

**A Change of Heart:**  
**An investigation of the role of moral purpose**  
**within a model of leading for learning**

Submitted by

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

Faculty of Educational Leadership

June 2018



## Statement of Authorship and Sources

This thesis contains no material that has been extracted in whole or in part from a thesis that I have submitted towards the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the relevant Ethics/Safety Committees (where required).

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Signature:

Date: June 2018

## Statement of Appreciation

I would like to thank my principal supervisor, Associate Professor Charles Burford (Australian Catholic University), and my co-supervisor, Dr Elizabeth Labone (Australian Catholic University), for their perseverance and particularly for sharing their knowledge, wisdom, and friendship over the years.

To the friends and colleagues who have walked with me on every step of the doctoral journey, particularly Peggy Saab and Ian Barker, thank you for being teachers who make our world a better place. I also thank Associate Professor Michael Bezzina (formerly Australian Catholic University) for his guidance in the early stages of this research.

My gratitude extends to the teachers who participated in this case study and to Sydney Catholic Schools (formerly the Catholic Education Office Sydney) who approved the research, in particular Dr Dan White and Dr Mark Turkington for your constant support and encouragement.

I will always be indebted to my parents, Patricia and Terrence Sheedy, who made many sacrifices to allow me the privilege of a good education and instilled in me a love of lifelong learning. To my children, Louisa, Michael and Amelia, thank you for having faith in me. Finally, to my devoted husband whose patience, love and understanding are boundless, thank you for all you have done to support me over the life of this research.



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# Abstract

Researchers are advocating for a stronger focus on moral purpose and ethical leadership within school improvement processes (Burford & Bezzina, 2014; Duignan, 2006; Fullan, 2011a; Shapiro & Gross, 2013; Stefkovich & Begley, 2007); however, the relevant literature suggests this is not being operationalised for teachers in schools. At one Catholic primary school, teachers who participated in the Australian Catholic University's Leaders Transforming Learning and Learners (LTLL) project developed a model where explicit attention to moral purpose involved teachers focusing on key values and ethics, the moral dimensions of leadership and learning.

This thesis explores how explicit attention to moral purpose influenced teachers' perceptions and practice in teaching, leading and learning. Using case study methodology within the paradigm of interpretivism, the research involved collecting and analysing qualitative data from one-to-one interviews, a focus group interview and documentary evidence. The participants were fourteen classroom teachers and three school leaders who led the school improvement process.

This research found four areas where teachers focusing on moral purpose generated school improvement: a collaborative culture of practice, professional learning, professional relationships, and reflective practice. Teachers were sensitized to the moral dimensions of their work, displayed moral potency or courage and became agents of change. These findings suggest ways in which school leaders can challenge teachers' engagement, commitment and enactment of moral purpose as a driver for change in schools.

## **List of Abbreviations**

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| ACU    | Australian Catholic University                                    |
| AITSL  | Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership           |
| AP     | Assistant Principal   |
| CEO    | Catholic Education Office   |
| GERM   | Global Education Reform Movement                                  |
| IDEAS  | Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievement in Schools           |
| LTLL   | Leaders Transforming Learning and Learners                        |
| NAPLAN | National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy               |
| OECD   | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development            |
| Ofsted | Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills |
| PAL    | Planning for Authentic Learning                                   |
| PALM   | Planning for Authentic Learning Model                             |
| PISA   | Program for International Assessment                              |
| PLC    | Professional learning community                                   |
| REC    | Religious Education Coordinator                                   |
| TIMSS  | Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study             |

## Glossary of Terms

**Authenticity:** Requires educational leaders to be honest in all their relationships. ‘The ethic of authenticity challenges us to act in truth and integrity in all our interactions as humans, citizens, teachers and leaders’ (Burford & Bezzina, 2007, p. 5).

**Axiology:** The domain of administrative philosophy that deals with the study of value and ethics and is guided by the fundamental questions, ‘What is good? What is right?’ (Hodgkinson, 1996, p. 10).

**Collaboration:** Involves individuals choosing to value collective practices, values and beliefs over individual ones (Elmore, 2005).

