in the text. The first three or four letters of the key word were used to denote the themes within a particular category. A first draft of coded themes for category one is presented in Table 4.3 as a sample. The final list of the coded themes for all categories is displayed in Chapter Five in Tables 5.5, 5.14, 5.18 and 5.26 in order for data to be easily identified in the reporting of the findings.

Table 4.3

First draft of coded themes for category one: What are teachers' perceptions about

leadership in general?

Code:	Theme
PER	person
POS	position
SKILL	skill & expertise
RESP	responsibility
OPP	opportunity
VIS	vision & direction
FOLL	followership
LEAD	leading & helping others
EXP	experience
NPER	not permanent
OTH	other

Table 4.3 displays the first draft of coded themes for category one: What are teachers'

perceptions about leadership in general? Data collated in relation to category one were

then categorised according to these themes. A sample of the data coded according to the

themes is presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

A sample of the first draft of data coded according to themes in category one: What are

teachers' perceptions about leadership in general?

Code	Response
RESP	a leader has to assume responsibility
OPP	you have to have the opportunity to lead
POS	you have to perceive that you can move into a position where you lead
OPP	you have to have the opportunity in time and history
FOLL	you have to have the people to go with you
POS	I don't think that leaders have to occupy a position

Table 4.4 displays a sample of data coded according to themes in category one in the data

analysis process. This process was used for each analysis of data from all focus group

interviews. Appendix S contains a sample of the data coding and the draft process of data

from one of the focus groups.

During the drafting process, themes were reviewed and refined as new themes and insights

emerged (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Some codes were deleted while others were created.

Data from the 'expert' group were added in stage five.

In stage four the data from each discrete unit were merged and organised under the four

categories formulated for the data analysis to form a single unit of analysis. Data items

were further coded so that their source was easily identified.

Table 4.5

Codes that identify the source of the data items

Code:	Focus group
	School A
FGA1	Focus group 1 < = 10 yrs
FGA2	Focus group 2 > = 11 yr
	School B
FGB1	Focus group 1 < = 10 yrs
FGB2	Focus group 2 > = 11 yrs
	Other responses
SSH	Summary Sheet
EXP	Expert group (added in stage 5)

Table 4.5 identifies the codes that identify the source of the data items. For example, data from the focus group interview conducted in School A with respondents with teaching experience less than, or equal to, ten years, are denoted by FGA1. Data from the focus group interview conducted in School A with respondents with teaching experience greater than, or equal to, eleven years, are denoted by FGA2. Similarly, data from the focus group interview conducted in School B are denoted by FGB1 and FGB2. Additional data from the summary sheet completed by some of the respondents were identified as SSH. Data collected from the expert group were identified as EXP.

Table 4.6 contains coded data items from the four units organised as a single unit of analysis under the theme: *Leadership is perceived in terms of the person leading.*

Table 4.6

A sample of coded data items for the theme: Leadership is perceived in terms of the person leading

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Less than and including 10 years

PER1   some people are born leaders and they have some intrinsic motivation and they are very focused (FGB1)

PER2   some people are natural leaders… some of that derives from a passion for what they are leading (FGB1)

PER3   they naturally become a leader. They want to represent those whose views, values and ideas they have listened to (FGB1)

PER4   they have that gift of leadership and have that vision. And that's their passion. I think that's the leader of the highest order (FGB1)

PER5   there are two types of leaders: those being paid and those who do it because that's their nature (FGA1)

PER6   there's different leadership, there's different qualities of each person. You need to recognise the qualities. For some it's in their nature to organise things – but sometimes you're just a manager not a leader (FGA1)

PER7   there has to be a quality about a leader that you want to listen to them and take their advice or you just want to be around them (FGA1)

PER8   they have to have something that grabs, for example, humour or intelligence. There's always something that strikes a chord (FGA1)

Greater than and including eleven years

PER9   a good leader doesn't seek leadership (FGB2)

PER10   being recognised by colleagues as a leader (FGA2)

PER11   it is the person who leads. Not the role (FGA2)

PER12   some people lead naturally or just take initiative (FGB2)

Summary sheet No responses recorded

Expert group   Data added in Stage five

Table 4.6 displays a sample of coded data items of the data from all focus groups organised as a single unit of analysis under the theme: *Leadership is perceived in terms of the person leading.* All data items that were organised in themes in relation to the research question categories were labelled and the focus group sourced. Further reflection was undertaken in the draft process and themes were further reviewed and refined.

Data display

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), data display involves summarising and assembling the information in order to display the themes that emerge out of the data. In stage five the data were synthesised under themes. A first summary of the findings was presented in the focus group interview with the 'expert' group, as detailed in Appendix P. New data obtained from the interview with the 'expert' group were transcribed and added to the existing data classification. Although it did not generate significant new concepts, this data confirmed and verified a number of the themes. The data were further synthesised. Key understandings for each theme were drawn from the data. Appendix T contains a sample of a draft synthesis of the themes and key understandings arising from the data.

In stage six the classification of themes and their key understandings were further reviewed. The themes were further synthesised to reduce the data to a "*small, manageable set of themes*" (Cresswell, 1998, p. 144). This final synthesis of themes formed the basis for displaying the data and reporting the findings. Nineteen themes and key understandings identified for each theme were organised under the four categories formulated for the data analysis.

The themes and their key understandings are displayed in Chapter Five. Tables 5.6 to 5.13 display the themes for reporting the findings in relation to research question one; Tables 5.15 to 5.17 display the themes for reporting the findings in relation to research question two; Tables 5.19 to 5.25 display the themes for reporting the findings in relation to research questions three and four, and Tables 5.27 to 5.31 display the themes for reporting the findings in relation to research question five.

The inclusion of excerpts from the transcriptions in the reporting of the results provided a rich source of information. Patton (2002) emphasised the importance of the descriptive phase in the reporting of the results: "*good description takes the reader into the setting being described*" (p. 437). A description of the results of the data can be found in the next chapter.

Data verification

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), data verification involves interpreting the data, drawing conclusions and verifying meanings. The researcher was constantly mindful that the themes that emerged were already the result of layers of interpretation (Van Maanen, 1988, cited in Miles & Huberman, p. 145) and that interpretation derived from the meaning that is read into the data by the researcher (Patton, 2002).

The interpretation of the results involved creating a framework within which to discuss the results in light of the literature review. The framework was devised from key elements described in Frost and Harris's (2003) conceptualisation of key factors in the analysis of teacher leadership.

Figure 4.3

A framework developed for the study

A framework used by Frost & Harris (2003)	A framework developed for the study
Key factors in the analysis of teacher leadership	**Key factors in the analysis of leadership by teachers**
Construction of the professional role of teachers ▪ teachers' beliefs and expectations ▪ societal constructions	Leadership by teachers in Catholic schools is shaped and influenced by a teacher's sense of 'agency' ▪ teachers' personal agency ▪ teachers' interpersonal agency ▪ teachers' professional agency
The organisation environment ▪ organisational structures ▪ organisational culture ▪ social capital	Leadership by teachers in Catholic schools is shaped and influenced by the organisational agency of the school ▪ cultural factors ▪ organisational factors
Personal capacity ▪ authority ▪ knowledge (pedagogical, organisational, community) ▪ situational understanding ▪ interpersonal skills	Leadership by teachers in Catholic schools is shaped and influenced by ways in which the school facilitates teacher leadership ▪ teacher professional practice ▪ teacher professional learning ▪ teacher leadership development
(Frost & Harris, 2003, p. 493)	(Adapted from Frost & Harris, 2003, p. 493)

Figure 4.3 outlines the framework of Frost and Harris (2003) which contains some key elements that were adapted and included in a framework devised for a discussion of the findings in this study. These included: elements relating to the professional role of teachers; elements relating to the organisational environment of the school; and elements relating to the personal capacity of teachers, all of which are perceived by Frost and Harris to develop leadership in teachers. The data were interpreted and discussed in light of these elements and other key elements in the literature review recorded in Chapters Two and Three. The framework presented in Figure 4.3 is explained in further detail in Chapter Six. The interpretation phase also involved drawing conclusions and determining the

significance of the results. Patton (2002) emphasised the importance of "*substantive significance*" (p. 467) in qualitative findings.

Standards for enhancing quality and credibility

Integral to the research process was the need to ensure that standards of quality and credibility were maintained at all times (Patton, 2002). In the conduct of the research the researcher was well aware of the differing meanings and perspectives on the subject matter that were embedded in both the literature and the data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed four main criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, to ensure that integrity is maintained in process of qualitative research. The researcher sought to uphold integrity in each stage of the data analysis.

Credibility

According to Patton (2002) credibility depends on the rigorous methods employed, the credibility of the researcher and a philosophical conviction of the researcher of the value of the inquiry. The opinions of experts and the research supervisors were constantly sourced. The researcher maintained credibility by conducting a pilot study to check the credibility of the research process. Credibility was also ensured by the incorporation of triangulation into the research design to ensure the collection of rich data on understandings of leadership from a variety of perspectives. In particular, the 'expert' group verified the data through their expert opinions in response to a first summary of the findings from the four focus group interviews conducted in the two schools.

The researcher held a philosophical conviction of the value of the study and its potential as a basis for further research on the topic of teacher leadership. Throughout the study the

maintenance of a researcher's journal provided a means of recording a number of predispositions held on the nature and function of leadership in schools in order to counter potentially subjective interpretations of the findings. Patton (2002) described this as a *"mental cleansing process"* (p. 553).

Transferability

In qualitative research transferability is concerned with the extent to which the research can be replicated in another context (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this study, although the conclusions cannot be generalised, a number of key aspects of the research might be applied in another context. This might occur where the sample and sampling procedures are conducted in a similar way to this research (Patton, 2002) so that an exploration of the perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers might be undertaken in another context and produce quality data that have real meaning within that context. Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasised that it was not the task of the researcher to detail the transferability of the research, rather those who read and use the research might determine whether transferability was applicable.

Dependability

Dependability was ensured principally through the consistency of the selected processes for the conduct of the research, including thoroughness in sourcing the relevant literature, the formulation of the research questions and the research design, the conduct of a pilot study and the use of triangulation. The triangulation of sources for the data collection (Patton, 2002) helped to confirm consistency in the research. Data were provided by the respondents in the two focus group categories in order to draw some comparison of the perspectives of teachers with teaching experience less than, and including, ten years, and

teachers with teaching experience greater than, and including, eleven years. An 'expert' group verified the data that were gathered from the four focus group interviews which were conducted in the two schools. The researcher's journal was also used as an additional record and check.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the objectivity and neutral stance of the research, in particular, of the researcher in order to minimise bias (Patton, 2002). In this research, confirmability was ensured through explicit and detailed explanations of data collection procedures and steps used in the data analysis. Detailed data reduction sources were recorded. Objectivity was also enhanced through the conduct of the pilot study, verification by the 'expert' group and the acknowledgment of personal assumptions in the researcher's journal.

Delimitations and limitations of the study

The delimitations of the study included the contextual setting of the research problem, the Catholic school, and the selection of a 'convenience' sample of teachers who were employed in two Catholic secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne and who were principally not in a formal position of leadership. The data collection process was bound by management factors in terms of the number of respondents and the allocated time given to the conduct of the focus group interviews.

A major limitation of the study was that the findings of the research are applicable only to the teachers who participated in the research. The data that were gathered in the four focus groups conducted in the two schools were the views of teachers who were principally not in a formal position of leadership. However, the perceptions and experiences of the

respondents might provide important insights into the ways in which leadership is constructed in Catholic schools. The findings might inform further research on leadership by teachers in Catholic schools.

A limitation of the study was its failure to provide demographic data which distinguished on the basis of gender. However, this factor was identified by the researcher as an area for further research. Attention has already been drawn to a further limitation in the study: the constraint of the need for objectivity and freedom from bias in the collection and analysis of the data.

Ethical considerations

Appropriate measures to ensure compliance with ethical procedures were taken throughout the conduct of the research. The Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University granted ethical approval. An outline of the nature and conduct of the research was presented to the principals of the target schools. Similarly, this information was presented at a staff meeting in each of the two schools from where the research respondents were drawn. Confidentiality of the intended research respondents was ensured in the invitation letter and the accompanying consent form. The principals of the selected schools and the respondents were advised that they were free to withdraw their consent at any time throughout the data preparation and collection phase.

Following one focus group interview, a request was made by a respondent to withdraw the respondent's data. However, permission to use the data was later reinstated by this respondent. Because of the nature of the focus group interview, it was acknowledged that anonymity was not possible during the conduct of the interviews. However, the

respondents were assured that anonymity and confidentiality were maintained in the transcription of the audiotape, each stage of the data analysis, all draft documentation and the publication of the research findings.

Data recording, security and disposal

In accordance with Australian Catholic University research policy and procedures, the original data, that were recorded on audiotape and in the summary sheets, were stored in a locked cabinet in the principal supervisor's office and will be retained for the set period of five years, after which they will be destroyed. All computer text file copies of the audiotapes created by the researcher during the process of the study will be retained for five years and then erased.

Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined and justified the research design, the research methods and the steps involved in the analysis of the data, and the reporting and interpretation of the results. Standards of quality and credibility, ethical considerations, and delimitations and limitations of the research were also addressed. Following this detailed account of the conduct of the research, a description of the findings is presented in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

Description of the findings

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to report on the data collected in the conduct of the research. The data are described in themes that emerged in the process of the data analysis. A discussion of the findings that are presented in this chapter is given in Chapter Six.

The five key questions that guided the research are as follows:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of leadership in general?

2. What are teachers' perceptions of leadership in Catholic schools?

3. What are teachers' perceptions of leadership by teachers in Catholic schools?

4. What are teachers' experiences of leadership by teachers in Catholic schools?

5. What are the opportunities for leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools?

Four main categories correlating to the five key research questions were formulated for the data analysis. They are:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of leadership in general?

2. What are teachers' perceptions and experiences of leadership in Catholic schools?

3. What are teachers' perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers in Catholic schools?

4. What are the opportunities for leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools?

As explained in Chapter four, the data were synthesised and displayed in nineteen themes. Tables 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4 display the data in categories relating to the research questions.

Table 5.1

Display of data relating to research question one

Theme: Leadership is perceived in terms of the person leading
key understandings:
-   a person who has personal motivation and natural leadership qualities
-   a person who can recognise his or her distinctive leadership qualities

Theme: Leadership is perceived in terms of having competency
key understandings:
-   leadership requires knowledge and organisational competency
-   leadership requires effective communication and interpersonal skills
-   a person exercising leadership is not expected to be multi-skilled

Theme: Leadership is perceived in terms of a position
key understandings:
-   leadership is equated with holding a position of leadership
-   leadership is equated with hierarchical structure and being in charge
-   formal positions of leadership can constrain leadership

Theme: Leadership is perceived in terms of having experience and an opportunity to lead
key understandings:
-   leadership can be developed through first-hand experience
-   leadership can be exercised in a range of ways and at different times
-   leadership is dependent upon context and an opportunity to move into a position of leadership

Theme: Leadership is perceived to be relational
key understandings:
-   leadership is about valuing and getting along with people
-   leadership is best exercised by people with effective interpersonal skills
-   leadership is about exercising influence

Theme: Leadership is perceived to be empowering
key understandings:
-   leadership is about empowering others to work towards a common goal
-   leadership is about offering guidance
-   leadership is about challenging others

Theme: Leadership is perceived in terms of vision
key understandings:
-   leadership is about having a vision and direction
-   leadership is about having a higher motive
-   leadership is about a desire to bring about change

Table 5.1 displays the data relating to research question one that are synthesised around

seven themes and their key understandings.

Table 5.2

Display of data relating to research question two

Theme: Leadership in a Catholic school is perceived and experienced in relation to the cultural context of the school
key understandings:
- leadership in a Catholic school is informed by the school's mission and ethos
- leadership in a Catholic school is influenced by a strong sense of community
- leadership in a Catholic school is about service to others

Theme: Leadership in a Catholic school is perceived and experienced in relation to the organisational context of the school
key understandings:
- leadership in a Catholic school is influenced by bureaucratic and managerial issues
- leadership in a Catholic school is equated with management
- leadership in a Catholic school is principally collaborative

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Table 5.2 displays the data relating to research question two that are synthesised around

two themes and their key understandings.

Table 5.3

Display of data relating to research questions three and four

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Theme: The nature of teaching entails leadership
key understandings:
- it is in the nature of teaching to exercise leadership
- teachers exercise leadership beyond a formal role
- teachers assume a responsibility in exercising leadership

Theme: Teachers exercise leadership in their professional practice
key understandings:
- teachers exercise leadership in the activities of their everyday professional practice
- teachers exercise leadership in a range of extra-curricula activities
- teachers lead and influence students

Theme: Leadership attributes that enable teachers to exercise leadership
key understandings:
- trust, mutual respect, and acceptance of colleagues enable teachers to exercise leadership
- care, a concern for others, empathy and discernment enable teachers to exercise leadership
- being authentic enables a teacher to exercise leadership
- a sense of humour and the capacity to laugh at oneself enable teachers to exercise leadership

Theme: Leadership competencies that enable teachers to exercise leadership
key understandings:
- organisational competencies enable teachers to exercise leadership
- communication competencies enable teachers to exercise leadership
- knowledge competencies enable teachers to exercise leadership
- abilities to work with change and to consider new ways of teaching enable teachers to exercise leadership

Theme: Leadership approaches that enable teachers to exercise leadership
key understandings:
- a collaborative approach enables teachers to exercise leadership
- empowerment enables teachers to exercise leadership
- a consultative approach enables teachers to exercise leadership
- a service approach enables teachers to exercise leadership

Theme: Factors that hinder leadership by teachers
key understandings:
- a lack of professional identity can hinder leadership by teachers
- formal leadership can dominate leadership in a school
- a lack of experience and confidence can hinder leadership by teachers
- a lack of autonomy in the classroom can hinder leadership by teachers
- a lack of permanency can hinder leadership by teachers

Table 5.3 displays the data relating to research questions three and four that are synthesised

around six themes and their key understandings.

Table 5.4

Display of data relating to research question five

Theme: Leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools is enabled through professional practice
key understandings:
- leadership development for teachers occurs through the everyday experience in their professional practice
- leadership development for teachers occurs through an openness to new experiences and learning
.
Theme: Leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools is enabled through professional learning
key understandings:
- formal professional development programs provide an opportunity for teachers to develop leadership skills and competencies
- collaborative teamwork develops leadership in teachers
- reflective practice and mentoring are valuable processes for leadership development in teachers

Theme: Leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools is facilitated by the school structures
key understandings:
- various school structures facilitate leadership development for teachers
- formal leadership roles facilitate leadership development for teachers
- school change and development enable leadership development for teachers

Theme: Leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools is hindered by a range of factors
key understandings:
- teachers in formal positions of leadership have priority to leadership development
- teachers have limited access to programs that facilitate leadership development
- there are few opportunities for teachers to develop leadership beyond the classroom

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Table 5.4 displays the data relating to research question five that are synthesised around

four themes and their key understandings.

Each theme and its key understandings are displayed discretely in the description of the

findings: Tables 5.6 to 5.13 display the themes in relation to research question one in

category one; Tables 5.15 to 5.17 display the themes in relation to research question two in

category two; Tables 5.19 to 5.25 display the themes in relation to research questions three

and four in category three, and Tables 5.27 to 5.31 display the themes in relation to

research question five in category four. Preceding these tables are the codes that were

identified to classify the data in each category, as explained in Chapter Four. The codes are listed to assist in the reading of the description of the findings. They are displayed in Tables 5.5, 5.14, 5.18 and 5.26. Although the number of themes was reduced in the final synthesis of data, data items referenced in this chapter are identified according to the coded themes as listed. For example, (PER1) represents the first data item listed under the theme '*leadership is perceived in terms of the person leading*'. Some data items are cross-referenced and are reported in more than one theme.

Category One: What are teachers' perceptions of leadership in general?

In category one, seven themes formed a basis for reporting the data in relation to research question one: what are teachers' perceptions of leadership in general? The data are described under these themes. Table 5.5 contains a list of coded themes that were used to collate the data in relation to research question one.

Table 5.5

Coded themes relating to research question one

Code	Theme
PER	Leadership is perceived in terms of the person leading
POS	Leadership is perceived in terms of the position held
REL	Leadership is perceived in terms of being relational
EMP	Leadership is perceived in terms of empowerment
VIS	Leadership is perceived in terms of having a vision and direction
COMP	Leadership is perceived in terms of having competency
EXP	Leadership is perceived in terms of having experience and an opportunity to lead
INFL	Leadership is perceived in terms of influence
TRAN	Leadership is perceived to be transient

Table 5.5 details the coded themes identified to code the data in relation to research question one: *What are teachers' perceptions of leadership in general?* These codes identify the data items that are included in the reporting of the findings in relation to research question one. The nine themes were further synthesised into seven themes for reporting the findings. These themes are displayed in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6

Themes for reporting the findings in relation to research question one

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Category 1: What are teachers' perceptions of leadership in general?

Theme 1.1: Leadership is perceived in terms of the person leading

Theme 1.2: Leadership is perceived in terms of having competency

Theme 1.3: Leadership is perceived in terms of a position

Theme 1.4: Leadership is perceived in terms of having experience and an opportunity to lead

Theme 1.5: Leadership is perceived to be relational

Theme 1.6: Leadership is perceived to be empowering

Theme 1.7: Leadership is perceived in terms of vision

In Table 5.6 are presented seven themes that formed a basis for reporting the data in relation to research question one: *What are teachers' perceptions of leadership in general?* The focus question *How would you define the term, leadership in general?* Was designed to draw respondents into a general discussion of their perceptions of leadership without specific reference to their perceptions and experiences of leadership in an educational context. The themes displayed in Table 5.6 were defined from key concepts drawn principally from the literature on general leadership theory. Each theme and its key understandings drawn from the data are displayed in the following tables and then described in turn.

Table 5.7

Theme 1.1: Leadership is perceived in terms of the person leading

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Key understandings:

- a person who has personal motivation and natural leadership qualities

- a person who can recognise his or her distinctive leadership qualities

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Respondents perceived that some people have natural leadership qualities and are born to

be leaders, and therefore have *"some intrinsic motivation"* (PER1) to lead. They were seen

as having a gift for leadership and driven by *"a passion for what they are leading"* (PER2).

In the context of the discussion, the reference to 'passion' had a dynamic connotation. It

denoted something about a person's personal motivation and enthusiasm to lead. One

respondent described such a person as *"the leader of the highest order"* (PER4). Such

people were also termed by another respondent as the *"natural leaders"* (PER2) because

they were seen to assume responsibility, take initiative and lead naturally (PER12).

Leadership was distinctively described by one respondent: *"It is the person who leads not*

the role" (PER11). However, it was acknowledged by a respondent that not everyone has

the ability to lead (TRAN1).

One respondent stated that leadership is perceived and exercised differently by each person

and that an individual has distinctive leadership qualities but in turn, needs to know these

qualities in order to exercise effective leadership (PER6). Respondents suggested that

leaders have an outstanding quality that is apparent and impacts in some way on the lives

of others. This was described as *"they have to have something that grabs, for example,*

humour or intelligence. There's always something that strikes a chord." (PER8). Another

comment was *"there has to be a quality about a leader that you want to listen to them and*

take their advice or you just want to be around them" (PER7). Additional viewpoints were that a good leader would not seek leadership (PER9) but the person will be duly recognised by colleagues as a leader (PER10).

There was one response from the 'expert' group. It was perceived that people with outstanding qualities are identified as potential leaders for formal leadership early in their career (PER13).

Table 5.8

Theme 1.2: Leadership is perceived in terms of having competency

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Key understandings:

- leadership requires knowledge and organisational competency

- leadership requires communication and interpersonal skills

- a person exercising leadership is not expected to be multi-skilled

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Leadership was equated with the naming of some distinctive competency and expertise in a particular area (COMP8, COMP10). Competencies identified included knowledge (COMP1), communication (COMP4, COMP5), interpersonal skills (COMP2), and organisation skills (COMP3). However, it was emphasised that leaders are not expected to be multi-skilled and should not assume that they have the capacity to lead in more than one field: "*If you're a leader in one area it doesn't necessarily mean you're a leader in all areas of life*" (TRAN2). One respondent suggested that some people are more skilled than others (COMP7) and will therefore be the more appropriate person to lead. There were no responses recorded from the 'expert' group.

Table 5.9

Theme 1.3: Leadership is perceived in terms of a position

Key understandings:

- leadership is equated with holding a position of leadership

- leadership is equated with hierarchical structure and being in charge

- formal positions of leadership can constrain leadership

Although considerable discussion focused on leadership perceived in terms of a person and a person's competencies, a key discussion point in the focus group interviews was a view of 'positional' leadership. Leadership was seen by respondents to be dependent upon being given a position, "*a person who holds a position, other people see that person as a leader*" (POS10), becoming part of the structure (POS7), and having an opportunity to "*move into a position where you lead*" (POS6). The discussion was also grounded in a hierarchical understanding of leadership with reference to those who are in charge, "*some want to just be in charge and be on top*" (POS4); those who occupy a recognised position, "*obviously, people in the hierarchical structure are leaders, it's their job. They have to be leaders. They're not necessarily leaders, it's their job.*" (POS3), and a hierarchical strata, "*normally they have somebody working below or under them, or working for them*" (POS2).

Conversely, respondents perceived that although a person may be in a formal position of leadership within an organisation, the person may not necessarily exercise effective leadership. One respondent drew upon personal experience to emphasise the constraints that a formal leadership role can place upon a leader and commented that those who are not in formal leadership roles are freer to lead:

In the formal position of leadership I wasn't free to lead in a lot of areas. In some ways your contact with staff is fairly formal. Now I've got a bit more collegial contact with staff. I'm freer to lead in some respects (POS11).

The notion of a transient leadership was evident in the discussion. Although leadership was equated with a holding a position, leadership was considered to be a transient more than a permanent status. As one respondent declared, "*once a leader, not always a leader. They may not have the qualities and skills to be a leader in that area*" (TRAN1). This respondent alluded to the transient nature of leadership by acknowledging that somebody else "*can come along and do a better job*" (TRAN2). Responses from the 'expert' group validated these perceptions. It was suggested that in the exercise of leadership "*Different people have wisdom at different times*" (TRAN3), and that teachers should be able to move in and out of leadership (TRAN4).

An understanding of leadership beyond a 'position' was also apparent in the course of the discussion, as evidenced by the following two responses: "*I don't think leaders have to occupy a position*" (POS13), and "*leadership is not necessarily a position that you have to have as a formal one*" (POS14).

There was a range of responses from the 'expert' group. One response reinforced the notion that leadership was not dependent upon a position (POS16). However, the majority of responses from this group perceived that leadership was dependent upon a formal position of leadership (POS17, POS20, POS21). There were some varying views expressed regarding leaders in a formal position of leadership. There was an assumption that persons

in formal, positional leadership would have the appropriate leadership qualities and exercise these qualities naturally (POS18) and that a person's leadership skills might not be recognised until the person was in a formal position of leadership (POS17). One respondent perceived that if leadership was equated with a role it was about the exercise of power: *"if leadership is tied to a role, it's power"* (POS19).

Table 5.10

Theme 1.4: Leadership is perceived in terms of having experience and an opportunity to lead

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Key understandings:

- leadership can be developed through first-hand experience

- leadership can be exercised in a range of ways and at different times

- leadership is dependent upon context and an opportunity to move into a position of leadership

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Leadership was also perceived as being dependent upon having experience (OPP1, OPP4), and being developed in the course of a person's experience (OPP2) in a range of ways in everyday work. It was described by one respondent as "*defacto leadership sort of happens"* (OPP6), and by another respondent as *"something that you develop as you go along"* (OPP3). However, the perspective of a third respondent was that the opportunity for leadership was seen to emerge within a particular context: "*you have to have the opportunity to lead in time and history"* (OPP8).

There was one response recorded from the 'expert' group. This response declared that a good leader will let people develop and will give people opportunities without making a judgment (OPP10).

Table 5. 11

Theme 1.5: Leadership is perceived to be relational

Key understandings:

- leadership is about valuing and getting along with people

- leadership is best exercised by people with effective interpersonal skills

- leadership is about exercising influence

Leadership was perceived by respondents to be relational. The relational nature of leadership was referred to in terms of "*someone who is able to interact*" (REL2), who will "*value getting along with others, they value relationships*" (REL1). Reference was also made to the importance of having well-developed interpersonal skills (REL4) and the capacity to "*get to know how people work*" (REL5) as the basis of good communication. The relational nature of leadership was also described in terms of the person being a good listener (REL7), a discerning person (REL8), and built upon trust (REL10) and integrity (REL11). There was one response from the 'expert' group. It succinctly described the relational nature of leadership as a way of dealing with people and being a 'people' person (REL12).

The relational nature of leadership was reinforced through reference to the notion of leadership as influence. As one respondent stated, "*you have to have the people to go with you so they are the people to lead*" (INFL8). Other respondents spoke in terms of the

importance of role modelling: "*you want to subconsciously model them*" (INFL1), and "*to take their advice*" (INFL2); "*you just want to be around them*" (INFL3); and in leading by example: "*I carry a responsibility around all the time to lead by example*" (INFL10).

Leadership as influence was also expressed in terms of a desire to represent others whose views are influenced (INFL4). However, a respondent expressed a concern that leaders may be self-serving and mislead people in order to maintain their leadership: "*the probability of misleading people so that you can maintain the leadership, to me is a real worry, um, in terms of contemporary leadership*" (INFL12). Another respondent acknowledged that only in hindsight might some individuals recognise the extent of their influence as a leader (INFL6). There were no responses recorded from the 'expert' group in relation to leadership as influence.

Table 5.12

Theme 1.6: Leadership is perceived to be empowering

Key understandings:

- leadership is about empowering others to work towards a common goal

- leadership is about offering guidance

- leadership is about challenging others

An empowering leader was perceived as someone who "…*talks to people, resources people; travels beside them, drives with them, and travels with them and behind them*" (EMP4), and one who can "*bring people along with you, not forcing it (vision) on them. No short cuts to this.*" (EMP9). Leadership was perceived in terms of empowering others to "*work towards a common goal*" (EMP2) and offering guidance, ideas and inspiration

(EMP10). It was also expressed in terms of recognising that someone may need help (EMP1), enabling and empowering a person to take risks (EMP7), and in challenging others to step beyond their comfort zone (EMP8). There were no responses recorded from the 'expert' group in relation to leadership as empowerment.

Table 5.13

Theme 1.7: Leadership is perceived in terms of vision

Key understandings:

- leadership is about having vision and direction

- leadership is about having a higher motive

- leadership is about a desire to bring about change

The empowering nature of leadership was equated with vision, as succinctly described by one respondent "*you can be a leader by example… the vision that you espouse, whatever that may be*" (VIS8). The inference to vision was made in terms of leaders having wisdom (VIS11), having a direction (VIS1, VIS3) and a focus on what is important for people (VIS4).

The vision dimension of leadership was perceived in terms of a person's higher motives. A visionary leader was described as "*a leader of the highest order*" (VIS6) and "*the best leaders are people of a higher spirituality, they are guided by something else*" (VIS5). A leader of this kind was seen to have a gift for leadership. The following dialogue encapsulates respondents' understanding of a visionary leader as one who has multiple functions and who is able to lead people into another dimension in their lives:

"*in our general way we're looking for leaders to give us vision, people who are wise, people who can perhaps challenge us to grow and develop*" (VIS11), "*and who can name things and name what's happening*" (VIS12), and "*who can enable and empower us to perhaps take risks, to accept mistakes and to be trusted to have another go*" (VIS13) .

The vision dimension of leadership was also equated with having enthusiasm and desire to bring about change. It was depicted in terms of *"taking people often where they don't know, taking them into areas that they don't know are there"* (VIS10), and having a clear vision and *"being strong enough to push it through"* (VIS15). One response from the 'expert' group suggested that a leader needs to *"think outside the square"* (VIS18) in order to offer a view into the future.

Category Two: What are teachers' perceptions and experiences of leadership in Catholic schools?

In category two, two themes formed a basis for reporting the data in relation to research question two: *What are teachers' perceptions and experiences of leadership in Catholic schools?* The data are described under these themes. Table 5.14 contains a list of coded themes that were used to collate the data in relation to research question two.

Table 5.14

Coded themes relating to research question two

Code	Theme
MVIS	Leadership in Catholic schools is perceived and experienced in the context of mission and vision
COMM	Leadership in Catholic schools is perceived and experienced in the context of community
SERV	Leadership in Catholic schools is perceived and experienced in the context of service
COLL	Leadership in Catholic schools is perceived and experienced as collaborative
ORGF	Leadership in Catholic schools is perceived and experienced in relation to organisational factors

Table 5.14 details the coded themes identified to code the data in relation to research

question two: *What are teachers' perceptions and experiences about leadership in*

Catholic schools? These codes identify the data items that are included in the reporting of

the findings in relation to research question two. The five themes were further synthesised

into two themes for reporting the findings. These themes are displayed in Table 5.15.

Table 5.15

Themes for reporting the findings in relation to research question two

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Category 2: What are teachers' perceptions and experiences of leadership in Catholic Schools?

2.1: Leadership in Catholic schools is perceived and experienced in relation to the cultural context of the school

2.2: Leadership in Catholic schools is perceived and experienced in relation to the organisational context of the school

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Table 5.15 displays two themes that formed a basis for reporting the data in relation to research question two: *What are teachers' perceptions and experiences of leadership in Catholic schools?* The focus question *How do you perceive leadership in the educational context of a Catholic school?* was designed to draw respondents' views on their perceptions and experiences of leadership within an educational context. Whilst the broad context for the discussion was educational, the immediate experience of the respondents, the Catholic school, provided the specific context. The themes as depicted in each table were defined from key concepts drawn principally from the literature on leadership in the context of the school, in particular, the Catholic school. Respondents perceived leadership in Catholic schools principally in relation to their perceptions and experiences of the cultural context of the school, Theme 2.1, and the structural context of the school, Theme 2.2.

Table 5. 16

Theme 2.1: Leadership in Catholic schools is perceived and experienced in relation to the cultural context of the school

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Key understandings:

- leadership in Catholic schools is informed by the school's mission and ethos

- leadership in Catholic schools is influenced by a strong sense of community

- leadership in Catholic schools is perceived to be about service to others

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An understanding of the importance of a Catholic school's mission was especially evident in the responses of respondents who worked in a religious congregation-owned school. A school's mission statement was seen to permeate the climate of the school and inform the two important dimensions of curriculum and pastoral care: *"the mission statement keeps cropping up in every dimension of the school's life, and constantly reminding us about what we are on about"* (MVIS7). In particular, a respondent perceived that the charisma of the religious congregation that founded the school permeated teaching and learning in the school: *"the motto permeates throughout the school. It informs curriculum and the pastoral care and is instilled in the students"* (MVIS3). Another respondent commented that the values of the school were grounded in the values of the tradition (MVIS2).

Discussion in the focus groups was given to the nature of leadership in Catholic schools. Leadership in Catholic schools was perceived to require a vision based on gospel values (MISV13). One respondent referred to Jesus as an exemplary leader: *"Jesus was a perfect leader. He was aware of people around him; his environment; responding and calling others to respond to his message"* (MVIS8). Leadership in Catholic schools was ideally described as being authentic and sincere (MVIS1), supportive, compassionate and

knowledgeable in fostering a love of learning in students (MVIS12), and empowering members to fulfil their Christian potential (MVIS14). However, it was commented that Catholic schools today experience tension in espousing Christian principles (MVIS11), the inference being that schools experience undue pressure in marketing their image (MVIS10) and, in this course, may lose sight of the core Christian values (MVIS9).

Responses from the 'expert' group reinforced the significance of mission and vision in Catholic schools. Concern was expressed over the need for leadership to be focused on a school's mission and vision so that they do not become a token (MVIS15). Such concern is described in the following responses: *"leaders may espouse Christian values but not necessarily live them"* (MVIS18), and *"…there has to be a congruence if you like, between action and vision"* (MVIS17).

A sense of community (COMM1, COMM2) was perceived to be a key indicator of the ethos of a Catholic school. Respondents acknowledged the importance of community in being interrelated with a school's mission and ethos: *"sharing in the community aspect of the school comes with the ethos of a Catholic school"* (COMM2). A sense of community was seen to provide individuals with a sense of belonging (COMM3) and encourage shared leadership (COMM1, COMM6). One respondent drew upon personal experience in a school within another system: *"You can easily go up and approach the leaders whereas in (name) schools there doesn't seem to be the sharing, the life behind the sharing community spirit"* (COMM4).

Leadership in Catholic schools was seen to have the capacity to empower members of the community to fulfil their Christian potential (COMM7). Respondents perceived that

Christian leadership is congruent with a Christian sense of service (SERV2). Reference was made to leaders who serve their community by living out Christian values: "*some of the better leaders I've worked with have been very much of service to people, meeting needs and showing concern; being available to students*" (SERV4). Another respondent perceived that "*to genuinely serve people requires strength and energy and commitment*" (SERV1). Service to others was achieved by setting an example (SERV3).

There were a number of responses on leadership in the context of service from the 'expert' group but none in relation to leadership in the context of community. Concerns expressed were that the notion of service was not emphasised (SERV7) and that people who were in a current position of leadership did not have a good sense of leadership and service (SERV6). Responses referred to pressures such as a leader's need for accountability, and marketing forces and results in terms of productivity that discouraged leadership being exercised as service (SERV8, SERV9). It was commented that leadership as service needed to be inherent in a leader (SERV9).

Table 5. 17

Theme 2.2: Leadership in Catholic schools is perceived and experienced in relation to the organisational context of the school

Key understandings:

- leadership in Catholic schools is perceived as being influenced by bureaucratic and managerial issues

- leadership in Catholic schools is perceived as being equated with management

- leadership in Catholic schools is perceived to be principally collaborative

Catholic schools today were seen to be places where sometimes vision may be compromised by bureaucracy: *"I think the stated vision is there but I'm not sure to what extent the reality exists in many Catholic schools. It's not just Catholic schools. Number one priority today is to balance the books"* (ORGF4). It was commented that, *"Schools are a business today and require effective management. Our leadership has been pushed to the business side of life"* (ORGF8). Some respondents perceived that principal leadership was more a managerial style as a result of bureaucratic forces (ORGF2) and consequently, principals were not free to lead in a lot of areas (ORGF7). One respondent from the 'expert' group commented that people at middle management level traditionally see their role as one of management and that they are driven by a need *"to get things done"* (ORGF10).

The pressure of market forces, both externally and internally, was considered to be a negative force in Catholic schools. It was commented that, in comparison to previous years, there was a different market today in terms of a school's size and in meeting the demands of the students (ORGF6). Concern was expressed that Catholic schools needed to compete in a competitive market environment and with marketing forces being seen by one respondent to replace the vision (SERV2). It was suggested by a respondent that leadership needs to have mission and vision as its reference: *"sometimes the mission, vision statement can be a token thing. Leadership should come back to the mission and vision."* (MVIS15).

One respondent perceived that leadership dealt with management issues at the expense of nurturing personal and professional relationships with staff (ORGF3). It was also commented that the creativity of teachers and their educational vision could be stifled

because of undue pressure on leadership to deal with management and bureaucratic issues (ORGF5).

A number of responses from the 'expert' group equated leadership with a school's structure. It was perceived that formal positions of leadership dominate and consequently, reflect the structural context of a school (ORGF11), and that structures hinder the practice of leadership, for example, role expectations in relation to formal leadership (ORGF15). One respondent commented that, even in the case of distributed leadership, power and control is "*from the top*" (ORGF13). However, it was also commented that hierarchical structures were gradually breaking down and that the system (school) was no longer a closed one (ORGF14). It was suggested that the advent of online interactive teaching might help to break down school structures (ORGF16).

Although leadership was perceived as being consumed with addressing managerial and bureaucratic issues, leadership was also perceived as being principally collaborative in nature and in structure. Respondents who worked in a congregation-owned school environment were particularly articulate about their experiences of a collaborative leadership structure: *"this school is very strong on the shared leadership. It's built into the system"* (COLL1). This leadership structure was one in which respondents perceived that members of staff were empowered in decision-making: *"The formal leadership in the school is collaborative. Decisions are made generally with some sort of discussion with staff. There are very few things that they'll just decide"* (COLL2). It was perceived that a collaborative approach resulted when colleagues worked in conjunction with leaders with the school community towards the school's common goals (COLL11), sharing leadership and working to get others involved (COLL4).

A collaborative leadership approach was seen to focus on meeting the needs of students (COLL7) and the involvement of staff in a range of activities (COLL11, COLL15). However, this was not necessarily the experience of all respondents. One respondent recalled a past experience and expressly stated *"my past experience of leadership in Catholic schools was more a hierarchical one than a collaborative approach. Decisions were just made. There wasn't as much communication going on between staff and leadership. In this school the leadership is more valued and there's more opportunity"* (COLL6). The notion of collaborative leadership was also expressed in terms of a group effort (COLL8), the experience of working in a team (COLL8, COLL9), and sharing the responsibility of empowering others (COLL13).

Category Three: What are teachers' perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers in Catholic schools?

In category three, six themes formed a basis for reporting the data in relation to research question three: *What are teachers' perceptions of leadership by teachers in Catholic schools?* and research question four: *What are teachers' experiences of leadership by teachers in Catholic schools?* The data are described under these themes. Table 5.18 contains a list of coded themes that were used to collate the data in relation to research questions three and four.

Table 5.18

Coded themes relating to research questions three and four

Code	Theme
TEAC	Leadership by teachers in Catholic schools is perceived in the context of the nature and status of teaching
PROP	Leadership by teachers in Catholic schools is perceived and experienced in the context of professional practice
STUD	Leadership by teachers in Catholic schools is perceived and experienced in terms of influence on students
STRU	Leadership by teachers in Catholic schools is perceived and experienced in the context of school structure
LA	**Leadership attributes**
LA-TRUS	Trust
LA-CARE	Care
LA-EMPH	Empathy
LA-AUTH	Authenticity
LA-MRES	Mutual respect
LA-HUMR	Humour
LC	**Leadership competencies**
LC-COMM	Communication
LC-KNOW	Knowledge
LC-ORGS	Organisational skills
LC-CHAN	Ability to work with change
LC-DECS	Decision-making
LP	**Leadership approaches**
LP-COLP	Collaborative practice
LP-EMP	Empowerment
LP-CONS	Consultative
LP-SERV	Service

Table 5.18 details the coded themes identified in relation to research questions three and four: *What are teachers' perceptions of leadership by teachers in Catholic schools?* and research question four: *What are teachers' experiences of leadership by teachers in Catholic schools?* These codes identify the data items that are included in the reporting of the findings in relation to research questions three and four. The themes were further synthesised into six themes for reporting the findings. These themes are displayed in Table 5.19.

Table 5.19

Themes for reporting the findings in relation to research questions three and four

Category 3: What are teachers' perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers in Catholic schools?