**Educative leadership:** ‘The capacity to influence others in order to enhance student learning’ (Bezzina, 2012).

**Ethics:** Concerned with ‘human value problems’ or what is right and wrong (Hodgkinson, 1996, p. 107). Ethics are the method of enacting those concepts of the desirable into our principled lives. They are the ‘norms and virtues’ by which a community is bound to a moral way of living (Starratt, 2004, p. 6). Ethics are the method of enacting values into a moral way of living.

**Ethics sensitivity:** A component of moral literacy, ethics sensitivity is made up of three competencies: (a) the capacity to govern whether a situation involves ethical issues; (b) knowledge of the moral intensity of the ethical situation; and (c) the skill to identify the moral virtues or values underlying an ethical situation (Tuana, 2007).

**Indicator:** The gauge or marker of a value or ethic as described in the *Leaders Transforming Learning and Learners School Reflection Guide* (Burford & Bezzina, 2007).

**Integrity:** ‘an attribute of a person’s character. Being integrated as a person comprises the consistency of assumptions, beliefs, values, espoused ethics, actions and behaviors (morality), commitments, principles and forms of reasoning’ (W. C. Frick & Covalleskie, 2014, p. 390).

**Leaders Transforming Learning and Learners (LTLL):** A school renewal program developed by academics at Australian Catholic University (Burford & Bezzina, 2014).

**Moral agency:** When teachers act on their ethical responsibility to be an agent of change (Moberg, 2006; Weaver, 2006). Moral agency is carried out through the control of ‘negative self-sanctions’ that infringe on one’s moral principles and the confirmation of ‘positive self-sanctions’ for behaviour that is true to one’s moral principles (Bandura, 2006). ‘Moral thought

is translated into moral conduct through this self-reactive regulatory mechanism' (Bandura, 2006, p. 171).

**Moral efficacy:** A component of moral potency, moral efficacy is the personal belief in oneself that is motivated by the desire to act with persistence in the face of adversity (Bandura, 2006). Put simply, for teachers this is the belief in their ability to 'make a difference' in the lives of their students (Frost, 2006).

**Moral imagination:** A component of moral literacy, this is the 'ability to imaginatively discern various possibilities for acting in a given situation and to envision the potential help and harm that are likely to result from a given situation' (Tuana, 2007, p. 374).

**Moral literacy:** When teachers who are exposed to the moral imperative are sensitised to the need for providing authentic learning for their students (Begley & Stefkovich, 2007; Leonard & Begley, 2007; Tuana, 2007). It is the cognitive foundation for morality (Bandura, 2006, p. 7). 'Moral literacy involves three basic components: ethics sensitivity; ethical reasoning skills; and moral imagination' (Tuana, 2007, p. 364).

**Moral ownership:** A component of moral potency, moral ownership is concerned with teachers making responsible judgements and having a sense of ownership over their ethical conduct and over the ethical conduct of others in their sphere of influence (Hannah & Avolio, 2010).

**Moral potency:** When teachers have the understanding, sense of efficacy, commitment and courage to act ethically in the face of adversity (Hannah & Avolio, 2010) they invest their self-worth by sacrificing self-regard for certain values and principles (Bandura, 2006). Moral potency is teachers' understanding of their ownership of the moral aspects of schooling and a self-belief in their capacity to transform the learner despite unethical influences.

**Moral purpose:** Teachers' commitment to the transformed learner prompted by fundamental values and ethics.

**Moral reasoning:** A component of moral literacy, ethical reasoning skills also involve three capabilities: (a) an understanding of the different ethical frameworks – cosequentialist, duty-based, virtue ethics, care ethics; (b) the ability to identify and assess the legitimacy of facts relevant to the ethical situation, as well as assessing any implications from such facts; and (c) the ability to identify and assess the values that an individual or group holds to apply to the ethical issue under deliberation (Campbell, 2004; Tuana, 2007).

**Planning for Authentic Learning Model (PALM):** School improvement process developed by a core group at the case study school who participated in the LTLL project.



**Planning for Authentic Learning (PAL) sessions:** Reflection on, and planning for, teaching and learning focused on moral purpose.

**Presence:** Mindfulness of self and other. ‘The ethic of presence challenges us to relate to others, and to develop self awareness, in ways that are truly open and engaging’ (Burford & Bezzina, 2007, p. 5).

**Professional learning communities:** ‘An ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve’ (Dufour & Marzano, 2011, p. 22).