3.1: The nature of teaching entails the exercise of leadership
3.2: Teachers exercise leadership in their professional practice
3.3: Leadership attributes which enable teachers to exercise leadership
3.4: Leadership competencies which enable teachers to exercise leadership
3.5: Leadership approaches which enable teachers to exercise leadership
3.6: Factors that hinder leadership by teachers

Table 5.19 displays six themes that were formulated from the data in relation to research question three*: What are teachers' perceptions about leadership by teachers in Catholic schools?* and research question four: *What are teachers' experiences about leadership by teachers in Catholic schools?* The focus questions: *What are your perceptions of leadership in Catholic schools context by teachers who are not in a formal position of*

leadership? and *What are your experiences of leadership in Catholic schools context by teachers?* were designed to draw respondents into a discussion on their perceptions and their experiences, as teachers, on leadership by teachers. The themes as depicted in each table were defined from key concepts drawn principally from the literature on teacher leadership theory. The responses that were denoted by the researcher to be related to the interrelationship of leadership by teachers with the teaching and learning process were portrayed in Themes 3.1 and Theme 3.2. Theme 3.3, theme 3.4 and theme 3.5 respectively contain results drawn from the data that named specific leadership attributes, leadership competencies and leadership approaches identified by the respondents. Some of the data in these three themes were drawn from respondents' responses throughout the focus group discussion and not exclusively from a discussion of the focus questions three and four. Theme 3.6 contains a synthesis of the findings that portray the factors that hinder leadership by teachers.

Table 5.20

Theme 3.1: The nature of teaching entails the exercise of leadership

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Key understandings:

- it is in the nature of teaching to exercise leadership

- teachers exercise leadership beyond a formal role

- teachers assume a responsibility in exercising leadership

Responses that were denoted by the researcher to be focused on the integral nature of teaching and leadership by teachers are depicted in theme 3.1. Respondents perceived that leadership is integral to the nature of teaching: "*All teachers are leaders. I think that's why people go into teaching…*" (TEAC1). It was perceived that most teachers see themselves

as leaders who have something to offer (TEAC1, TEAC24). It was apparent that the nature of teaching demands from teachers a capacity to lead, as indicated by the following response, *"You have to think: 'I'm the person in charge, I'm the leader, I've got to teach these students something'. You know, you do it without thinking"* (TEAC12).

Some respondents perceived that teachers do not need to hold a formal position of leadership to enact leadership. One respondent commented that *"what I stand for and how I present, is very much a position of leadership" (*TEAC13). Reference was made to a teacher's passion and integrity (TEAC14) and offering hope and learning (TEAC11) as motivating forces in exercising leadership. Leadership by teachers was seen to occur beyond the formal leadership structures: *"Teachers lead so much in the informal structures"* (STRU3) and *"They don't need formal roles"* (TEAC14*)*. It was perceived that all teachers had the capacity to take up leadership (TEAC6) and that teachers who are not in formal leadership roles constantly exercise leadership (TEAC5). One respondent declared that *"You don't have to fit a certain type to be a leader here. Contrast and a variety of styles seem to be valued here"* (STRU2). However, this view was countered by the perceptions of another respondent who perceived that, although teachers are entrusted to lead, the experience is that when staff come together, people fall into a structural role (STRU6). Another respondent inferred structure in reference to teachers *"stepping out of their own personal space into the corporate space"* (STRU5).

Responses from the 'expert' group on teachers exercising leadership beyond the formal role, raised the need for teachers to focus on leadership. It was perceived that *"teachers do see themselves as leaders although it is not named"* (TEAC29). Conversely, it was perceived that a number of teachers do not see themselves as leaders yet they may have

leadership qualities (TEAC28), and that they do not focus on leadership, they just do their job (TEAC27). One comment suggested that teachers would benefit from opening up understandings of leadership by teachers within their classroom practice beyond associating leadership with a formal position (TEAC31).

Leadership by teachers was equated with responsibility. It was perceived that, in the responsible exercise of their duties, teachers are showing leadership: "…*by going about your duties in a responsible way you are showing a lot of leadership; being prepared to work with students; managing a classroom well…*" (PROP9). It was also perceived that teachers assume responsibility as leaders in the school community, in particular, to students and colleagues. The following responses indicate an emphatic understanding of a teacher's responsibility to lead: *"Our responsibility is to help and to advise others"* (TEAC7) and, "*…we've all got to be leaders, we're teachers you know, we're leaders to children and also leaders to teachers"* (TEAC6). Specific reference was made to the responsibility of teachers to be leaders within the community (TEAC15) and the particular responsibility of teachers to help and to assist new teachers who come into the school (TEAC16).

Table 5.21

Theme 3.2: Teachers exercise leadership in their professional practice

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Key understandings:

- teachers exercise leadership in the activities of their everyday professional practice

- teachers exercise leadership in a range of extra-curricula activities

- teachers lead and influence students

Responses that were classified by the researcher to focus on leadership by teachers in relation to teacher professional practice are depicted in theme 3.2. Respondents perceived that teachers exercise leadership in their professional practice. A range of examples that included classroom teaching practice and extra-curricula activities was offered in the discussion. One respondent commented *"I see my role as being a leader in all sorts of facets of everyday work"* (PROP11). Teachers were seen to show leadership in classroom management, decision-making, communication (PROP6), in sharing knowledge (PROP8) and, in particular, as a homeroom teacher (PROP5). One response from the 'expert' group commented that teachers show leadership in their willingness to do things and to communicate with people (PROP20).

Teachers were seen to exercise leadership in running groups of students, in organising activities such as lunchtime activities, and school camps (PROP2), and taking sport after school (PROP3). The following response suggested that leadership is assumed in the conduct of extra-curricula activities: *"I think we're all showing leadership, for example, on athletics days we're all doing the same thing; we'll have particular jobs and we look after the students so we're all showing leadership"* (PROP1). Leadership by teachers was equated with initiative, such as when an individual recognized an opportunity to undertake a specific task that required knowledge and skill. In this action the teacher was seen to demonstrate leadership: "*Some teachers who don't have leadership roles take it upon themselves to undertake initiatives, for example, running workshops; music productions. They share with us their knowledge and skills and get us involved"* (PROP4).

Respondents perceived that teachers show leadership to students (STUD2, STUD4) and are seen by students to be leaders (STUD6). Students regard teachers as role models (STUD7)

who lead by example and are there to guide and assist students (STUD8). In particular, teachers lead and manage students in the learning process. It was perceived that the vast majority of teachers see themselves as a leader and as someone who inspires students (STUD5). Teachers are aware of their capacity to guide and influence students' learning which in turn is viewed by students as leadership in action: *"You are guiding the learning process and managing it in a particular way. Students see that as leadership of some sort"* (STUD6).

Particular reference was made to the matter of a teacher's use of authority in leading students: "*that authority and how you give that authority across to students can determine good or bad leadership"* (STUD1). Conversely, two respondents acknowledged that a sense of authority could be lost if students became too dependent on their teachers (STUD3) and if teachers did not exercise their authority to "…*step away because otherwise they lose the respect of students. Kids want us to show them light at the end of the tunnel"* (STUD9). There were no responses from the 'expert' group in relation to teachers leading students.

Table 5.22

Theme 3.3: Leadership attributes which enable teachers to exercise leadership

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Key understandings:

- trust, mutual respect, and acceptance of colleagues
- care, a concern for others, empathy and discernment
- authenticity
- a sense of humour and the capacity to laugh at oneself

Theme 3.3 contains a range of leadership attributes identified by respondents in the discussion. The attributes are arranged in order of the most frequently commented upon to the least frequently commented upon.

Trust was accorded the most frequent reference. Trust was regarded by respondents to be a significant attribute in terms of maintaining professional relationships with other teachers (LA-TRUS6, LA-TRUS7) and with those in formal leadership (LA-TRUS9, LA-TRUS13). Trust was equated with empowerment (LA-TRUS12), acceptance and with the reciprocal sharing of ideas among staff (LA-TRUS8). As one respondent commented, "*Staff show acceptance and trust of each other, even by the way we sit together in the staffroom*" (LA-TRUS10). Trust was seen to be an essential attribute in teacher's relationship with students. Students were perceived to be intuitive (LA-TRUS1) and placed a lot of trust in their teacher (LA-TRUS3, LA-TRUS4), so the trust of the teacher was considered important: "*Trust is important because kids can see straight through you*" (LA-TRUS2).

Empathy was described as the ability to listen, to discern and to give good advice (LA-EMPH12). Empathy was seen as being desirable for leadership (LA-EMPH3) and linked with understanding, "*understanding where people come from*" (LA-EMPH10), in particular, to understand what students are saying (LA-EMPH5). However, one respondent noted that, although it was important for teachers to have empathy, they also needed to know when to step away from a situation (LA-EMPH1). Another respondent commented that "*some teachers may have organisational skills but they are not naturally an empathetic person*" (LA-EMPH2).

Care was seen to be a leadership attribute in the way teachers care for each other: *"if you're going to lead by example, caring for others comes into that"* (LA-CARE6). Leadership was described as showing concern and *"a desire to stand with a colleague"* (LA-CARE5). Care was equated with compassion (LA-CARE1) and dedication (LA-CARE2) and was seen to be important in exercising pastoral care among staff (LA-CARE3, LA-CARE7).

Reference was made to the notion of being authentic in terms of having sincerity (LA-AUTH1), being genuine (LA-AUTH4) and being honest with each other (LA-AUTH3). Authenticity was also linked with a mindfulness of the philosophy of a Catholic school in being aware of *"the way you behave and the way you relate to one another"* (LA-AUTH5).

Mutual respect was expressed in terms of *"respecting each other as colleagues and as teachers"* (LA-MUTR2). Respect was considered to be an important attribute to be instilled in students, and in turn, for teachers to show respect for students and for their ideas: *"we model to them how to respect; show respect for their ideas; speak to them"* (LA-MUTR3). It was stated that leadership came through respecting students (LA-MUTR1).

A sense of humour (LA-HUMR1, LA-HUMR3) and the ability to laugh at oneself (LA-HUMR2) were considered important attributes for teachers but were not directly referenced to leadership.

Table 5. 23

Theme 3.4: Leadership competencies which enable teachers to exercise leadership

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Key understandings:

- organisational competency

- communication competency

- knowledge competency

- an ability to work with change and the exploration of new ways of teaching

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Theme 3.4 contains a range of leadership competencies identified by respondents in the discussion. The attributes are arranged in order of the most frequently commented upon to the least frequently commented upon.

Organisational competency was considered to be essential for teaching and in the exercise of leadership, and was the most frequently leadership competencies commented upon. It was perceived that teachers need to have a structured approach (LC-ORGS1) and to be able to organise their time (LC-ORGS2, LC-ORGS9). Teachers were seen to have a capacity to *"just step in and do it before things get too bad"* (LC-ORGS6). One respondent declared that *"Teachers could almost run anything"* (LC-ORGS7). Classroom management was referred to as an area in which teachers demonstrated their organisational competency (LC-ORGS5). One respondent perceived the need for teachers to find a balance in exercising competency without appearing to be dominant (LC-ORGS4). It was the view of another respondent that teachers who are promoted to managerial positions may not have organisation and management experience and so exercise leadership from an authoritative stance (LC-ORGS8).

Constant communication was considered a key competency for teachers, and although communication was not directly referenced in all responses to leadership in the discussion, it was categorically implied. Communication was described in terms of being able to engage in (LC-COMM6) and lead a conversation (LC-COMM1). It was acknowledged by respondents that, in the process of teaching and learning, teachers need to be in constant communication about different ideas and about classroom practice (LC-COMM4), and constantly communicating with students (LC-COMM3). Reference was made to conflict-resolution as being a key competency in relation to communication and interpersonal skills (LC-COMM7).

Teachers were seen to lead when they shared their knowledge with students (LC-KNOW2) and with staff (LC-KNOW3). One respondent reflected on the need for leaders to be honest in their acquisition of knowledge: "*When you're a leader you've got to be able to know the basics. If you can't answer a question you can say that you will get back with the answer*" (LC-KNOW1). Another respondent made reference to the need to gain knowledge through further study (LC-KNOW5).

Change was seen to be a constant process of teaching and learning. It was described by one respondent as "*a drive and a passion towards the goals that gets the work done*" (LC-CHAN1). Teachers were perceived to be constantly looking for new and more effective ways of doing things to bring about a change in methodology. They were described as leaders in influencing each other and helping each other to embrace change: "*Helping people to change methodology; to look at new ways of doing things; better ways and more effective ways*" (LC-CHAN2).

Although reference was made to decision-making as a competency for teachers who were seen to be constantly making decisions in class (LC-DECM1; PROP6), a teacher's capacity to make decisions was not specifically discussed in relation to the exercise of leadership by teachers. However, one response denoted that the power of making decisions could be seen to be a threat to administration (LC-DECM3). This comment reinforced a view that teachers' decision-making in classroom practice was controlled externally (PROP16).

Table 5.24

Theme 3.5: Leadership approaches which enable teachers to exercise leadership

Key understandings:

- collaborative leadership

- empowerment

- consultative leadership

- service leadership

Theme 3.5 contains a range of leadership approaches identified by respondents in the discussion. The attributes are arranged in order of the most frequently commented upon to the least frequently commented upon.

Frequent reference was made to a collaborative approach to leadership throughout the focus group discussion. The notion of a collaborative approach to leadership was interlinked with collaborative practice.

The process of working collaboratively was perceived by respondents to encourage leadership in teachers. Teachers working together in groups provided an opportunity for individuals to lead the group and for delegation: *"you've got to be able to show that other people are leaders as well so it's delegating... let everyone work together and getting people to be leaders together in groups"* (LP-COLL3). A collaborative approach to leadership was seen by one respondent to underpin groups within the school, for example, the stewardship committee and student leadership (LP-COLL9).

A collaborative leadership approach was described in terms of working as a team (LP-COLL7, LP-COLL12), in particular, working as a team to achieve something (LP-COLL6). One respondent observed that *"the model of leadership throughout the school is a team thing"* (LP-COLL8). Respondents spoke of their experience of collegiality (LP-COLL11, LP-COLL13) and specifically in terms of empowering each other (LP-COLL10).

The capacity to empower others and be empowered was considered to be a leadership approach. As one respondent commented, *"my sense of leadership in the school is that of being an enabler"* (LP-EMPO4). Respondents spoke in terms of leading and enabling others to see their capabilities and their potential: *"you've still got to be able to show others that they can be leaders as well"* (LP-EMPO1). Empowerment was seen to occur within the dynamic of a faculty where teachers could empower and enable others (LP-EMPO5), and where teachers assisted the more inexperienced teachers (LP-EMPO4).

Three responses reflected a consultative approach to the exercise of leadership by teachers. A consultative approach was equated with being collaborative: *"you've just got to be able to*

speak to colleagues about different ideas about what you're doing in your class" (LP-CONS1). It was also referred to in terms of consulting each other and contributing ideas as a group effort (LP-CONS3).

It was perceived that service was a natural approach for some leaders: *"Some people would prefer a service approach to leadership. That's just their nature"* (LP-SERV1). One respondent perceived that leadership was about "*genuinely serving people… by setting an example"* (LP-SERV2).

Table 5.25

Theme 3.6: Factors which hinder leadership by teachers

Key understandings:

- a lack of professional identity can hinder leadership by teachers

- formal leadership can dominate the function of leadership in a school

- a lack of experience and confidence can hinder the exercise of leadership by teachers

- a lack of autonomy in the classroom can hinder the exercise of leadership by teachers

- a lack of permanency can hinder the exercise of leadership by teachers

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Theme 3.6 describes a range of responses that were categorised as factors that were perceived by respondents to hinder leadership by teachers. Although respondents perceived that it is in the nature of teaching to exercise leadership, there was also a perception that some teachers lacked a sense of their own professional identity. One respondent commented "*we are expected to be professionals but the definition of teacher does not include leadership*" (TEAC18). Another respondent held the view that "*some people would perceive teachers as leaders while others would perceive them to be employees"*

(TEAC17). An additional perspective was that teachers could be seen to project a negative self-image, as one respondent stated a need to *"get rid of that 'Oh! I'm just a teacher' attitude' "* (TEAC9). Teachers were seen to *"go about their business and take a less obvious leadership role"* (PROP14), to the point that *"even in a classroom there would be moments when a teacher would never exert leadership"* (PROP13). It was argued that teachers needed a greater sense of identity as teachers (TEAC4) and discussion that focused on the notion that *"everyone is a leader in their own right"* (TEAC8).

As respondents acknowledged, some teachers lacked the power and confidence to exercise leadership. There was also the view that not all teachers aspired to leadership: *"There are a lot of teachers who mentor students well but are not really interested in leadership roles within the school"* (STRU4). The matter of equating leadership with a leadership role indicated the mindset of this respondent that leadership was about moving into a position or role rather than leadership being perceived in relation to teacher professional practice, in this case, mentoring students.

A view was expressed that, although teachers may be entrusted to lead, it was the experience of some respondents that those who occupy formal positions of leadership in a school are ultimately at the forefront in meetings and in decision-making. One respondent stated *"When it's staff as a group there's particular people obviously who run the meetings. Those in formal positions of responsibility get up and do the presentation"* (STRU1*).* It was a perception of a respondent from the 'expert' group that leadership was *"all controlled from the top"* (STRU13) and that teachers would only lead when given permission to lead.

Respondents also focused on the lack of status and capacity of teachers who have limited years of teaching experience to exercise leadership. It was perceived that some young teachers are neither empowered in confidence nor have the experience to be a leader. Leadership was seen as something to aspire to when you have enough experience and confidence (TEAC9). In the case of one respondent, leadership by teachers was hindered by the lack of permanency: "*Some teachers don't feel that they can be agents of change because their position is not permanent*" (STRU9).

Reference was made to the lack of power in some teachers to exercise leadership. One respondent perceived that as a young and new teacher the respondent "*did not have much power at all*" (TEAC10) to have input into school-based decisions. Respondents also raised the matter of power in relation to teachers' classroom management as a function of leadership: "*If leadership is power you have to question whether we have power within our own classrooms*" (PROP17). It was perceived that teachers' classroom management was not leadership, as the power to make decisions was controlled not by teachers but by those who exercised leadership through the formal structures (PROP16). A view was expressed that teachers have a "*different degree of confidence*" (STUD10) in exercising leadership with students than with their peers.

Some responses indicated respondents' perception of the status of teachers in the community. Although one respondent had perceived that teachers were leaders within the community (TEAC15), it was also perceived that teachers lack status in the wider community and in some sections of the school community. Hence, they are not seen to be leaders: "*the image that has been created by our society is that teachers are not leaders*

and in the school certain groups would actually think that teachers are not leaders at all"
(TEAC19).

Category four: What are the opportunities for leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools?

In category four, four themes formed a basis for reporting the data in relation to research question five: *What are the opportunities for leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools?* The data are described under these themes. Table 5.26 contains a list of coded themes that were used to collate the data in relation to research question five.

Table 5.26

Coded themes relating to research question five

Code	Theme
FORM	The opportunities for leadership development for teachers through formal professional development
EXPP	The opportunities for leadership development for teachers through experience in professional practice
COLP	The opportunities for leadership development for teachers through collaborative practice
REFP	The opportunities for leadership development for teachers through reflective practice
MENT	The opportunities for leadership development for teachers through mentoring
SCST	The opportunities for leadership development for teachers through school structures

Table 5.26 details the coded themes identified in relation to research question five: *What are the opportunities for leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools?* The six themes that were identified to collate the data in relation to research question five were

synthesised into four themes for reporting the findings. These themes are displayed in Table 5.27.

Table 5.27

Themes for reporting the findings in relation to research question five

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Category 4: What are the opportunities for leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools?

4.1:   Leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools is enabled through professional practice

4.2:   Leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools is enabled through professional learning

4.3:   Leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools is facilitated by the school structures

4.4:   Leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools is hindered by a range of factors

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Table 5.27 displays four themes that formed a basis for reporting the data in relation to research question five: *What are the opportunities for leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools?* The focus question *What are the opportunities for leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools?* was designed to draw respondents into a discussion on their perceptions and their experiences as teachers of the opportunities for leadership development. The themes were defined from key concepts drawn principally from the literature relating to the professional practice and professional learning of teachers.

Table 5.28

Theme 4.1: Leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools is enabled through professional practice

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Key understandings:

- leadership development in teachers occurs through the everyday experience in their professional practice

- leadership development in teachers occurs through an openness to new experiences and learning

- a lack of permanency can hinder the exercise of leadership by teachers

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Responses that were denoted to be focused on enabling leadership development in teachers in Catholic schools through professional practice are depicted in theme 4.1. Responses indicated that leadership development in teachers occurs on an informal basis and through experience in professional practice more so than through a formal process. A range of comments supported this view: *"there's nothing formal to develop your leadership, it just happens in informally talking to people"* (EXPP3); *"it comes down to on-the-job training like you learn as you go"* (EXPP4), and *"sometimes if you just plunge into it, that's the best way to learn"* (EXPP2).

Respondents placed a high value on leadership development through experience, as indicated by the following responses: *"You can be a leader without having the name next to it, just by experience"* (EXPP9). *"You need the experience obviously first and foremost; you also have to be willing to still learn more and to have new experiences and to implement changes, and to get other teachers involved as well"* (EXPP6). However, the responses did not specify particular experiences for leadership development in teacher

professional practice. Respondents placed value on taking small opportunities to build up self-belief (EXPP17) and being generally open to new experiences and opportunities.

Although respondents acknowledged a number of opportunities for leadership development for teachers through the school structures, there was a perception that the individual teacher had to take the initiative and actively seek opportunities for new experiences (FORM6) and be open to learning (EXPP7). However, one respondent perceived that while some teachers may have the appropriate skills they may not necessarily think that any further development of these skills is necessary (EXPP10).

Table 5. 29

Theme 4.2: Leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools is enabled through professional learning

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Key understandings:

- formal professional development programs provide an opportunity for teachers to develop leadership skills and competencies
- collaborative teamwork develops leadership in teachers
- reflective practice and mentoring are valuable processes for leadership development

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Responses that were denoted by the researcher to be focused on enabling leadership development in teachers in Catholic schools through professional learning are depicted in theme 4.2. Respondents gave considerable focus to teacher collaborative practice throughout the discussion.

Professional learning in the form of formal professional development programs was seen as a positive and enhancing process for leadership development in teachers. Responses highlighted the notion of formal professional development programs being a way to *"share insights and skills with other people"* (FORM5) and ultimately as *"an effective way of empowering others"* (FORM4). Reference was made to professional development that occurred on a regular basis in faculty and staff meetings as a means of developing leadership (SCST3). It was noted that teachers needed to take the initiative for professional development opportunities (FORM 6). One respondent referred to formal study as a way of *"involving teachers in the issues… to name the issues and to have the images and language to clarify them"* (FORM7).

The process of working collaboratively was seen to facilitate leadership development in teachers. Collaborative practice facilitated teachers working as team members (COLP1), working together to achieve something (COLP8), consulting each other (COLP3), encouraging each other (COLP4), supporting each other (COLP15), affirming each other (COLP11), inservicing each other and showing expertise (COLP13), sharing ideas (COLP9) and learning from each other (COLP7).

Particular professional learning practices identified in this research, reflective practice and mentoring, were discussed as appropriating effective leadership development. Reflective practice was referred to in terms of a teacher's *"ability to reflect, their reflective skills and their ability to think"* (REFP3). Reflective practice was seen to occur in reflective conversation and discussion with colleagues, to *"have a chat about issues - and to be reflective"* (REFP4), and to look for alternate ways in teaching and learning. One respondent succinctly commented that *"To ask the question, can you see another way?"*

(REFP5) was professional development. Reflective discussion was seen to provide some honest feedback for colleagues and giving teachers an opportunity to identify their strengths and weaknesses in their teaching practice (REFP1).

For one respondent, reflective practice was perceived as a way of discussing leadership development in teachers: *"there is a need to discuss more that everyone is a leader in their own right"* (REFP2). Reference was made to networking as a way of raising awareness about issues in teaching and learning (REFP7).

Mentoring was referred to as a positive professional learning process for teachers. Respondents regarded mentoring as a valuable process for sharing insights on classroom and behaviour management and methodologies: *"The real stuff is mentoring, meeting every week, sharing both your insights and skills with other people"* (MENT9).

Respondents perceived that a greater emphasis needs to be placed on the mentoring process for teachers in general and for leadership development in particular. This view was indicated by the following responses: *"I think that we could do with more mentoring"* (MENT3) and *"much more could be done with people sharing their success stories–mentoring"* (MENT4). Responses referred to various forms of mentoring, including working directly with a supervisor (MENT10), working in partnership with a leader (MENT8) and team teaching arrangements (MENT11). One respondent perceived that the more experienced teachers undertake an informal mentoring role (MENT7). However, reference was made to the inadequacy of an induction program to help teachers to emerge as leaders (MENT14).

Table 5.30

Theme 4.3: Leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools is facilitated by the school structures

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Key understandings:

- various school structures facilitate leadership development in teachers

- formal leadership roles facilitate leadership development

- school change and development enable leadership development in teachers

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Responses that were denoted by the researcher to be focused on leadership development in teachers in Catholic schools being facilitated by school structures are depicted in theme 4.3. Respondents perceived that leadership in Catholic schools is facilitated to some extent by school structures, specifically in relation to formal leadership positions (SCST15, 18). Conversely, respondents also named a number of factors relating to school structures that are seen to hinder leadership development, as reported in theme 4.4 below.

School structures were seen to provide opportunities for leadership development, including faculty and staff meeting structures (SCST3) and the structural role of a homeroom teacher who was seen to have additional responsibilities. One respondent perceived that "*being a homeroom teacher is added responsibility. They have to be more of a leader than teachers who are not homeroom teachers*" (SCST4).

Formal leadership was a key reference in the discussion, as indicated by the following response: "*I think about being in a formal position of leadership but I still want to establish myself and feel more comfortable with my classroom teaching practice before I venture up*" (SCST15). It was perceived that opportunities for leadership development

occurred through the experience of a formal position of leadership either through a formal appointment (SCST6) or through the occasional opportunity to fill a position (SCST19).

Change and development in the school were seen to provide opportunities for leadership development through appointment to a formal position of leadership: *"the school has a lot of change and development which is good; good to have new people in leadership positions"* (SCST8).

Table 5.31

Theme 4.4: Leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools is hindered by a range of factors

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Key understandings:

- teachers in formal positions of leadership have priority to leadership development

- teachers have limited access to programs for teachers to develop leadership

- there are few opportunities for teachers to develop leadership beyond the classroom

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Despite the evidence that supported a range of opportunities for leadership development for teachers, responses also indicated a number of factors that were seen to hinder leadership development for teachers. A factor in the focus group discussion was a perception that leadership was experienced principally by those in formal positions of leadership and that there were limited opportunities for formal leadership within school structures:

You get the occasional opportunities to fill a position, to get a role. But if you miss out, what happens then? You just sit around and wait for opportunities to appear again. I don't know that there are many opportunities. (SCST13).

It was perceived that unless a teacher was in a formal leadership position, access to programs for leadership development was limited (SCST7). This view was reinforced by a response recorded from the 'expert' group which stated that *"there isn't a lot of on-the-job training for leaders who come through the ranks"* (SCST23). Respondents also commented that teachers would perceive that a formal position of leadership assumed an extra workload (SCST2) and that a teacher required energy, commitment, drive and momentum to undertake a formal position of leadership (SCST9).

Respondents perceived that there were limited opportunities extended to teachers beyond the classroom to develop as a leader. This perception is expressed in the following response: "*in the classroom context most teachers will extend themselves as far as they can to maximise the learning but once you've achieved that there are not many opportunities to develop as a leader beyond the classroom*" (SCST19). It was commented that teachers needed to create the opportunities for leadership development otherwise these would not occur: *"there's nothing formal to develop leadership skills. If you want to go and do something like that, you will have to go and do it off your own bat"* (SCST10). It was the view of a respondent in the 'expert' group that there needed to be people with expertise working with teachers to *"help them to talk about leadership…to give them encouragement. All that sort of thing. Then they will start challenging the structures"* (SCST22).

Chapter summary

The data described in this chapter revealed some key findings on understandings of leadership, leadership in the context of a Catholic school, leadership by teachers in the context of a Catholic school, and opportunities for leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools. The findings established that leadership is perceived principally in terms of both the person leading and the position of leadership; leadership is perceived to require competency, experience and vision, and is seen to be relational and empowering in its nature and function. The findings suggest that, while all teachers have the capacity to lead, other factors influence their ability to exercise leadership in a Catholic school.

The findings established that leadership in Catholic schools was perceived to be informed and influenced by a strong sense of mission, vision and community. The findings established that, although leadership was perceived and experienced by some respondents as being collaborative, leadership was also seen by other respondents to reflect elements of hierarchy in structure and function and that managerial and bureaucratic pressures sometimes compromised effective leadership. The findings established that teachers are perceived to exercise leadership in a range of ways in their professional practice and professional learning; however, factors such as teachers' lack of professional identity and the way in which a school constructs leadership, hinder leadership by teachers.

Finally, the findings established that, although leadership development for teachers is facilitated through some activities related to teachers' professional learning, there is a lack of opportunities available in Catholic schools for leadership development in teachers. A discussion of these findings and their significance is presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

Discussion, recommendations and conclusions

Introduction

The findings of the study were described in the previous chapter using the framework of the five key research questions. In this chapter the findings are discussed in light of the literature review and within the framework presented in Chapter Four (Figure 4.3). Recommendations arising from the findings are outlined and areas for future research are suggested. The final section of the chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the study.

Patton (2002) advocated that *"qualitative findings are judged by their 'substantive significance'"* (p. 467). This includes: evidence of the consistency of the data; the extent to which the findings deepen an understanding of the phenomenon that is studied; the extent to which the findings are consistent with other knowledge in the field; and the extent to which the findings serve an intended purpose. In light of Patton's schema, the findings are discussed in order to elucidate meanings from teachers in the sample about leadership in a Catholic school, to confirm ways in which the findings are consistent with related literature, and to determine the usefulness of the findings in the formulation of key recommendations. Given the nature of qualitative analysis and interpretation, the discussion was guided by Patton's advice: "… *there is no absolutely 'right' way of stating what emerges from the analysis. There are only more and less useful ways of expressing what the data reveal."* (p. 476).

Frost and Harris (2003) argued that a conceptualisation of teacher leadership needed to be underpinned by an understanding of the nature of leadership and the distinctiveness of

educational leadership. In this study the nature of leadership and the nature and function of educational leadership in the context of a Catholic school were explored to help illumine teachers' perceptions and experiences of leadership and leadership by teachers. A framework, which drew upon Frost and Harris's conceptualisation and analysis of teacher leadership, was developed to shape a discussion of the findings in this study. The framework is presented in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1

A framework for a discussion of the findings

Key factors in the analysis of leadership by teachers

Leadership by teachers in Catholic schools is shaped and influenced by a teacher's sense of 'agency'

- teachers' personal agency
- teachers' interpersonal agency
- teachers' professional agency

Leadership by teachers in Catholic schools is shaped and influenced by the school as an 'organisational agency'

- organisational factors
- cultural factors

Leadership by teachers in Catholic schools is shaped and influenced by ways in which teacher professional practice and professional learning are facilitated in the school

- teacher professional practice
- teacher professional learning
- teacher leadership development

(Adapted from Frost & Harris, 2003, p. 493)

Figure 6.1 outlines the framework used to guide the discussion of the findings. It draws upon elements relating to the professional role of teachers, the organisational environment

of the school, and the personal capacity of teachers, highlighted by Frost and Harris (2003) as factors which can affect the capacity of teachers to exercise leadership. The framework is grounded in the notion of 'agency' as discussed by Frost and Harris, and Frost and Durrant (2004). In the framework, 'agency' refers to particular factors which characterise a teacher in terms of knowing one's personal self, knowing one's interpersonal capacities and knowing one's professional capacities. Findings that are identified in these categories are considered in the discussion as characterising a teacher's sense of personal agency, interpersonal agency and professional agency. The extent to which these agencies might shape and influence leadership by teachers is evaluated in light of the review of literature. In the framework, 'organisational agency' refers to particular organisational and cultural factors which characterise a school. Findings that illumine understandings about leadership in the context of a Catholic school and in relation to these factors are discussed. The extent to which organisational and cultural factors shape and influence leadership in Catholic schools, in particular, leadership by teachers, is evaluated in light of the review literature. Findings which relate to teachers' professional practice and teachers' professional learning are then discussed in light of the review literature, to evaluate the extent to which a Catholic school facilitates leadership by teachers and leadership development for teachers.

In the first stage, a discussion of the findings is centred on the extent to which leadership by teachers is shaped and influenced by teachers' personal, interpersonal and professional agency.

Leadership by teachers: the influence of teachers' personal, interpersonal and professional agency

The extent to which leadership by teachers in Catholic schools is shaped and influenced by teachers' personal, interpersonal and professional agency, is discussed.

Personal agency

Frost and Harris (2003) argued that a sense of moral and professional authority, among other sources of authority, resources the personal capacity of a teacher to exercise leadership. The findings revealed that teachers in the sample perceived that a sense of the authentic self and personal motivation were key requirements for leadership. These two factors are considered in this discussion as providing teachers with a sense of personal agency.

The findings indicated that teachers in the sample have an understanding of what it means to be an authentic person, as expressed by Terry (1993), in being true to oneself and to one's relationships. A high value was placed on personal attributes such as sincerity, honesty, trust, care, empathy and mutual respect in building positive relationships in the workplace and for exercising leadership. According to Duignan (1997) these attributes are embedded in the deepest core of a person and are foundational to authentic leadership. In light of the emphasis which Frost and Harris (2003) placed on sources of authority as a key factor which shapes a teacher's capacity to exercise leadership, this discussion confirms that teachers have a strong sense of the authentic self.

The findings also indicated that teachers place a high value on personal motivation in terms of a person's capacity to exercise leadership. Personal, motivating forces such as passion,

enthusiasm, and a sense of responsibility and initiative were identified as influencing a leader to envisage and to achieve what is possible. In this sense, personal motivation is integral to personal vision as described by Senge (1992, 1999). Respondents referred to personal vision as a motivating force in leadership in terms of a leader having wisdom and direction, a focus on what is important for people, and the capacity to challenge others to grow and develop. It was of interest to note that teachers with teaching experience less than and including ten years, emphasised personal motivation more so than the teachers with teaching experience greater than and including eleven years. This suggested that teachers with the lesser teaching experience may have more idealistic expectations of leadership, and that, in light of their limited years of teaching, their experiences of leadership were positive and they have retained their enthusiasm.

Interpersonal agency

Frost and Harris (2003) identified interpersonal skills as an important factor in a teacher's personal capacity to influence others. Leadership, in terms of its relational, influencing and empowering nature, is considered in this discussion to underpin teachers' interpersonal agency. The findings highlighted the relational nature of leadership in terms of a person's capacity to interact with, and get along with, others and to get to know how people work. It can be assumed that these views were drawn from teachers' perceptions and personal experiences of the relational aspects of working with others in the context of their professional practice. These views reflected the relational context of leadership as emphasised by Daft (1999), and Kouzes and Posner (2002). However, it was apparent that the respondents did not have as clear a conception of the dynamics of leadership as a relational process between the person and the organisation, as that highlighted by Bolman and Deal (2003) and Gronn (1998). There was a sense that respondents perceived the

relational nature of leadership to be applied specifically between people and it was not envisaged at the more complex level where a relational process could benefit both the organisation and its members.

The findings illumined some key understandings that teachers in the sample held about leadership and its interplay with influence, power and empowerment. Leadership as 'influence' was described principally in terms of a person's capacity to lead and represent others. This view negated an understanding of reciprocal leadership, as described by Kouzes and Posner (2002), and leadership in terms of mutual influence, as conceptualised by Rost (1993), where the leadership relationship and influence is multi-directional. However, the findings supported Bradford and Cohen's (1998) view that mutual influence can lead to more effective communication, decision-making, commitment and responsibility, factors which help to empower teachers with a sense of interpersonal agency and which ultimately benefits teachers in exercising leadership.

The notion of the interplay of power and influence in the exercise of leadership was explored in the literature review in this study. The literature was drawn principally from Handy (1993), Hatch (1997), Zand (1997) and Yukl (2002), and focused on power exercised as legitimate authority and, conversely, on power exercised coercively. Although the findings highlighted the capacity of a leader to empower and enable others, some concerns were expressed over the propensity of those who were in formal position of leadership to use positional power authoritatively and to misuse power.

The findings revealed that empowering others was considered to be an important function of teachers' professional practice. It was established from the general leadership literature

that empowerment was integral to the function of leadership. The notion of empowerment was highlighted in Lipman-Blumen's (2000) model of 'connective leadership', Shtogren's (1999) model of leadership value enablers, and Limerick and colleagues' concept of 'collaborative individualism' (Limerick et al., 1998). In these contexts the process of empowering and enabling others is not seen to rely on formal leadership structures, rather, leadership takes shape and is given expression through the person empowering and enabling others.

It can be established from the findings that empowerment underpins a teacher's sense of interpersonal agency. Respondents placed a high value on empowering and enabling others in the form of offering advice, guidance, inspiration, and empowering others to take risks and to step beyond their comfort zone. However, although the respondents articulated these ideals, the extent to which teachers are encouraged to exercise empowerment as leadership is more problematic.

Professional agency

Frost and Harris (2003) asserted that the extent to which teachers exercise leadership will be influenced by the way in which teachers "*construct their professional role*" (p. 487). In the framework for this discussion (Figure 6.1) teachers' professional agency is characterised by the way in which teachers in a Catholic school perceive their professional role as teachers and exercise professional competency in their practice.

Literature relating to the professional nature of teaching and the professional requirements of teachers in Catholic schools was explored. These two perspectives were considered in this study to be foundational to leadership by teachers. Key developments in relation to

teacher professionalism (Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996; Day, 1999; Sachs, 1999) were acknowledged, in particular the significance of the *"personal, professional and political dimensions of teachers' professional lives"* (Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996, p. 24). However, the findings illumined the personal and professional more than the political dimension of teacher professionalism. The findings revealed that teachers perceive leadership to be integral to the nature of teaching, as one teacher succinctly expressed *"All teachers are leaders. I think that's why teachers go into teaching"* (NAT4). However, the findings also revealed that teachers lack professional status both within the school and the wider community. It was apparent, from these findings, that teachers might not readily access literature relating to teacher professionalism, its related developments and their impact on the professional role of teachers. Rather, a teacher's sense of professional identity is**,** to a great degree, shaped by personal identity and status, in terms of both years of teaching and experience in a position of responsibility. In the case of teachers with limited years of teaching experience, the findings highlighted that teachers, in some cases, are empowered neither in confidence nor in experience to be a leader. These findings largely confirm Robertson's (1996) view that new forms of teacher professionalism have not resulted in professional autonomy for teachers. Although professional bodies for teachers have made advancements in Australia in raising standards in the teaching profession, such as the *Australian Education Union* and the *Victorian Institute of Teaching*, there is still much work to be done to improve the professional status of teachers. The establishment of the *National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership* in 2004 might help to improve the professional image and status of teachers in Australia and ultimately develop and promote leadership in teachers.

Key professional requirements of teachers in Catholic schools were illuminated in the literature review (CCE, 1977, 1988, 1998; CEVC, 1997). Professional standards, in light of Catholic Church teachings, are detailed in these official Church documents, and teachers are urged to demonstrate these standards in the conduct of both their personal and professional lives. Although the focus group interviews did not specifically focus on the professional expectations of teachers in Catholic schools, it was apparent that teachers have a well-developed understanding of these expectations, namely, espousing Christian principles and fulfilling one's potential. For example, responses which articulated desirable leadership attributes, such as trust, empathy, care and compassion, and mutual respect, and the need for teachers to build community, be of service to others, and lead by example, all exemplified Christian ideals that underpin professional expectations of teachers in Catholic schools. However, the extent to which these ideals are actualised by teachers is more problematic. As one respondent discerned, "… *there has to be a congruence if you like, between action and vision."* (MVIS17).

This discussion also considers ways in which teachers' 'professional agency' is constructed through teachers' professional practice. Findings are discussed to highlight the extent to which teachers' sense of 'professional agency' is attained through their professional practice and the exercise of key professional competencies that were considered in this study to be leadership competencies.

It was apparent from the findings that teachers develop a sense of 'professional agency' in their professional practice. Professional practice was not confined to the learning process in the classroom but incorporated a range of learning activities and extra-curricula activities which occurred within and beyond the school environment. The findings

indicated that teachers had a good sense of their capacity to exercise leadership in their professional practice. The view of one respondent *"I see myself as being a leader in all sorts of facets of everyday work"* (PROP11) was representative of a positive mindset of teachers. However, this view was countered somewhat by a perception that teachers lacked autonomy and power to make decisions in their classroom management. Teachers perceived that they exercised leadership in informal roles in their classroom teaching practice, classroom management, as a homeroom teacher, and in sporting and school camp activities. Further, they perceived that all teachers have the capacity to take up leadership, although not all perceived themselves to be a leader or desired to be recognised as a leader. The overarching premise in these findings was that leadership was not role-specific but that the very process of teaching was a leadership function.

This view lies in the core of the genre, teacher leadership, and is developed in different perspectives by the key authors of teacher leadership literature. These authors (Ash & Persall, 2000; Harrison & Lembeck, 1996; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996) advocated teachers as multiple leaders and who exercise a wide range of abilities and skills in their professional practice, both within and beyond the classroom. Moller and Katzenmeyer (1996) regarded teacher leadership to be *"a critical competency for every teacher"* (p. 11)**.** The *Teacher as Leaders* framework developed by Crowther and colleagues in the Australian context (Crowther et al., 2002) focuses on the value of *"ordinary people doing extraordinary things"* (p.16).

The findings revealed that the exercise of key professional competencies in teachers' professional practice was identified as being tantamount to exercising leadership. In light of Fullan's (1994) six interrelated conceptions of commitment and knowledge as

requirements for leadership by teachers, the findings confirmed that teachers place value on organisational competency, communication and knowledge as key competencies which enable teachers to exercise leadership. Although Fullan's framework did not specify organisational competency, the findings reflected that teachers perceived organisational competency to be essential for effective leadership. In this discussion, organisational competency is considered as a key requirement for a teacher's sense of professional agency. It is in the nature of teaching for teachers to be structured in their professional practice, as one respondent declared *"Teachers could almost run anything"* (ORG9). In the literature review it was acknowledged that leadership of operational tasks, as outlined by Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996), was pivotal to the professional role of a teacher and provided an appropriate framework in which teachers' organisational competencies could be exercised. However, the findings also revealed that organisational competency might not necessarily result in effective leadership, rather it might reflect more about the context or organisational environment in which teachers work (Frost & Harris, 2003). The findings suggested that particular cultural and structural forces determined one of two school environments. First, an environment in which teachers had a high level of accountability and were essentially 'busy persons' who needed to be highly structured and organised to meet organisational expectations, or alternatively, an environment in which teachers were highly motivated in their professional practice and aspired to be competent. In this case organisational competency was seen to help teachers to achieve in their endeavours.

The findings revealed that the teaching and learning process requires constant communication. However, reference to the crucial role of communication in the teaching and learning process was more implicit rather than explicit. In this discussion communication is considered as a key requirement in empowering a teacher's sense of

professional agency. The findings inferred that communication was about conversation, listening, engagement and interaction, all of which were empowering and enabling practices reflecting a strong collaborative culture in which teachers worked together and supported and empowered one another. In his leadership model of core values, Shtogren (1999) established that a collaborative culture built on open communication was a characteristic of leadership. The value of open and informal communication lay in its capacity to encourage the dissemination and sharing of information among members and across sectors in an organisation. In light of Shtogren's conception, it can be suggested that the extent to which teachers exercise open and informal communication is very much reliant on the cultural and structural environment in which teachers operate.

In the literature review it was established that knowledge is foundational to teaching and learning (Ash & Persall, 2000; Fullan, 1994; Tanck, 1994) and that knowledge of subject matter and pedagogical knowledge underpinned the teaching and learning process. In this discussion, knowledge is considered as a key requirement for a teacher's sense of professional agency. The findings revealed general, rather than particular, understandings of teachers on the matter of knowledge acquisition or the significance of knowledge of subject matter in teaching and learning. It was not the intent of the research to focus on particular conceptual understandings of knowledge, such as 'knowledge creation' (Fullan, 2001), 'knowledge-generation' (Andrews et al., 2001) and developing a 'knowledge economy' (Kalantzis & Harvey, 2003). Rather, the purpose was to gain a sense of whether teachers placed value on knowledge acquisition in the exercise of leadership by teachers. There was little evidence in the findings to support Fullan's (1994) emphasis on the importance of knowledge of educational contexts and knowledge through continuous

learning. However, it was apparent from the findings that teachers are conscious of the need to engage in continuous learning.

In this first stage of this discussion of the findings in light of the literature review, it was established that a teacher's personal, interpersonal and professional agency have the capacity to shape and influence leadership by teachers in a Catholic school. The second stage of the discussion is focused on the extent to which leadership by teachers in a Catholic school is shaped and influenced by the school as an 'organisational agency'.

Leadership by teachers: the influence of the school as an 'organisational agency'

Discussion is given to the extent to which leadership by teachers in Catholic schools is shaped and influenced by the school as an 'organisational agency'

Findings which relate to leadership in light of organisational and cultural factors within the school are discussed in this stage to establish the extent to which leadership in Catholic schools, in particular, leadership by teachers, is shaped and influenced by the school as an 'organisational agency'. In this discussion 'organisational agency' refers to the interplay of organisational and cultural factors within the school in constructing and influencing leadership.

The concept of organisational structures, which were perceived by Frost and Harris (2003) to influence and legitimise leadership by teachers, includes *"the system of roles, responsibilities, opportunities for decision-making and accountability"* (p. 489). These elements were evident in the findings.

The literature review established that, in light of school reforms, leadership has experienced a shift from leadership based on hierarchy, power, and accountability (Boles & Troen, 1996; Hoy & Miskel, 1996) to a more distributed approach Gronn, 2000; 2002a; 2002b; Spillane et al., 2001) in which leadership is participative (Leithwood et al., 1999) and shared (Lambert, 2002; Sergiovanni, 1996). These approaches reflected, to a great extent, new conceptions of leadership in the broader field: leadership that is connective (Lipman-Blumen, 2000), collaborative (Limerick et al., 1998), distributed and exercised by any individual (Pearce and Conger, 2003; Senge, 1997).

Notwithstanding these new conceptions of leadership, the findings revealed two distinctive views of leadership, determined to a large extent by the both the organisational and cultural environment in the school. First, leadership was strongly equated with positional leadership in which the person, by virtue of attaining the position, assumes the status of a leader. And second, leadership was also viewed as being participative and collaborative. Positional leadership was very much equated with a hierarchical structure in which the leader was positioned over others and in control, as reflected in the literature by Hoy and Miskel (1996). Further, leadership did not simply occur but was dependent upon an opportunity to attain a position in which to exercise formal leadership. Although the greater number of responses were from teachers with teaching experience equal to, or greater than, eleven years, there were also some strong views about the hierarchical nature of positional leadership expressed by teachers with teaching experience equal to, or less than, ten years. From the responses, it was apparent that positional leadership based on hierarchy was the experience of teachers in both categories. Comments from the 'expert' group validated these views in indicating that leadership in Catholic schools was dependent upon attaining a formal position of leadership. Within this group, although there was a

perception that hierarchical structures were gradually breaking down, there was a sense that even in a more participative leadership approach, as experienced by some respondents, power and control were still exercised from those at the top.

Some respondents had experienced a more collaborative and participative approach to leadership. These were principally teachers employed in a religious congregation-owned school. Teachers in this environment appeared to have a particular sensitivity towards the value of cooperating and working closely with colleagues in order to achieve the school's vision and goals. This approach encouraged a shared vision, shared decision-making, collaborative practice and empowerment, all of which were characteristics of leadership in the broader context (Daft, 1999; Limerick et al.,1998; Senge, 1997) and of leadership in the school context (Leithwood et al., 1999; Sergiovanni, 1996). Although respondents provided evidence of the experience of participative and collaborative leadership, the literature and findings attested that, in the main, schools were still relatively highly structured organisations (Garrett, 1997). The respondents did not envisage a school environment in which operational and leadership structures would be replaced by fluid and flexible networks and alliances, as suggested by authors such as Hesselbein et al. (1999) and Limerick et al. (1998).

One of the problematic factors in the focus group interviews was the variety of terms used to express understandings of leadership. This reflected the view of Reser and Sarros (2000) that there was no precise meaning or definition that is attributed to the term 'leadership'. Respondents did not conceive of, or describe, leadership as a discrete process or characteristic with a specific function within the organisation (Stogdill, 1974; Bolman & Deal, 2003). The dominant reference points for articulating understandings of leadership

were the person leading and the position held. It was apparent that these two views reflected the immediate experiences of the respondents. Leadership is still principally perceived in Catholic schools as being the preserve of persons who hold formal positions of leadership in the school.

In the framework (Figure 6.1) cultural factors within a Catholic school were also considered as having a significant influence on leadership. In the literature review, culture was seen to comprise both the visible and tangible behaviours as well as the more intrinsic values and beliefs of the individual and of the organisation (Schein, 1992). Drawing upon Schein's concept of culture, Flynn and Mok (2002) argued that leadership was interrelated with culture in a Catholic school, and that cultural factors both determined, and were determined by, leadership. Cultural factors such as vision, shared values, shared responsibility, community building and collegiality, identified by authors such as Leithwood et al. (1996), were embedded in the findings. However, the extent to which these cultural factors were distinctive to a Catholic school, as claimed by Flynn (1993), was more problematic.

Respondents expressed a sense of the distinctive culture of a Catholic school in terms of its vision, a strong sense of community and the importance of service. However, as evidenced in the literature, these elements are not necessarily exclusive to a Catholic school. The respondents had a strong sense of a Catholic school's mission built upon gospel values and, in the case of respondents who work in a religious congregation-owned school, upon the particular charisma of the religious order. This latter group of respondents clearly articulated a shared vision, and in light of the research of Moos (2000), felt that they shared in and contributed to the vision of a school. The key dimensions of a Catholic school,

namely, mission, vision, gospel values, and community, potentially provide an ideal environment within which teachers can explore, exercise and develop leadership in their professional practice.

One concern revealed in the findings was the extent to which the function of leadership in a Catholic school is compromised by bureaucratic and marketing forces. These are forces that are seen to hinder leadership in terms of time, pressure applied and issues arising. In particular, these forces at work were seen to compromise the vision of a Catholic school. As expressed by one respondent: "*sometimes the mission, vision statement can be a token thing. Leadership should come back to the mission and vision*" (MVIS15). According to Duignan (1997), vision and vision building is integral to the nature of a Catholic school and to leadership. Leadership in a Catholic school needs to be grounded, not in bureaucratic and marketing forces, but in building a vision which emanates from the spirit of gospel values.

It was apparent from the findings that respondents were aware of the significance of core values and ethical principles underpinning the intrinsic character of a Catholic school. Although the findings did not explicitly state specific ethical principles or categorise personal or shared values in relation to leadership, they were implicit in expressed ideals and aspirations relating to teaching in a Catholic school and to leadership. The findings indicated that respondents recognised the influence of their personal values within the school (Begley, 1999), and that authentic leadership developed from characteristics that are intrinsic to the nature and character of the person.

There was a sense of the importance of shared values through teachers' understanding of the value of relationships and empowerment, community and service, and collaborative leadership in a Catholic school. It can be noted from the findings that it was not common practice for Catholic schools to utilise formal values processes, as advocated by Begley, which provided teachers with an opportunity to explore and articulate desirable values underpinning leadership in a Catholic school.

A clear indicator of the strength of a Catholic school is its sense of community (Sultmann & McLaughlin, 2000). The findings highlighted the value that respondents placed on the experience of community in a Catholic school. It was acknowledged in the literature review that all schools needed to build community (Sergiovanni, 1996) in which there is a common commitment to shared goals. A sense of community was perceived to be foundational to a Catholic school. As one respondent stated, *"sharing in the community aspect of the school comes with the ethos of a Catholic school"* (COMM2). It was of interest to note that responses from teachers with teaching experience of less than, or equal to, ten years, indicated a positive and affirming experience of community in the context of their employment in a Catholic school.

The findings confirmed that there was a deeper dimension to the experience of community in a Catholic school, namely, a spiritual dimension of community grounded in a communitarian model of the church as a Christian community. This was the model in which the educational philosophy of a Catholic school was promulgated by the Council Fathers of Vatican 11 (Declaration on Christian Education, 1965). The findings highlighted that a sense of community encouraged leadership which was empowering and collaborative in nature and structure. Responses suggested that this was more the

experience of teachers who worked in a religious congregation-owned school than those who did not, and whose experience of leadership was one that encouraged a shared vision, shared decision-making, and collaborative practice. This confirmed the study's premise that teachers perceived and experienced leadership from the context in which they worked and that leadership by teachers was shaped and influenced by the ways in which the school as an organisation constructed leadership. The findings also suggested that teachers who worked in a school environment in which leadership was more tightly structured did not experience the same collaborative and empowering approach to leadership as those in a less structured environment.

In this stage of the discussion it was confirmed that organisational and cultural factors, to a great extent, shape and influence leadership in a Catholic school. Although the focus group interview discussions focused principally on the organisational and cultural factors influencing leadership within a formal leadership context, it can be concluded that these same factors have the capacity to similarly shape and influence leadership by teachers in Catholic schools. The third stage of the discussion is centred on the extent to which leadership by teachers in Catholic schools is shaped and influenced by the way in which schools facilitate teacher professional practice and professional learning.

Leadership by teachers: the facilitation of teacher professional practice and professional learning

Discussion is given to the extent to which leadership by teachers in Catholic schools is shaped and influenced by ways in which teacher professional practice and professional learning are facilitated in the school

In their framework Frost and Harris (2003) identified a third factor in the organisational environment that influenced and shaped leadership in teachers, namely 'social capital', as outlined by D. Hargreaves (2003, cited in Frost & Harris). According to Hargreaves, 'social capital' reflects the quality of relationships between members in the organisation and between members and external contacts, and the extent to which these relationships build trust.

In light of D. Hargreaves' (2003) concept of 'social capital', in this discussion the notion of 'social capital' as a school's resource is considered in terms of teachers' 'professional capital'. Teachers' 'professional capital' refers to the way in which a Catholic school resources the professional role of teachers, and ultimately leadership by teachers, through the organisation of teachers' professional practice and teachers' professional learning. An evaluation of the findings in relation to these two key concepts illumines the extent to which leadership by teachers is shaped and influenced by teacher professional practice and professional learning in a Catholic school.

The findings revealed that leadership by teachers in a Catholic school was both facilitated and hindered by the organisation of teachers' professional practice and teachers' professional learning. There was strong evidence to suggest that leadership by teachers occurred principally on an informal basis through the experiences of everyday professional practice. There was no evidence to suggest that leadership by teachers occurred through formal processes specifically constructed in the school to facilitate leadership by teachers. The findings indicated that teachers recognise their capacity to lead and influence student learning and to collaboratively work with colleagues in their professional practice. It was apparent from the findings that although a school may not provide specific processes for

the exercise of leadership by teachers, it was in the nature of teachers to exercise leadership and to create their own opportunities for leadership. This was also the outcome of Boles and Troen's (1996) research, which revealed teachers' preference for exercising leadership through their professional expertise rather than through a designated position of leadership.

Literature on the 'new professionalism' of teachers revealed that there was a shift from individual teacher professional practice to group participation which encompassed elements of decision-making and collaborative professional practice (Day, 1999; A. Hargreaves, 1994; M. McLaughlin, 1997). Underpinning this concept was the broader context of changing approaches to leadership in schools as articulated by writers such as Caldwell, (1998), Fullan (2001, 2003a) and Leithwood et al. (1999). Although the respondents did not articulate a historical understanding of the impact of school reform on teacher professional practice, they were well aware of some of the changing patterns which had occurred in teaching during the past two decades. Value was placed on the experience of collaborative professional practice for teachers. The findings revealed that collaborative professional practices such as faculty meetings, facilitated teachers working as part of a team and sharing responsibility for learning. These findings supported the views of authors such as Harrison and Lembeck (1996), Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996), Smylie (1997), and Ash and Persall (2000).

A high value was placed on the informal collaborative practices which provided opportunities for collaborative interaction with colleagues by working together to achieve school goals, encouraging and supporting each other, learning from each other and sharing the learning. Such practices reflected the essence of the culture of *"collaborative individualism"* (Limerick et al., 1998, p. 116) in which the individual did not necessarily

rely on structure and role for identity but retained a sense of autonomy while working collaboratively with colleagues. The influence of a collaborative working environment in fostering and developing leadership capacity in teachers was a key finding in the literature (Crowther et al., 2002; Frost & Durrant, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2004; Frost & Harris, 2003; Harris, 2002a; Harris & Muijs, 2002a, 2002b; Lambert, 2000). The collaborative practices identified by the respondents also closely reflected the collegial nature of teacher professional practice, as considered by Fullan (1994), Jarzabkowski (2000) and Frost and Durrant (2003a), whose views were that collegiality created a positive professional learning culture for teachers.

Specific professional learning experiences were identified in the literature review as appropriating leadership development in teachers. These included the teacher as a collaborative learner (Boles & Troen, 1996; Tschannen-Moran, 2001), as a reflective practitioner (Day, 1999; Groundwater-Smith et al., 1998), as a researcher (Dick, 1999; Loughran, 2002) and as a mentor (Butcher & Prest, 1999; Wollman-Bonilla, 1997). The findings revealed that the respondents had a good sense of being collaborative learners, mentors, and reflective practitioners in an informal context more so than within a formal process. These professional learning practices provided opportunities for teachers to develop and exercise leadership, but the extent to which the school encouraged teachers to participate in such processes, with the specific purpose for leadership development, was not identified.

There was no discussion of the teacher as a researcher or of teachers participating in any form of action-research. Perhaps the schools in which the research was conducted did not place emphasis on the value of formal research processes in teacher professional practice.

This may reflect a wider reality for many schools that have not yet considered the potential for including inquiry-based research processes in teacher professional practice in order to enhance teachers' professional learning and ultimately, student learning, a strategy advocated by Dick (1999) and Loughran (2002). Such practices, according to Harris and Muijs (2002) and Lambert (2002), might help to build leadership capacity in teachers and ultimately bring about school improvement.

The findings revealed that respondents regarded formal professional development programs and formal academic study to be effective means of developing leadership in teachers in terms of attaining skills. However, such programs did not specifically focus on leadership development. It was apparent from the findings that there were limited opportunities available for leadership development in teachers through formal professional learning processes in the schools concerned. There was a perception that, unless the individual teacher took the initiative and actively sought opportunities for new experiences (FORM6), then it was most unlikely that leadership development in teachers would occur beyond the everyday experience of classroom practice.

Specific formal processes identified for leadership development for teachers were the formal leadership structures and other structures such as a homeroom teacher role, and faculty and staff meetings, which provided some opportunities for teachers to be empowered with a sense of professional agency. The formal leadership structures were seen to provide an avenue to positional leadership and were not necessarily avenues for developing leadership in teachers. Concern was expressed by some respondents that those who held formal leadership positions were given priority in accessing professional development activities provided by the school. Further, there was always the potential for

leadership development in teachers to be hindered by a lack of encouragement from those who held formal positions of leadership.

These findings highlight the concern which has emerged in the Catholic school system in Australia in recent years regarding the matter of leadership development and leadership succession in Catholic schools (Carlin et al., 2003; d'Arbon et al., 2001; Spry et al., 2004). Although the focus is mainly on developing leaders for principal succession, the programs arising from the research of these authors might benefit all teachers in developing leadership capacity.

To summarise, in the third stage of this discussion, factors which facilitate and factors which hinder leadership by teachers and leadership development in teachers in their professional practice and professional learning revealed in the findings, were discussed in light of the literature review. The discussion has established that leadership by teachers occurs principally on an informal basis in the everyday professional practice of teachers and, in particular in the professional learning experiences which occur principally on an informal basis between teachers. The discussion has established that, other than formal positions of leadership, there are no formal processes for leadership development of teachers. Leadership development occurs in informal ways in the context of teachers' professional practice and professional learning.

Recommendations

The study's findings have recommendations and implications for the work of: education system authorities; school leaders; directors and coordinators of teacher professional practice and professional learning; teachers; and universities and professional teaching

bodies. In light of the findings, recommendations for each of these groups are now described.

Education system authorities

1. It is recommended that education system policymakers, such as State Departments of Education and the National Catholic Education Commission in Australia, develop policies that articulate a multi-dimensional perspective of leadership, recognising in particular the professional role of teachers as leaders, and provide directives for the funding and resourcing of leadership development programs for all teachers.

2. It is recommended that Catholic education system authorities, such as the Catholic Education Office in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, actively engage school principals in consultation on principles of multi-dimensional leadership and the professional role of teachers as leaders, addressing in particular the application of these principles to local school policy development and practice.

3. It is recommended that Catholic education system authorities, such as the Catholic Education Office in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, actively seek broad consultation with teacher practitioners in the Archdiocese of Melbourne for input on ways in which leadership development in teachers can be implemented and supported.

4. In light of the consultation suggested in recommendation three, it is recommended that Catholic education system authorities, such as the Catholic Education Office in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, provide financial, personnel and program resources at system and school level, to support leadership development in all teachers.

5. It is recommended that the *National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership* (NIQTSL) in Australia consult broadly with teacher practitioners to seek their input on ways in which the NIQTSL can support and promote leadership development in teachers.

School leaders

1. It is recommended that school principals and senior leaders review school leadership policies, structures and practices to determine the degree to which they reflect principles of multi-dimensional leadership and the professional role of teachers as leaders.

2. It is recommended that school principals and senior leaders develop policy statements and practical strategies which promote leadership by teachers in their professional practice and professional learning.

3. It is recommended that school principals and senior leaders develop teacher selection and role description criteria for recruitment which reflects the importance of the nature and practice of leadership by teachers in their professional practice and professional learning.

4. It is recommended that school principals and senior leaders incorporate criteria for the identification and enhancement of teachers' leadership capacities in induction programs for beginning teachers.

5. It is recommended that school principals and senior leaders incorporate criteria for the identification and evaluation of teachers' leadership capacities in the conduct of annual review meetings with teachers.

   Directors and coordinators of teacher professional practice and professional learning

1. It is recommended that directors and coordinators of teacher professional practice and professional learning within schools provide appropriate processes for teacher reflective-practice which enables teachers to engage in collaborative learning and networking with colleagues.

2. It is recommended that directors and coordinators of teacher professional practice and professional learning provide formal mentor programs which emphasise leadership development for teachers.

3. It is recommended that directors and coordinators of teacher professional practice and professional learning develop processes that encourage inquiry-based research by teachers in their professional practice.

4. It is recommended that directors and coordinators of teacher professional practice and professional learning support teachers' access to professional teaching bodies and associations which support leadership development in teachers.

5. It is recommended that directors and coordinators of teacher professional practice and professional learning develop and implement teacher professional profiles which

enable teachers to formally identify, evaluate and document their leadership capacities and leadership practices in their professional practice.

Teachers

1. It is recommended that teachers use a teacher professional profile to regularly identify, evaluate, document, and reflect on, their leadership capacities and leadership practices within their professional practice.

2. It is recommended that teachers take responsibility for undertaking regular professional reading relevant to the theory and practice of teacher leadership.

3. It is recommended that teachers become members of professional teaching bodies and associations which promote the theory and practice of teacher leadership.

4. It is recommended that teachers collaboratively network with colleagues to engage in professional conversation on the nature of their experiences of leadership in their professional practice.

5. It is recommended that teachers undertake inquiry-based research on leadership in their professional practice and where possible, publish the finding, thus contributing to the body of professional knowledge in this field.

Universities and professional teaching bodies

1. It is recommended that universities, professional teaching bodies and related associations undertake research and develop and resource programs which engage teachers in professional discourse on the nature and practice of leadership by teachers.

2. It is recommended that university personnel involved in pre-service teacher education include in their curriculum and field experience, policies and programs which promote leadership by teachers in their professional practice and professional learning.

Recommendations for researchers

In light of the study's findings it is recommended that future research be undertaken in the area of teacher leadership.

1. It is recommended that follow-up qualitative research to this study is undertaken with a larger and broader sample of teachers in Catholic schools to further develop the concept of leadership by teachers in their professional practice and professional learning in Catholic schools at both the national and international level.

2. It is recommended that follow-up qualitative research to this study is undertaken to explore the linkage between leadership by teachers in their professional practice and professional learning, and school improvement.

3. It is recommended that research involving a sample of Catholic education system leaders and senior leaders in Catholic schools is undertaken to determine the level of

support, in theory and practice, for leadership by teachers in their professional practice
and professional learning.

4. It is recommended that further research be undertaken with teachers in Catholic schools
   to explore the extent to which the cultural environment of a Catholic school
   appropriates leadership by teachers.

5. It is recommended that further research be undertaken on teachers to explore ways in
   which teachers' personal, interpersonal and professional 'agency' enhances their
   capacity to exercise leadership.

6. It is recommended that a longitudinal study be undertaken with beginning teachers to
   identify factors which enable and hinder their leadership development.

In summary, these recommendations are linked to the major finding of the study: that
leadership by teachers is exercised in their professional practice but that their opportunities
for leadership and for leadership development are generally not supported by the formal
processes in schools.

Conclusions

In this final section the theoretical orientation and methodology used in addressing the
research questions in the study is reviewed and the major findings of the study are
presented. The study has explored teachers' perceptions and experiences of leadership in
Catholic schools. Specifically the matter of leadership exercised by teachers and their

opportunities for leadership development was the focus of the investigation. Five research questions guided the study. They were:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of leadership in general?

2. What are teachers' perceptions of leadership in Catholic schools?

3. What are teachers' perceptions of leadership by teachers in Catholic schools?

4. What are teachers' experiences of leadership by teachers in Catholic schools?

5. What are the opportunities for leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools?

The study involved qualitative inquiry and the conceptual framework developed for the study was informed by leadership literature from three perspectives: leadership in a general context, educational leadership in the context of the school, and leadership by teachers. The specific context of the study was the Catholic school. The research design was situated in an interpretative paradigm and was oriented to providing in-depth and detailed descriptions of the phenomenon of leadership. The data were analysed as an iterative process of data collection and data analysis through focus group interviews and data reduction. The findings were reported, and a framework which highlighted key factors drawn from Frost and Harris's (2003) conceptualisation and analysis of teacher leadership, was developed to guide the discussion of the findings. With further development, this framework has application beyond the study for the further analyses of leadership by teachers.

The findings relate to the theory of teacher leadership and highlight the lack of empirical research in this field in Catholic schools. This study has taken an initial step in

conceptualising understandings of leadership in two Catholic schools in Australia from the perspective of teachers, specifically leadership as perceived and experienced by teachers. The study provides an appropriate theoretical framework and research process for similar studies to be undertaken in Catholic schools, at both the national and international level. Although the sample of teachers was limited to two Catholic schools, the findings illumine a number of significant issues which may be representative of Catholic schools in general.

The major findings arising from this study focus on how leadership by teachers in Catholic schools is determined by the way in which schools organise and structure leadership, and the resulting implications for leadership by teachers in their professional practice and professional learning and leadership development for teachers. In discussing the 'substantive significance' of the findings (Patton, 2002), the four key factors outlined by Patton were considered.

The study highlighted that, in theory teachers have well-developed conceptual understandings of leadership which are cognisant of leadership conceptions in teacher leadership literature and in the general leadership literature. Although this study was limited in the size of its sample, the data were rich and the findings consistent across the five focus groups. The findings provide rich insights on leadership in Catholic schools, and specifically leadership by teachers, for all educators. The depth and richness of the data reflected the value of the topic for teachers and their desire to be engaged in the professional conversation. It also suggested the need for dynamic, ongoing professional conversation in this subject. However, for teachers in Catholic schools the theory does not always translate into practice. The findings suggested that the nature and practice of leadership by teachers in Catholic schools is determined to a great extent by the way in

which leadership is organised and constructed in the school. The major findings arising from the study have implications for teachers, policymakers and principals alike.

The significant finding of the study was that leadership in a Catholic school operates principally as formal, positional leadership which has notions of hierarchy, power and status. A related finding was that leadership is dependent upon an opportunity to attain a position. These findings have direct implications for teachers and leaders of Catholic schools, and indirectly for leaders within the broader Catholic education system. It might be of benefit to leaders within the system to consider the divisions, in terms of position and status, which are created through formal leadership structures, and the limited capacity of these leadership structures to promote leadership widely among teachers. As formal, positional leadership is role-specific and is attainable only by the few, it can be seen to be antithetical to the principles underpinning teacher leadership. Leadership which is not bounded but is distributed throughout the organisation, and which is participative and empowering, is a more appropriate model. Such leadership approaches, which, if adopted, can replace conventional leadership structures and practices in the broader Catholic education system and in the particular context of the Catholic school would help to better appropriate the theory and practice of leadership by teachers. This study acknowledges that research on leadership succession in Catholic schools in Australia has commenced this important challenge.

From the study it was evident that teachers' personal and professional dispositions predisposed teachers to exercise leadership. However, whilst teachers articulated their sense of personal, interpersonal and professional agency in exercising leadership in their professional practice, they expressed doubts about their professional status, especially

within the school community and the wider community. New forms of, and support structures for, teacher professionalism were evident in the literature. Although professional bodies in Australia, the context of this study, have developed and widely promoted teacher professionalism, there is a need for these bodies to focus on developing and widely promoting interest in the theory of teacher leadership among teachers specifically, and educators generally. Similarly, there is a need for teachers to regularly access these organisations and be informed of emerging trends in the areas of teacher professionalism and teacher leadership. In turn, such bodies would benefit the teaching profession by engaging teachers in ongoing professional discourse on leadership by teachers.

The study has highlighted the integral connection between leadership and teachers' professional practice. The significant finding which confirmed the purpose and intention of the study was that teachers perceive that they exercise leadership in informal ways in their everyday professional practice. Examples of teachers' leadership practices were authenticated in the literature relating to teacher leadership. Although the findings emphasised the direct linkage between leadership by teachers and student learning, the broader linkage between teacher leadership and school improvement was not evident in the discussion. As the focus in the focus group interviews was on allowing teachers to speak of their perceptions and experiences of leadership, it was not possible to explore all topics related to teacher leadership. As the literature highlighted, the concept of teacher leadership for school improvement is an important one which requires ongoing research.

As highlighted in both the literature and the findings, collaborative practice and empowerment is integral to the practice of leadership by teachers. These practices, singly and collectively, highlight the significant value teachers place on the relational and

collegial nature of leadership. The literature and the findings emphasise that the mission of a Catholic school ideally aims to provide an environment which promotes authentic relationships and a strong sense of community and commitment to shared goals. When teachers have an opportunity to contribute to the broader school vision and shared goals, they work effectively and collaboratively in their professional practice and professional learning. However, it is also noted that, in practice, it is the collegial forces at work among teachers which effectively nurture teachers in their professional practice and professional learning. The degree to, and ways in which, the mission and vision of a Catholic school influence and shape leadership in teachers in Catholic schools is a valuable area to be further explored and requires specific research.

The role of teacher professional learning in developing leadership in teachers was a significant outcome of the study. Although the literature highlighted a range of professional learning processes which develop leadership in teachers, it was evident from the findings that emphasis in schools is not given to the construction of formal professional learning processes which might facilitate leadership development in teachers. Rather, teacher professional learning occurs principally through collaborative-related practices such as reflective practice and mentoring, practices which occurred informally. The implications of this outcome have a direct bearing on the purpose and organisation of professional learning in Catholic schools. The task is for school leaders and those responsible for teacher professional learning to ensure that opportunities are provided in professional learning practices for leadership development in teachers. The extent to which this will be achieved is dependent on the value placed on, and the processes put in place for, leadership development.

This study has focused on a 'sleeping giant' (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996). The genre of teacher leadership is well established in educational leadership literature. Teachers involved in this study have well-developed conceptual understandings of its theory. However, the findings suggest that leadership by teachers is yet to be fully awakened in teachers' professional practice and professional learning in the specific education setting of Catholic schools in Australia. Not until system and school authorities develop policy and practices that promote a multi-dimensional perspective of leadership in schools, formally recognise the capacity of all teachers to exercise leadership, and implement practices to support leadership by teachers, will the 'sleeping giant' be awakened. It is hoped that this study will contribute to awakening the 'sleeping giant' by bringing to the attention of the educational community that leadership by teachers is a vital dimension for enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in schools. It is only then that the insights reflected in the following comment will be realised: *"All teachers are leaders … that's why teachers go into teaching."* (TEAC1).

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Appendix A: Summary sheet for research participants

SUMMARY SHEET FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Research on Leadership

Topic: An exploration of the perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers and the opportunities for leadership development of teachers in Catholic secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne

For the purpose of the research some demographic data is required.

Could you please provide the following information.

Sex male ☐   female ☐

Status of employment in current school

Teacher who is not in a formal position of leadership   ☐

Teacher who is in a formal position of leadership   ☐

Teacher who is in a formal position of leadership and with non-teaching duties   ☐

Years of teaching experience

0 – 5 yrs	6 – 10 yrs	11 – 15 yrs	16 – 20 yrs	20 + yrs

Years of experience in a formal position of leadership

0 – 5 yrs	6 – 10 yrs	11 – 15 yrs	16 – 20 yrs	20 + yrs

You are invited to add further comment to the discussion

Relating to Q. 1: Give a definition of leadership

Relating to Q. 2: How do you perceive leadership in the educational context of a Catholic secondary school?

Relating to Q. 3: What are your perceptions of leadership by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in a Catholic secondary school?

➤ Give examples of leadership attributes

1.

2.

➤ Give examples of leadership competencies

1.

2.

➤ Give examples of a leadership approach

1.

2.

Relating to Q. 4: What are your experiences of leadership by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in a Catholic secondary school?

➤ Give examples

1. leadership attributes -

2. leadership competencies -

3. leadership approaches -

Relating to Q. 5: What are the opportunities for leadership development for teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in a Catholic secondary school?

➤ Give examples

1.

2.

➤ Ideally, what professional development activities would you recommend for leadership development for teachers?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

Appendix B: Excerpts from the researcher's journal

March 13, 2002: formulating the research question
Limerick, Cunnington and Crowther's fourth blueprint model has challenged my views on the structures of schools today, in particular, the place and function of leadership in schools. It seems to me that whilst organisations are deconstructing their structures and workplace practices, schools are still highly structured places. From my own experience, even though leadership comprises a senior and middle leadership structure, it is still very much hierarchical in its nature and exercising a top- heavy power base. In reality, I perceive this structure to be disempowering for teachers. This confirms my view of the need to focus on exploring teachers' views of leadership and whether they perceive themselves to be leaders.

November 23, 2002: the conduct of focus group interviews in School A
The first focus group involved seven participants who had been teaching for 10+ years. The conversation flowed. They had obviously responded to the invitation to participate because they regarded the topic to be an important one. The participants found it difficult to differentiate between 'perceptions' and 'experiences' of leadership. Although I presented a definition, the responses indicated that the participants did not definitively distinguish between the two terms. It seemed to me that their perceptions were drawn from their experiences. This is something that I shall have to consider when summarising the data. The second interview entailed only two participants of less than ten years teaching experience. This interview resulted in a dynamic discussion. These two participants were articulate and it was obvious that they valued teaching as a profession. It became apparent to me through the interview that they were leaders in their professional practice. I will be interested to read the transcript.

August 30, 2003: data collection from 'expert group"
In discussion with my principal supervisor a concern was expressed about triangulation. It was decided that an effective triangulation method would be to have the data from the focus group interviews verified by another group. As I was an executive member of the Catholic Secondary School Professional Development Network group, I perceived that this group had the capacity to respond as an 'expert group'. The Ethics committee granted permission for this to occur. I made contact with the convenor of the group who invited me to agenda the request at the next PD executive meeting. Permission was granted for me to invite interested members at the following network meeting to form an 'expert' group and participate in a focus group interview. The purpose of the group was to invite their 'expert' response on the first summary of the data. I then prepared the appropriate letter, reply form, consent form and participant summary sheet. Five replies were forthcoming. As usual, finding a time to suit all respondents was a difficult one. All respondents were in agreement to conduct the interview after the next PD Network meeting on 26 August 2003.The interview was a dynamic one. Here were five teachers, all of who occupied an executive position in either a school or the Catholic Education office, discussing the dominant themes that emerged in the data. I found the conversation to be enriching for me as I'm sure it was for the respondents. Upon transcribing the data it was evident that this group perceived similar issues relating to leadership, in particular leadership by teachers.

Appendix C: Human Resource Ethics Committee Approval Form

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne

⊕ ACU National

Human Research Ethics Committee

Committee Approval Form

Principal Investigator/Supervisor: Dr Annette Schneider   Ballarat Campus

Co-Supervisor: A/P Charles Burford   Sydney Campus

Student Researcher: Ms Patricia O'Brien   Melbourne Campus

Ethics approval has been granted for the following project:
An exploration of the perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers and the opportunities for leadership development by teachers

for the period: 01/08/02 - 31/12/04

Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Register Number: V2002.03-18

The following standard conditions as stipulated in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* (1999) apply:

(i)   that Principal Investigators / Supervisors provide, on the form supplied by the Human Research Ethics Committee, annual reports on matters such as:
- security of records
- compliance with approved consent procedures and documentation
- compliance with special conditions, and

(ii)   that researchers report to the HREC immediately any matter that might affect the ethical acceptability of the protocol, such as:
- proposed changes to the protocol
- unforeseen circumstances or events
- adverse effects on participants

The HREC will conduct an audit each year of all projects deemed to be of more than minimum risk. There will also be random audits of a sample of projects considered to be of minimum risk on all campuses each year.

Within one month of the conclusion of the project, researchers are required to complete a *Final Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer.

If the project continues for more than one year, researchers are required to complete an *Annual Progress Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer within one month of the anniversary date of the ethics approval.

Signed: .... Date: ... 01/08/02 ...
(Research Services Officer, Melbourne Campus)

Appendix D: Letter seeking permission from the Director of Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Melbourne

Rev. Mgr. T. M. Doyle
Director of Catholic Education
P.O. Box 3
EAST MELBOURNE 3002

13 September 2002

Dear Monsignor Doyle

I am writing to seek your permission for research to be conducted in two Catholic secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

The research entails an exploration of the perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers and the opportunities for leadership development of teachers in Catholic secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. Currently, this topic has been identified as an important one for teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership. Findings from the research may inform teachers and educational authorities of the importance of effective leadership practice by teachers in Catholic secondary schools.

The research is entitled: *an exploration of the perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers and the opportunities for leadership development of teachers*. The research is being conducted as part of research in educational leadership in a doctoral program at Australian Catholic University.

The selected research method is qualitative and will rely on the focus group interview as the strategy for data collection. The conduct of the focus group interview will give interested teachers an opportunity to dialogue with their professional colleagues to explore important dimensions of leadership by teachers. The focus group session should ensure the gathering of rich data, principally from teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership. However, teachers who currently or have previously, held a formal position of leadership are invited to participate.

It is intended to conduct two focus group sessions with the following groups of teachers
⇒ Focus Group 1: up to ten teachers with teaching experience less than, and including, ten years
⇒ Focus group 2: up to ten teachers with teaching experience greater than, and including, eleven years.

The duration for each session will be approximately one hour and will be held after school hours, and preferably on your school's premises.

Because of the nature of an interview schedule, while the identity of the participant will be known to the researcher, confidentiality will be assured at all times in the conduct of the research and no participant or a school will be identified in the data analysis and publication of findings.

Participation in this study is optional and a participant can withdraw their consent at any time without giving a reason. There are no anticipated risks to participants.

The Human Research Ethics Committee has approved this research at Australian Catholic University. Once your approval is granted, a letter outlining the nature and purpose of the research will be sent to the Principal in each of the selected schools.

Any questions regarding the research should be directed to Dr. Jacqueline McGilp, Principal Supervisor on telephone number 03 53365315 at the Ballarat Campus of Australian Catholic University.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely

Dr Jacqueline McGilp   Tricia O'Brien
Principal Supervisor   Research student

Appendix E: Letter seeking permission from principals of Catholic secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne

The Principal
Name of Principal
Name of School
Address of school

Date:

Dear (name of Principal)

I am writing to seek your permission for research to be conducted on your school premises with teaching members of staff at (name of school).

The research entails an exploration of the perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers and the opportunities for leadership development of teachers in Catholic secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. Currently, this topic has been identified as an important one for teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership. Findings from the research may inform teachers and educational authorities of the importance of effective leadership practice by teachers in Catholic secondary schools.

The research is entitled: *an exploration of the perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers and the opportunities for leadership development of teachers*. The research is being conducted as part of research in Educational Leadership in a doctoral program at Australian Catholic University.

The selected research method is qualitative and will rely on the focus group interview as the strategy for data collection. The conduct of the focus group interview will give interested teachers an opportunity to dialogue with their professional colleagues to explore important dimensions of leadership by teachers. The focus group session should ensure the gathering of rich data, principally from teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership. However, teachers who currently or have previously, held a formal position of leadership are invited to participate.

It is intended to conduct two focus group sessions with the following groups of teachers
⇒ Focus Group 1: up to ten teachers with teaching experience less than, and including, ten years
⇒ Focus group 2: up to ten teachers with teaching experience greater than, and including, eleven years.

The groups will meet independently to ensure a representation of teachers from both groups. The duration for each session will be approximately one hour and will be held after school hours, and preferably on your school's premises.

Because of the nature of an interview schedule, while the identity of the participant will be known to the researcher, confidentiality will be assured at all times in the conduct of the research and no participant or a school will be identified in the data analysis and publication of findings. Participation in this study is optional and a participant can withdraw their consent at any time without giving a reason. There are no anticipated risks to participants.

The Human Research Ethics Committee has approved this research at Australian Catholic University.

 If your approval is granted, an invitational letter outlining the nature and purpose of the research and the required Consent Forms will be forwarded to teachers in your school.

Any questions regarding the research should be directed to Dr. Jacqueline McGilp, Principal Supervisor on telephone number 03 53365315 at the Ballarat Campus of Australian Catholic University.

If you are willing to grant approval for teachers at your school to participate in this research and for the research to be conducted on your school premises after school hours, please complete the attached agreement and return in the self-addressed envelope.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely

Dr Jacqueline McGilp   Tricia O'Brien
Principal Supervisor   Research student

Appendix F: Approval form for principals

ACU NATIONAL

APPROVAL FORM

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: AN EXPLORATION OF THE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF LEADERSHIP BY TEACHERS AND THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

NAMES OF SUPERVISORS: DR J. McGILP

            DR C. BURFORD

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: TRICIA O'BRIEN

Permission is granted for teachers at   (Name and address of school) to participate in the

research to be conducted by Tricia O'Brien. I agree that research data collected for the

study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not

identify the school in any way.

NAME OF PRINCIPAL:……………………………………………………………

SIGNATURE: …………………………………. **DATE:** …………

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR: …………………………………….

DATE: …………

Appendix G: Letter of acknowledgement to principals

ACU NATIONAL

Date

Dear (name of principal)

Dr Jackie McGilp, supervisor of my research study, has informed me of your approval for me to conduct research with teachers at (name of school). Thank you for this response. In general, the response from schools has been most positive.

As the research is to be undertaken in two Catholic secondary schools, two schools have been randomly selected from the responses. If there are insufficient numbers to form the required two focus groups in the two randomly selected schools, I will need to make a further selection of one or two schools to fulfil the requirements of the research.

I thank you for your initial response and for your interest in the topic of teacher leadership. Hopefully, the study will provide some rich data for educators.

Sincerely,

Tricia O'Brien

Research student

Appendix H: Letter for research participants

ACU NATIONAL

Date

Dear Teacher

I am writing to invite you to participate in a research project. The research entails an exploration of the perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers and the opportunities for leadership development of teachers in Catholic secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. Currently this topic is an important one for teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership, yet, by nature of their professional practice, exercise a range of leadership attributes and competencies that are identified in leadership theory. Historically, educational leadership in the Australian context has been principally the domain of persons who hold formal positions of leadership.

The research is entitled: AN EXPLORATION OF THE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF LEADERSHIP BY TEACHERS AND THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS.

The conduct of the focus group interview will give participants an opportunity to dialogue with some professional colleagues to explore important dimensions of leadership by teachers. The focus group session should ensure the gathering of rich data, principally from teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership. However, if you currently or have previously, held a formal position of leadership you are invited to participate.

It is intended to conduct two focus group sessions with the following groups of teachers
⇒ Focus Group 1: up to ten teachers with teaching experience less than, and including, ten years
⇒ Focus group 2: up to ten teachers with teaching experience greater than, and including, eleven years.

The groups will meet independently to ensure a representation of teachers from both groups. The duration for each session will be approximately one hour and will be held after school hours on your school's premises, and on a date suitable to the interested participants.

Because of the nature of the focus groups the identity of the participants will be known to the researcher. However, confidentiality will be assured at all times in the conduct of the research. You also have the option to withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. There are no anticipated risk to participants.

Permission has been granted by your Principal, Mr Vin Feeney, for teachers to participate in this research.

The Human Research Ethics Committee, Australian Catholic University, and the Catholic Education Office, Archdiocese of Melbourne, have approved this research project.

Any questions regarding the research should be directed:

Dr. Jacqueline McGilp
Principal Supervisor
Australian Catholic University
PO Box 650
BALLARAT 3350
Ph: 0353365315

After the research project has concluded and been formalised I will be happy to share the research findings with the participants. Findings from the research may inform teachers and educational authorities of the importance of effective leadership practice by teachers in Catholic secondary schools.

In the event that you have any complaint or concern that my supervisor or I have not been able to satisfy, you may write to:

Chair, HREC
C/o Research Services
Australian Catholic University
Locked Bag 4115
FITZROY VIC 3065
Tel: 03 9953 3157
Fax: 03 9953 3315

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will also be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this research, you will need to sign both copies of the Consent Form, retain one copy for your records and place the other copy for me in the self-addressed envelope. I will collect this envelope at the commencement of the focus group discussion.

Yours sincerely

Tricia O'Brien   Dr Jacqueline McGilp
Research student   Principal Supervisor

Appendix I: Consent form for research participants

ACU NATIONAL

CONSENT FORM

(participant's copy)

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: AN EXPLORATION OF THE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF LEADERSHIP BY TEACHERS AND THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

NAMES OF SUPERVISORS: DR J. McGILP

DR C. BURFORD

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: TRICIA O'BRIEN

I …………………………….(*the participant*) have read and understood the information provided in the Letter to Participants. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in his activity, and know that I can withdraw at any time from the research. I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: …………………………………….

SIGNATURE: …………………………… **DATE:**…………

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR: ……………………………………

DATE: ………..

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER: …………………………………………………...

DATE: ………..

Appendix J: Letter to Professional/Staff Development Coordinators' Network (7-12) Executive

ACU NATIONAL

21 July 2003

Dr Pauline Sharma
Convenor of Professional Development Network
Catholic Education Office
MELBOURNE 3001

Dear Pauline

Further to our phone conversation I am writing to formalise my request to the Professional Development Executive Committee to approve the conduct of a focus group with a panel of experts as part of my doctoral research through ACU National.

The research entails an exploration of the perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers, and the opportunities for leadership development for teachers in Catholic secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. Data has been collected through the conduct of focus groups. Currently I am in the process of analysing this data.

The next stage requires a verification of the data. This involves the formation of an expert 'reference group' of professional colleagues who are invited to participate in a focus group to reflect on and respond to the dominant themes that have emerged in the data. It is envisaged that the group will comprise up to six colleagues drawn from the Professional Development Coordinator's Network. The conduct of the focus group will be facilitated by me, the researcher, and will take approximately one hour scheduled after school hours. The date and venue will be decided in conjunction with the participants.

Upon the approval of your committee, I wish to invite a number of professional colleagues to participate in the focus group. Attached is a letter of invitation to colleagues. The letter

will be distributed separately to approximately eight colleagues by e-mail who will be asked to indicate their response in a return e-mail. Once the group is finalised, a consent form and relevant material will be forwarded to the participants by postal mail.

Thank you for your interest and I look forward to a response.

Sincerely

Tricia O'Brien
Ed.D. Research Student
ACU National

Appendix K: Information for the Professional /Staff Development Coordinators'
Network (7-12) Executive

ACU NATIONAL

DOCTORAL RESEARCH PROJECT
undertaken by Tricia O'Brien

Summary of Data

Research Topic:

An exploration of the perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers and the opportunities
for leadership development for teachers in Catholic secondary schools in the Archdiocese
Melbourne

➢ You are invited to read the first summary of the data and join in professional conversation with
colleagues to offer an 'expert' response to the data, in particular, the dominant emerging themes.

➢ The first summary of the data has been organised around the key focus questions that provided the
framework for the conduct of the focus groups in the collection of the data..

➢ The five key research questions were:

---

1. How would you define the term, leadership, in general?

2. How do you perceive leadership in the context of a Catholic secondary school?

3. What are your perceptions of leadership in a Catholic secondary school context
   by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership?

4. What are your experiences of leadership in a Catholic secondary school context
   by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership?

5. What are the opportunities for leadership development for teachers in a
   Catholic secondary school?

➢ In addition to the main themes that have emerged in relation to each focus question, some key
issues and concerns recorded in the data have been identified by the researcher and are listed
for your response.

Focus Question 1: How would you define the term, leadership, in general?

A summary of the data in relation to Focus question 1 is presented

You are invited to offer a response to the following questions (discussion approx. 10 mins)

1. To what extent do the responses reflect your definition of leadership in a general context?

2. In your opinion are there significant issues about leadership in a general context that did not emerge in the data?

Focus Question 2: What are your perceptions and experiences of leadership in Catholic schools?

A summary of the data in relation to Focus question 2 is presented

You are invited to offer a response to the following questions (discussion approx. 10 mins)

1. To what extent do the responses reflect your perceptions and experiences of leadership in the context of a Catholic school?

2. In your opinion, are there significant aspects about leadership in the context of a Catholic school that did not emerge in the data?

Focus questions 3 & 4: What are your perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

A summary of the data in relation to Focus questions 3 & 4 is presented

You are invited to offer a response to the following questions (discussion approx. 20 mins)

1. To what extent do the responses reflect your perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

2. In your opinion, are there significant aspects about leadership by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools that did not emerge in the data?

Focus Question 5: What are the opportunities for leadership development for teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

A summary of the data in relation to Focus question 5 is presented

You are invited to offer a response to the following questions (discussion approx. 10 mins)

1. To what extent do the responses reflect your perceptions and experiences on the opportunities for leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools?

2. In your opinion, are there significant aspects about opportunities for leadership development for teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools that did not emerge in the data?

Appendix L: Letter for participants in 'expert' group

ACU NATIONAL

21 July 2003

Dear colleague,

I am writing to invite you to participate in a focus group that is part of my doctoral research through ACU National. The research entails an exploration of the perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers, and the opportunities for leadership development for teachers in Catholic secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. Data has been collected through the conduct of focus groups. Currently I am in the process of analysing this data.

The next stage requires a verification of the data. This involves the formation of an expert 'reference group' of professional colleagues who are invited to participate in a focus group to reflect on and respond to the dominant themes that have emerged in the data.

I am inviting you to participate in this focus group. The conduct of the focus group will be facilitated by me, the researcher, and will take approximately one hour, after school hours, and at a time and venue convenient to all participants. Gourmet refreshments will be offered.

There are no anticipated ethical risks to participants. The focus group gives you an opportunity to share your expert reflections with professional colleagues, in this case, to respond to emergent themes on leadership by teachers, as perceived and experienced by teachers.

Because of the nature of a focus group, the researcher will know the identity of the each participant. However, anonymity and confidentiality will be assured at all times in the data

analyses and the publication of the findings, in accordance with the Human Research Ethics Committee of ACU National.

If you are interested in participating in the focus group could you simply return the 'REPLY FORM' via e-mail. Once the group is finalised, a consent form and relevant material for the focus group discussion will be forwarded to you by postal mail.

Thank you for your interest and I look forward to a response.

Sincerely

Tricia O'Brien

Ed.D. Research Student

ACU National

Appendix M: Reply form for 'expert' group

<div align="center">

REPLY FORM

</div>

I am interested in participating in the focus group discussion.

Please highlight one or more of the following:

Possible dates when I am available are:

Tuesday:	19 August	26 August	2 September	9 September
Wednesday:	20 August	27 August	3 September	10 September
Thursday:	21 August	28 August	4 September	11 September

The most convenient meeting time is:

4.30pm - 5.30pm

5.00pm – 6.00pm

A convenient venue is:

Australian Catholic University – St Patrick's Campus

(Name of researcher's workplace)

Suggested venue: _____

Appendix N: Consent form for 'expert' group

ACU NATIONAL

CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: AN EXPLORATION OF THE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF LEADERSHIP BY TEACHERS AND THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

NAMES OF SUPERVISORS: DR A. SCHNEIDER (Acting Principal supervisor)

DR C. BURFORD

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: TRICIA O'BRIEN

I ……………………………..(the participant) have read and understood the information provided for my participation in the expert 'reference group'. I agree to participate in this activity, and know that I can withdraw at any time from the 'reference group'.

I understand that data collected from the focus group discussion may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: ……………………………………

SIGNATURE: …………………………………DATE: ………….

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR: ……………………………………

DATE: …………

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: …………………………………….…

DATE: …………

Appendix O: Summary sheet for participants in 'expert' group

ACU NATIONAL

SUMMARY SHEET

Focus Group Discussion- a response from an expert 'reference group'

Research Topic: An exploration of the perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers and the opportunities for leadership development of teachers in Catholic secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne

Thank you for responding to the invitation to participate in this focus group. Your task is to join in professional conversation with colleagues and offer an 'expert' response to the data, in particular, the dominant emerging themes.

For the purpose of the research some demographic data is required.
Could you please provide the following information

Sex male ☐   female ☐

Current status of employment

Teacher who is not in a formal position of leadership   ☐

Teacher who is in a formal position of leadership   ☐

Name current leadership position: _____

Years of teaching experience

| 0 – 5 yrs | 6 – 10 yrs | 11 – 15 yrs | 16 – 20 yrs | 20 + yrs |

Years of experience in a formal position of leadership

| 0 – 5 yrs | 6 – 10 yrs | 11 – 15 yrs | 16 – 20 yrs | 20 + yrs |

Please bring the completed summary sheet to the focus group

Appendix P: First summary of findings for 'expert' group

ACU NATIONAL

DOCTORAL RESEARCH PROJECT
undertaken by Tricia O'Brien

Summary of Data

Research Topic: An exploration of the perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers and their opportunities for leadership development.

➢ You are invited to read the first summary of the data and join in professional conversation with colleagues to offer an 'expert' response to the data, in particular, the dominant emerging themes.

➢ The first summary of the data has been organised around the key focus questions that provided the framework for the conduct of the focus groups in the collection of the data..

➢ The five key questions were:

1. How would you define the term, leadership, in general?
2. What are your perceptions and experiences of leadership in Catholic schools?
3. What are your perceptions of leadership by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?
4. What are your experiences of leadership by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?
5. What are the opportunities for leadership development for teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

➢ In addition to the main themes that have emerged in relation to each focus question, some key issues and concerns recorded in the data have been identified by the researcher and are listed for your response.

Focus Question 1: How would you define the term, leadership, in general?

A summary of the data in relation to focus question 1 reflected three main themes:

Theme 1: Leadership is defined in terms of the qualities and expertise of the person
- a person who has natural leadership qualities and leads naturally
- a person who has intrinsic motivation
- a person who can assume responsibility and take initiative
- a person who has some competency, expertise and experience in a particular area
- a person who has strong interpersonal skills, who understands people, and who has the knowledge to help them

Theme 2: Leadership is defined in terms of having a position and opportunity
- leadership is equated with holding some position and being in charge
- leadership is dependent upon an opportunity to move into a position
- leadership develops through opportunities to lead
- leadership comes with having first-hand experience

Theme 3: Leadership is defined as being dynamic in offering vision and empowerment
- leadership is about having a clear vision and the passion to bring about change
- leadership is about empowering others to work towards a common goal
- leadership is about guiding and challenging others
- leadership is about having a clear direction and focus

Some key issues and concerns recorded in the data in relation to focus question 1

- a concern that those who are in leadership roles can mislead
- a concern that those who hold a formal position of leadership do not always enact effective leadership.
- a concern that a good leader might only be recognised in retrospect
- a perception that not everyone has the ability to lead

You are invited to offer a response to the following questions (discussion approx. 10 mins)
1. To what extent do the responses reflect your perceptions of leadership in a general context?

2. In your opinion, are there significant aspects about leadership in a general context that did not emerge in the data?

3. In your opinion what are some significant issues that may be identified in relation to leadership in general?

Focus Question 2: What are your perceptions and experiences of leadership in Catholic schools?

A summary of the data in relation to focus question 2 reflected two main themes:

Theme 1: Leadership in a Catholic school is influenced by, and has influence on, the culture and structures of the school

- Leadership in a Catholic school is informed by the school's mission and ethos
- Leadership in a Catholic school requires a vision based on the values of Jesus Christ
- Leadership in a Catholic school is ideally collaborative in structure and nature

Theme 2: Leadership in a Catholic school is empowered by a strong sense of community and service

- Leadership in a Catholic school is influenced by a strong sense of community
- Leadership in a Catholic school influences members of the community to fulfil their Christian potential
- Leadership in a Catholic school is about service to others

Some key issues and concerns recorded in the data in relation to focus question 2

- a need to ensure that a Catholic school's vision is dynamic and not impinged upon by marketing forces
- a concern that leadership is often perceived as a managerial role
- a need to address a traditional male-dominated leadership

You are invited to offer a response to the following questions (discussion approx. 10 mins)

1. To what extent do the responses reflect your perceptions of leadership in the context of a Catholic school?

2. In your opinion, are there significant aspects about leadership in the context of a Catholic school that did not emerge in the data?

3. In your opinion what are some significant issues that may be identified in relation to leadership in the context of a Catholic school?

Focus questions 3 & 4: What are your perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

Definition of Terms

Leadership by teachers refers to the potential and possibility of all teachers to exercise leadership attributes and competencies, and leadership approaches in their professional role.

Teachers' *perceptions* of leadership refer to teachers' knowledge and understanding of leadership

Teacher's *experiences* of leadership refer to teachers' personal experience in exercising leadership.

The data is collated in two sections.

Section 1: *Three main themes emerged from the general discussion on leadership by teachers who are not in a position of leadership in Catholic schools?*

Theme 1: Teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership are perceived to be leaders

- Teachers perceive themselves to be leaders and enact leadership beyond the formal role, in their support of colleagues and students
- Teachers have a responsibility to be leaders to other teachers
- Teachers are perceived to be leaders within the community

Theme 2: Society and certain groups within the school community do not necessarily view teachers as leaders

- Society and certain groups within the school do not necessarily view teachers as leaders, there is a need to discuss more that everyone is a leader in their own right
- Those who are in formal positions of leadership dominate the function of leadership in a school
- A young teacher is not empowered in confidence or in experience to be a leader

Theme 3: Teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership exercise leadership in the activities involved in the teaching and learning process

- Teachers exercise leadership in the activities of the teaching and learning process
- Teachers show leadership in the responsible exercise of their duties
- Teachers are seen to be leaders by their students

Section 2: *Specific leadership attributes, leadership competencies and leadership approaches were identified as being exercised by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools.*

Leadership Attributes - *refer to characteristics that may be intrinsic to the professional disposition of a teacher or developed, and that enable a teacher to exercise leadership.*

The following leadership attributes were identified by respondents

being authentic in relating to others
an acceptance and trust of each other
the trust of the students
a concern and care for others
an empathic understanding of others
respect for, and understanding of others
getting along with people and working together to achieve something
the capacity to be team member and to build relationships
the capacity to empower and enable others
a sense of humour and the capacity to laugh at oneself
good role-modelling and leading by example
offering hope
the capacity to admit mistakes
affirming others
courage to speak out and address an injustice
generosity in time and talent

Leadership Competencies - *refer to the application of abilities and skills that may be acquired or developed and enable a teacher to exercise leadership.*

The following leadership competencies were identified by respondents

knowledge and expertise
sharing knowledge and learning
an ability to work with change
an ability to look at new ways of doing things
constant communication with colleagues
conflict resolution
constant decision-making
gaining knowledge through further study
the ability to be think and articulate, reflect and critique
delegating
collaborative learning
mentoring
organisational skills
classroom management
time management

Leadership approaches - refers to an individual's way of operating to achieve goals

The following leadership approaches were identified by respondents

- a service approach to leadership
- a collegial approach to leadership
- a collaborative approach to leadership

Some key issues and concerns recorded the data in relation to focus questions 3 & 4
- the extent to which teachers have ultimate power to enact leadership within their classroom practice

- the perceived lack of confidence of teachers to enact leadership with their peers

- the perceived lack of power of young and inexperienced teachers to enact leadership

- the perception that not all teachers are interested in leadership roles

- the perception that some teachers may only develop a few leadership competencies

You are invited to offer a response to the following questions (discussion approx. 20 mins)

1. To what extent do the responses reflect your perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

2. In your opinion, are there significant aspects about leadership by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools that did not emerge in the data?

3. In your opinion, what are some significant issues that may be identified in relation to leadership teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

Focus Question 5: What are the opportunities for leadership development of teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

A first summary of the data in relation to focus question 5 reflected three main themes relating to opportunities for leadership development for teachers in Catholic schools

Theme 1: Leadership development in Catholic schools is perceived as being facilitated by school structures

- structures facilitate leadership development

- formal leadership roles facilitate leadership development

- school change and development enables leadership development

Theme 2: Leadership development in Catholic schools is enabled through both experience and formal professional development opportunities

- leadership development occurs through experience

- professional development opportunities enable leadership development

- mentoring and reflective practice are seen as valuable processes for leadership development

Theme 3: Leadership development in Catholic schools is hindered by limited opportunities for teachers

- leadership is perceived as belonging to those in formal positions of leadership
- the limited access to programs for leadership development
- the experience of leadership by teachers does not match the perceptions
- the need for forums in which teachers can discuss issues relating to their practice

You are invited to offer a response to the following questions (discussion approx. 10 mins)

1. To what extent do the responses reflect your perceptions and experiences of leadership by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

2. In your opinion, are there significant aspects about leadership by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools that did not emerge in the data?

3. In your opinion, what are some significant issues that may be identified in relation to leadership teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

Appendix Q: Sample of transcription of data

School A: Focus group 1 (>=11 yrs)

21 November 2002
Note:
RS denotes researcher
Res denotes comments of a respondent

RS: How would define the term, leadership in general? What does being a leader require? What are the qualities that are desirable?

Res: I think a leader has to assume responsibility. I think they also have to have the opportunity to lead.

RS: So therefore, if we are going to be a leader do we also have to have balance?

Res: I suppose, if you're also going to say that if you're going to be a leader and you have to have an opportunity to be a leader, there are two areas to that aren't there, because one, there has to be, you have to perceive that you can move into a position where you lead as well. Um! And, so therefore you have to have the opportunity in time and history, and also, you have to, as you said, have the people to go with you so they are the people to lead.

RS: You mentioned the word, position. Do leaders have to occupy a position?

Res: No, I don't think so.

RS: I'll try not to name you in this

Res: Often teachers, or in anything, people just seem to be better at doing things than you. Therefore, other people ask them about it and they sort of end up being, becoming a leader so even without even thinking about it often. So perhaps expertise in a particular area, experience or your comment before.. 'some leaders perhaps are born some leaders are made'. There's probably a bit of both involved here.

Res: So are you saying… that there's sort of, a defacto leadership?

Res: Probably. Yes. It sort of happens.

Res: A leader that comes out of an organisation, you know, you're given a position, a managing director or something, so you are part of the structure, you are a structural leader or there can be other leaders, who by as (name) says, their expertise, their vision, their charisma, or whatever that word happens to mean, um, become the person who holds the position that other people see as a leader.

Res: If you can lead by example.

Res: Yes. You can be a leader by example.

Res: Yes. You can be a coach of a football team also leader, you can be the captain who is, through the organisation or through a position, or you can be somebody else that the younger players look up to because of your example on the field, your ability to move around people, the vision that you espouse, what ever that may be.

Appendix R: Sample of data reduction as a discrete unit

1st Category - Summary of School A (= >10 yrs)

Focus question 1 - How would you define the term, leadership, in general?

- a leader has to assume responsibility
- you have to have the opportunity to lead
- you have to perceive that you can move into a position where you lead
- you have to have the opportunity in time and history
- you have to have the people to go with you
- I don't think that leaders have to occupy a position
- some people are better at doing things than you - they are asked about it and end up becoming a leader
- expertise in a particular area and experience
- a leader that comes out of an organisation is given a position – so you are part of the structure; you are a structural leader
- others will become leaders because of their expertise
- others will become leaders because of their vision; their charisma
- you can be a leader by example – your ability to move around people
- the vision that you espouse;
- in the formal position of leadership I wasn't free to lead in a lot of areas, in some ways your contact with staff as fairly formal, Now I've got a bit more collegial contact with staff- I'm freer to lead in some respects
- management and leadership can sit together
- leadership is not necessarily a position that you have to have as a formal one
- I see my role as being a leader in all sorts of facets in everyday work
- I carry a responsibility around all the time to lead by example –particularly role modelling to students
- people whom I consider to be leaders would have the trust of myself and others and would be recognised for having competency in a specific area and the integrity to be supportive of me

What are your perceptions and experiences of leadership in Catholic schools?

- I always thought Catholic leadership, Christian leadership was service – but it seems to have swung more towards the managerial side
- to genuinely serve people does require strength and energy and commitment
- most principals seem to be more in a structured managerial style of leadership as a result of bureaucracy
- I think the stated vision is there but I'm not sure to what extent the reality exists in many Catholic schools … it's just not Catholic schools – number one priority today is to 'balance the books'. It's a business. The Christian values can get left behind. This changes the vision
- Catholic schools today have a constant tension with following through the principles of Christianity
- a Christian school was one of focusing on the person, whether it be the student or the teacher – you didn't have the same battle with marketability; size of school and size of staff

Focus question 3 - What are your perceptions of leadership by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

Focus question 4 – What are your experiences of leadership by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

- it seems to be that teachers are leaders within the community
- some people would perceive teachers as leaders, others would perceive them to be employees
- even in a classroom there would be moments when a teacher would never exert leadership
- if leadership is power you have to question whether we have power within our own classrooms
- the image that has been created by our society is that teachers are not leaders and in the school certain groups would actually think that teachers are not leaders at all
- teachers are very dedicated to their students – at the classroom level and taking sport after school and all that; and to the education of their students
- teachers lead by caring for others
- by going about your duties in a responsible way you are showing a lot of leadership – being prepared to work with students; managing a classroom well
- students view you as a leader - you are guiding the learning process and managing it in a particular way – students see that as leadership of some sort
- students look to teachers to be there as a guide and of assistance – very much viewed by them as leadership – you're leading by example
- if you're mindful of the philosophy of a Catholic school , the Catholic ethos, that is beneficial as well to the whole teaching process – you're modelling it (community-building) in the way you behave and the way you relate to one another
- my sense of leadership within the school is that of being an enabler – a lot of teachers help the more inexperienced teacher
- teachers go about their business and take a less obvious leadership role
- all competent teachers can step out of their own personal space and into the corporate space to enable the good governance of the school – that is teachers demonstrating leadership
- leadership is showing concern and a desire to stand with a colleague;
- leadership is being competent – it's the modeling thing in some ways
- the collegiality of staff – people perceive a need and step forward to assist that' one of our strengths as a school
- teachers who are often without formal positions of leadership will just step in and do it before things get too bad
- empathy is very strong among students and staff – it's a shared value
- collegiality here is the best amongst staff (in comparison to other school experiences) – people see each other as individuals
- leaders have to have some idea of where they're going – at both managerial and classroom level
- women need to be creative with their educational innovations

- teachers who are promoted to managerial ranks often don't have much organisational management experience – sometimes leaders who come through the ranks are authoritarian
- parent expectations can place restraints on where a school moves with its curriculum – this may have nothing to do with ethos

Focus question 5 - What are opportunities for leadership development for teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

- external constraints can control leadership action for teachers e.g. legal liability
- opportunities can be restricted because of the nature of the structure
- in the classroom context most teachers will extend themselves as far as they can to maximise the learning - but once you've achieved that there are not many opportunities to develop as a leader beyond the classroom
- you get the occasional opportunities to fill a position to get a role
- there are not many opportunities in terms of formal leadership
- there are teachers who are not in formal roles who are well respected as a leader – they are expert in their subject area
- within a faculty you can do things – empower and enable others; be creative
- attending organised PD training sessions is a very effective way of empowering others
- some of us with more experience end up taking a mentoring role but its informal
- there isn't a formal mentoring structure in the school – I would see mentoring as a leadership initiative
- I think a lot of empowering, enabling takes place at the horizontal level
- there doesn't seem to be an adequate induction program to help teachers to emerge as leaders … to give new people a mentor and an understanding of the existing culture
- the experience of teacher leadership does not match the perceptions
- the definition of 'teacher' does not include leadership
- if people emerge and enable a need to be met, is that leadership?

Appendix S: Sample of data coding and draft process

School A (= >11yrs)

Draft 1:
Focus question 1 - How would you define the term, leadership, in general?

First draft of coded themes for focus question 1

Code:	Theme
PER	person
POS	position
SKILL	skill & expertise
RES	responsibility
OPP	opportunity
VIS	vision & direction
FOLL	followership
LEAD	leading & helping others
EXP	experience
NPER	not permanent
OTH	other

Focus question 1 - How would you define the term, leadership, in general?
- RESP a leader has to assume responsibility
- OPP you have to have the opportunity to lead
- POS you have to perceive that you can move into a position where you lead
- OPP you have to have the opportunity in time and history
- FOLL you have to have the people to go with you
- POS I don't think that leaders have to occupy a position
- SKILL some people are better at doing things than you - they are asked about it and end up becoming a leader
- SKILL expertise in a particular area and experience
- POS a leader that comes out of an organisation is given a position – so you are part of the structure, you are a structural leader
- SKILL others will become leaders because of their expertise,
- VIS others will become leaders because of their vision; their charisma;
- LEAD you can be a leader by example – your ability to move around people;
- VIS the vision that you espouse
- POS in the formal position of leadership I wasn't free to lead in a lot of areas, in some ways your contact with staff is fairly formal
- LEAD now I've got a bit more collegial contact with staff- I'm freer to lead in some respects
- POS management and leadership can sit together
- POS leadership is not necessarily a position that you have to have as a formal one
- EXP I see my role as being a leader in all sorts of facets in everyday work
- RESP I carry a responsibility around all the time to lead by example –particularly role modelling to students

- ▪ SKILL people whom I consider to be leaders would have the trust of myself and others and would be recognised for having competency in a specific area and the integrity to be supportive of me

Draft 2:
Focus question 1: How would you define the term, leadership, in general?

Leadership is perceived in terms of 'person'

nil

Leadership is perceived in terms of a position
- • you have to perceive that you can move into a position where you lead
- • I don't think that leaders have to occupy a position
- • a leader that comes out of an organisation is given a position – so you are part of the structure; you are a structural leader
- ▪ management and leadership can sit together
- • leadership is not necessarily a position that you have to have as a formal one
- • for those in formal positions of leadership – it is more about the managerial style today
- ▪ a person who holds a position – other people see that person as a leader
- ▪ in the formal position of leadership I wasn't free to lead inn a lot of areas, in some ways your contact with staff as fairly formal – now I've got a bit more collegial contact with staff- I'm freer to lead in some respects

- ▪ **Leadership is about skill and expertise**

- • some people are better at doing things than you - they are asked about it and end up becoming a leader
- • expertise in a particular area and experience
- • others will become leaders because of their expertise. Their vision; their charisma
- • people whom I consider to be leaders would have the trust of myself and others and would be recognised for having competency in a specific area and the integrity to be supportive of me

Leadership is about assuming responsibility
- • a leader has to assume responsibility
- ▪ I carry a responsibility around all the time to lead by example –particularly role modelling to students

Leadership is about opportunities

- ▪ you have to have the opportunity to lead
- ▪ you have to have the opportunity in time and history

Leadership is about vision and direction
- ▪ the vision that you espouse
- ▪ others will become leaders – because of their vision; their charisma

Leadership is about followership

- ▪ you have to have the people to go with you

Leadership is about leading and helping others

- ▪ now I've got a bit more collegial contact with staff- I'm freer to lead in some respects

Leadership is about experience

▪ I see my role as being a leader in all sorts of facets in everyday work

Leadership is not permanent - nil

Other - nil

Draft 1:
Focus question 2: What are your perceptions and experiences of leadership in Catholic schools?

First draft of coded themes for focus question 2

Code:	Theme
CULT	culture
COMM	community
SERV	service
STRU	school structures
OTH	other
ISSU	Issues/challenges

How do you perceive leadership in the educational context of a Catholic school?

▪ SERV/ISSU I always thought Catholic leadership, Christian leadership was service – but it seems to have swung more towards the managerial side
▪ SERV/ISSU to genuinely serve people does require strength and energy and commitment
▪ STRU most principals seem to be more in a structured managerial style of leadership as a result of bureaucracy
▪ ISSU I think the stated vision is there but I'm not sure to what extent the reality exists in many Catholic schools … it's just not Catholic schools – number one priority today is to 'balance the books'. It's a business. The Christian values can get left behind. This changes the vision
▪ ISSU Catholic schools today have a constant tension with following through the principles of Christianity
▪ ISSU a Christian school was one of focusing on the person, whether it be the student or the teacher – you didn't have the same battle with marketability; size of school and size of staff

Draft 2:

What are your perceptions and experiences of leadership in Catholic schools?

Leadership is influenced by the culture of the school
nil
Leadership is perceived in a Christian context of community
nil
Leadership is perceived in a Christian context of service
▪ I always thought Catholic leadership, Christian leadership was service – but it seems to have swung more towards the managerial side
▪ To genuinely serve people does require strength and energy and commitment
Leadership in the school structures
▪ nil

Issues / Challenges relating to the exercise of leadership in a Catholic school

- I always thought Catholic leadership, Christian leadership was service – but it seems to have swung more towards the managerial side
- to genuinely serve people does require strength and energy and commitment
- I think the stated vision is there but I'm not sure to what extent the reality exists in many Catholic schools … it's just not Catholic schools – number one priority today is to 'balance the books'. It's a business. The Christian values can get left behind. This changes the vision.
- Catholic schools today have a constant tension with following through the principles of Christianity
- a Christian school was one of focusing on the person, whether it be the student or the teacher – you didn't have the same battle with marketability; size of school and size of staff.

Draft 1:
Focus question 3: What are your perceptions of leadership by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

Focus question 4: What are your experiences of leadership by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

First draft of coding for focus questions 3 and 4

Code:	Theme
PERC	perception
RESP	responsibility
MOD	modelling
TEAC	nature of teaching
Leadership Attributes	
AUTH	authenticity
TRUS	trust
CARE	care / compassion
EMPA	empathy
RES	mutual respect
INFL	mutual influence
CRED	mutual influence
COMM	commitment
OTHER: (includes)	
HON	honesty
REL	building relationships
EMP	empowerment – enabler

Code:	Theme

Leadership competencies

TEAC   teaching & learning

COMM   effective communication

DEC   decision-making

EDUC   ability to work with change

CHAN   ability to work with change

LEAR   continuous learning

DIAL   professional dialogue

REFL   self-reflection

COLL   collaborative practice

MENT   mentoring

OTHER: (includes)

MAN   management

ORG   organisational skills

EXP   expertise

INT   interpersonal skills

KNOW   knowledge

Leadership approaches

AUEN   authentic approach

ETH   ethical – principled approach

SERVI   service approach

OTHER   (includes)

COLL   collegiality

EXAM   leading by example

ISSU   issues/ challenges

Draft 2:
Focus question 3: What are your perceptions of leadership by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

Focus question 4: What are your experiences of leadership by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

- PERC it seems to be that teachers are leaders within the community
- PERC some people would perceive teachers as leaders, others would perceive them to be employees
- TEAC even in a classroom there would be moments when a teacher would never exert leadership

- TEAC/ISSU if leadership is power you have to question whether we have power within our own classrooms
- PERC the image that has been created by our society is that teachers are not leaders and in the school certain groups would actually think that teachers are not leaders at all
- TEAC teachers are very dedicated to their students – at the classroom level and taking sport after school and all that; and to the education of their students
- CARE teachers lead by caring for others
- TEAC by going about your duties in a responsible way you are showing a lot of leadership – being prepared to work with students; managing a classroom well;
- TEAC students view you as a leader - you are guiding the learning process and managing it in a particular way – students see that as leadership of some sort
- OTHER/EMPO students look to teachers to be there as a guide and of assistance – very much viewed by them as leadership – you're leading by example
- AUTH If you're mindful of the philosophy of a Catholic school , the Catholic ethos, that is beneficial as well to the whole teaching process – you're modelling it (community-building) in the way you behave and the way you relate to one another
- OTHER / EMP my sense of leadership within the school is that of being an enabler – a lot of teachers help the more inexperienced teacher
- TEAC teachers go about their business and take a less obvious leadership role
- RESP all competent teachers can step out of their own personal space and into the corporate space to enable the good governance of the school – that is teachers demonstrating leadership
- CARE leadership is showing concern and a desire to stand with a colleague;
- TEAC leadership is being competent – it's the modeling thing in some ways
- OTHER / COLL the collegiality of staff – people perceive a need and step forward to assist that' one of our strengths as a school
- OTHER/MAN teachers who are often without formal positions of leadership will just step in and do it before things get too bad
- EMPA empathy is very strong among students and staff – it's a shared value
- OTHER/COLL collegiality here is the best amongst staff (in comparison to other school experiences) – people see each other as individuals
- OTHER/leaders have to have some idea of where they're going – at both managerial and classroom level
- ISSU women need to be creative with their educational innovations
- ISSU teachers who are promoted to managerial ranks often don't have much organisational management experience – sometimes leaders who come through the ranks are authoritarian
- ISSU parent expectations can place restraints on where a school moves with its curriculum – this may have nothing to do with ethos

Draft 2:

Teachers who are not in formal positions of leadership are perceived as leaders?
- it seems to be that teachers are leaders within the community
- some people would perceive teachers as leaders, others would perceive them to be employees (someone who is not a leader)
- the image that has been created by our society is that teachers are not leaders and in the school certain groups would actually think that teachers are not leaders at all

Leadership is a responsibility of all teachers
- all competent teachers can step out of their own personal space into the corporate space – to step in and take a role

Leadership is closely connected to the nature of teaching
- even in a classroom there would be moments when a teacher would never exert leadership
- if leadership is power you have to question whether we have power within our own classrooms
- teachers are very dedicated to their students – at the classroom level and taking sport after school

and all that; and to the education of their students
- by going about your duties in a responsible way you are showing a lot of leadership – being prepared to work with students; managing a classroom well;
- students view you as a leader - you are guiding the learning process and managing it in a particular way – students see that as leadership of some sort
- teachers go about their business and take a less obvious leadership role

Leadership Attributes identified
Authenticity
- if you're mindful of the philosophy of a Catholic school , the Catholic ethos, that is beneficial as well to the whole teaching process – you're modelling it (community-building) in the way you behave and the way you relate to one another

Care
- teachers lead by caring for others
- leadership is showing concern and a desire to stand with a colleague

Empathy and understanding
- empathy is very strong among students and staff – it's a shared value

Other - Empowerment
- my sense of leadership within the school is that of being an enabler – a lot of teachers help the more inexperienced teacher
- students look to teachers to be there as a guide and of assistance – very much viewed by them as leadership – you're leading by example

Leadership Competencies identified

Teaching & learning
- leadership is being competent – it's the modeling thing in some ways
Collegiality
- collegiality here is the best amongst staff (in comparison to other school experiences) – people see each other as individuals
- the collegiality of staff – people perceive a need and step forward to assist that' one of our strengths as a school
Management
- teachers who are often without formal positions of leadership will just step in and do it before things get too bad

Leadership approaches identified
None identified

Issues / Challenges relating to the exercise of leadership by teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in a Catholic school
- if leadership is power you have to question whether we have power within our own classrooms
- women need to be creative with their educational innovations
- teachers who are promoted to managerial ranks often don't have much organisational management experience – sometimes leaders who come through the ranks are authoritarian
- parent expectations can place restraints on where a school moves with its curriculum – this may have nothing to do with ethos

Draft 1
Focus question 5 - What are opportunities for leadership development for teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

Code
EXP: Experience
REFP: Reflective Practice
NET   Networking
MENT: Mentoring
FORM   Formal PD
SCST   School Structures
ISSU   Issues
OTH   Other

- ISSU external constraints can control leadership action for teachers e.g. legal liability
- ISSU opportunities can be restricted because of the nature of the structure
- ISSU in the classroom context most teachers will extend themselves as far as they can to maximise the learning - but once you've achieved that there are not many opportunities to develop as a leader beyond the classroom –
- SCST you get the occasional opportunities to fill a position to get a role
- SCST there are not many opportunities in terms of formal leadership
- OTH there are teachers who are not in formal roles who are well respected as a leader – they are expert in their subject area
- SCST within a faculty you can do things – empower and enable others; be creative
- FORM attending organised PD training sessions is a very effective way of empowering others
- MENT some of us with more experience end up taking a mentoring role but its informal
- MENT there isn't a formal mentoring structure in the school – I would see mentoring as a leadership initiative
- MENT I think a lot of empowering, enabling takes place at the horizontal level
- MENT/ ISSU there doesn't seem to be an adequate induction program to help teachers to emerge as leaders … to give new people a mentor and an understanding of the existing culture
- ISSU the experience of teacher leadership does not match the perceptions
- ISSU the definition of 'teacher' does not include leadership
- ISSU if people emerge and enable a need to be met, is that leadership?

Draft 2:
Focus question 5 - What are opportunities for leadership development for teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership in Catholic schools?

Mentoring
- there doesn't seem to be an adequate induction program to help teachers to emerge as leaders … to give new people a mentor and an understanding of the existing culture

The opportunity for leadership development through formal PD
- attending organised PD training sessions is a very effective way of empowering others

The opportunity for leadership development through school structures / formal leadership
- you get the occasional opportunities to fill a position to get a role
- within a faculty you can do things – empower and enable others; be creative

Issues / Challenges relating to the opportunity for leadership development for teachers who are not in a formal position of leadership

Factors that hinder the opportunity for leadership development of teachers?
- external constraints can control leadership action for teachers e.g. legal liability
- opportunities can be restricted because of the nature of the structure
- there doesn't seem to be an adequate induction program to help teachers to emerge as leaders … to give new people a mentor and an understanding of the existing culture
- the experience of teacher leadership does not match the perceptions
- the definition of 'teacher' does not include leadership
- if people emerge and enable a need to be met, is that leadership?

Limited opportunities for leadership development
- there are not many opportunities in terms of formal leadership
- in the classroom context most teachers will extend themselves as far as they can to maximise the learning - but once you've achieved that there are not many opportunities to develop as a leader beyond the classroom – you get the occasional opportunities to fill a position to get a role

Appendix T: Sample of a draft synthesis of themes arising from data

Synthesis of themes arising from data in relation to research question ne

The data that were presented in each category are synthesised into key understandings

Leadership is perceived in terms of the person leading
Key understandings:
▪ leadership is perceived in terms of people with personal motivation who have natural leadership qualities and who can take initiative
▪ leadership is perceived and exercised differently by each person.
▪ a person exercising leadership will discern his or her distinctive leadership qualities

Leadership is perceived in terms of the position held
Key understandings:
▪ leadership is equated with holding a position
▪ leadership is equated with hierarchical structure and being in charge of others
▪ effective leadership does not necessarily result from holding a position of leadership
▪ formal positions of leadership are equated with positions of management

Leadership is perceived in terms of being relational
Key understandings:
▪ leadership is about valuing and getting along with people
▪ leadership is best exercised by people with effective interpersonal skills
▪ leadership requires discernment, understanding and trust

Leadership is perceived in terms of empowerment
Key understandings:
▪ empowering leadership is about being aware of colleagues and knowing them well
▪ empowering leadership is about leading colleagues to work towards a common goal
▪ empowering leadership is about challenging, guiding and bringing others along

Leadership is perceived in terms of influence
Key understandings:
▪ leadership is about leading by example
▪ leadership is about modelling to others
▪ leadership is about bringing about change

Leadership is perceived in terms of having a vision and direction
Key understandings:
▪ leadership is about having a vision to espouse
▪ leadership is about having a direction and focus
▪ leadership is about having a passion for what is important
▪ leadership is about exercising altruistic motives

Leadership is perceived in terms of having competency
Key understandings:
▪ leaders emerge because of their competency and expertise
▪ leadership requires knowledge and organisational competency
▪ leadership requires effective communication and interpersonal skills
▪ a person exercising leadership is not expected to be multi-skilled

Leadership is perceived in terms of having experience and an opportunity to lead
Key understandings:
- leadership can be developed through firsthand experience
- leadership can be exercised in a range of ways in everyday work
- leadership is dependent upon an opportunity to lead in context
- leadership is dependent upon an opportunity to move into a position

Leadership is perceived to be transient
Key understandings:
- leadership is seen to be transient more than permanent
- a person exercising leadership may lead in one area but not in other areas
- a people exercising leadership may move in and out of leadership

Synthesis of themes arising from data in relation to research question two

The data that were presented in each category are synthesised under the five main themes

Leadership in Catholic schools is perceived and experienced in the context of mission and vision
Key understandings:
- a school's mission and ethos informs the school's life and student learning
- a leader works within the context of the school's mission and ethos
- Christian leadership requires a gospel vision and values

Leadership in Catholic schools is perceived and experienced in the context of community
Key understandings:
- a sense of community is an important factor in influencing leadership in Catholic schools
- leaders have a greater awareness of their role and responsibility in Catholic schools
- leaders have the capacity to empower members of the community to fulfil their Christian potential

Leadership in Catholic schools is perceived and experienced in the context of service
Key understandings:
- authentic leadership is about service to others
- genuine service requires strength, energy and commitment

Leadership in Catholic schools is perceived and experienced in relation to organisational factors
Key understandings:
- leadership can be consumed with addressing bureaucratic and managerial issues
- bureaucratic and managerial issues can detract from the pastoral care of the individual
- the pressure of market forces can have a negative impact on leadership

Leadership in Catholic schools is perceived and experienced as collaborative
Key understandings:
- leadership is shared
- leadership is perceived to be collaborative
- leadership is team-based

Synthesis of themes arising from data in relation to research questions three and four

The data that were presented in each category are synthesised into key understandings

Leadership by teachers in Catholic schools is perceived in the context of the nature and status of teaching
Key understandings:
- it is in the nature of teaching to exercise leadership
- teachers exercise leadership beyond a formal role
- teachers assume a responsibility in exercising leadership
- lack of professional identity can hinder the exercise of leadership by teachers
- lack of experience and confidence can hinder the exercise of leadership by teachers

Leadership by teachers in Catholic schools is perceived and experienced in the context of professional practice
Key understandings:
- teachers exercise leadership in the activities of everyday professional practice
- teachers exercise leadership in a range of extra-curricula activities
- teachers lead and influence each other in their professional practice
- a lack of autonomy in the classroom can hinder the exercise of leadership by teachers

Leadership by teachers in Catholic schools is perceived and experienced in terms of influence on students
Key understandings:
- teachers lead students in the learning process
- leadership by teachers requires the responsible use of authority in dealing with students

Leadership by teachers in Catholic schools is perceived and experienced in the context of school structure
Key understandings:
- structures within the school determine leadership
- formal positions of leadership tend to dominate the function of leadership in a school
- lack of permanency can hinder the exercise of leadership by teachers

Leadership attributes
Key understandings:
- the need for trust and acceptance of others
- care and concern for others
- empathy
- a sense of discernment
- being authentic
- mutual respect and understanding of each other
- a sense of humour and the capacity to laugh at oneself

Leadership Competencies
Key understandings:
- strong organisational competency
- the need for constant communication
- to be a leader in knowledge
- sharing knowledge
- an ability to work with change and to look at new ways of doing things
- decision-making

Leadership approaches

Key understandings:
- working collaboratively with colleagues to achieve goals
- working collaboratively in informal structures
- empowering others and being empowered by others
- being consultative
- service leadership requires genuineness and generosity

Synthesis of themes arising from data in relation to research question five

The data that were presented in each category are synthesised into key understandings

The opportunities for leadership development through formal professional development

Key understandings:
- formal professional development programs provide an opportunity for leadership development
- there is a perceived need for teachers to use their initiative to take professional development opportunities
- formal study is perceived to nurture leadership development

The opportunities for leadership development through experience in professional practice

Key understandings:
- leadership development comes with on-the-job experience
- leadership development occurs through an openness to new experiences and learning
- opportunities to develop leadership beyond the classroom are limited

The opportunities for leadership development for teachers through collaborative practice

Key understandings:
- collaborative team work develops leadership in teachers
- the capacity of teachers to inservice each other develops leadership in teachers
- teachers learn from other teachers through informal opportunities

The opportunities for leadership development for teachers through reflective practice

Key understandings:
- there is a perceived need for constant reflection for leadership development
- there is a perceived need for honest feedback for leadership development
- networking is perceived to facilitate leadership development

The opportunities for leadership development for teachers through mentoring

Key understandings:
- informal mentoring is perceived to be a powerful tool for encouraging teachers
- mentoring provides an opportunity to share insights and skills with other people
- there is a perceived need to have a formal mentoring program established in schools

The opportunities for leadership development for teachers through school structures

Key understandings:
- opportunities for leadership development for teachers are equated with holding a formal position of leadership
- school structures both facilitate and hinder leadership development in teachers