**Reflective practice:** Self-reflectiveness is a core feature of human agency (Bandura, 2001). Teachers are not only agents of change but self-examiners of their own teaching. ‘Through reflective self-consciousness, people evaluate their motivation, values and the meaning of their life pursuits’ (Bandura, 2001, p. 10).

**Relational trust:** Teacher attitudes towards other teachers, parents and students to improve student learning. Relational trust is the ‘connective tissue’ that binds people together in the advancement of moral purpose (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Elmore, 2005; MacBeath, 2007; Sergiovanni, 2007).

**Responsibility:** The goodness or higher moral standard educational leaders strive for who are proactive in supporting quality learning for all students. ‘The ethic of responsibility challenges us to act in ways that acknowledge our personal accountability for our actions, for shaping learning and for providing growth promoting environments for transforming relationships and learning’ (Burford & Bezzina, 2007, p. 6).

**Shared leadership:** Shared leadership implies an ethical climate and culture built on trust (Sergiovanni, 2007). ‘There is wide agreement that effective practice requires principals and other designated leaders to share the leadership responsibilities they have by virtue of their rank or position’ (Sergiovanni, 2007, p. 112).

**Stage meetings:** Professional dialogues amongst teachers working within two consecutive grades (stages) focused on the moral dimensions of their work.

**Transformational leadership:** ‘The ultimate test of moral leadership is its capacity to transcend the claims of the multiplicity of everyday wants and needs and expectations, to respond to the higher levels of moral development, and to relate leadership behavior—its roles, choices, style, commitments—to a set of reasoned, relatively explicit, conscious values’ (Burns, 1978, p. 46). ‘Transformational leadership is more concerned with *end-values*’ (Burns, 1978, p. 426).

**Transformational learning:** ‘... the development of learners’ sense of who they are and how they may participate more fully as responsible members of the social, cultural, and natural worlds they already inhabit’ (Starratt, 2011, p. xvi). Transformation focuses teachers on student’s academic pursuits and their wellbeing as successful members of society. ‘Catholic schools must go beyond the informational and even the formational to the transformational. As Jerry Starratt says, through transformative learning, the learner becomes a fuller, richer, deeper human being’ (Burford & Bezzina, 2007, p. 4)

**Values:** ‘Concepts of the desirable with motivating force’ (Hodgkinson, 1996, p. 110). These concepts have the ability to influence our behaviour. The motivating force may be religious, political, spiritual, ecological, legalistic, and so on, or a combination of these. Values are not nouns, rather, consigning value and valuing are things that people do (W. C. Frick, 2009). The study of value is concerned with what is good and bad (Hodgkinson, 1996, p. 107). Values are ‘the principles and fundamental convictions which act as general guides to behaviour, the standards by which particular actions are judged as good or desirable’ (Halstead & Taylor, 2000, p. 169).

**Virtue:** A good quality or goodness (Weaver, 2006).

**Virtue ethics:** Reinforce the moral good rather than focusing on rules or principles (Starratt, 2011).

# Chapter 1: Introduction and Research Context

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Educational leaders are constantly seeking new and innovative ways to improve learning in schools. There is much tension in society today surrounding the purpose of schooling and whether learning is predominantly an intellectual endeavour or moral work that promotes the full humanity of teachers and students for its fulfilment. The core work of schooling is learning and the teaching that nurtures this learning. Learning inherently adds value to students' lives and equips them for responsible citizenship as adults (Starratt, 2004, 2012).

The researcher is an Assistant Principal working in a large Catholic primary (elementary) school in the south-west area of Sydney, Australia. From 2005 to 2010 she was the Religious Education Coordinator and member of the school executive at a four-stream Catholic primary school located in the southern region of the Archdiocese of Sydney and was a member of the core team. Early in her career the researcher was entrusted with the task of implementing a new archdiocesan Religious Education curriculum in a school where teachers were reluctant to change their teaching practices to meet the needs of a changing world. Ten years later the researcher re-entered full-time teaching after having a family and was again faced with the task of introducing a new Religious Education curriculum to a staff whose median teaching career was approximately 20 years and who were in some cases resistant to change. Both of these experiences led her to ask questions about leading the transformation of learning and learners in schools. How do you enable teachers to see the 'big picture' and recognise that they are transforming lives in order to create a better world? How do you create an ethical climate in schools focused on the transformation of learners and learning? Upon completion of her Master of Arts in Theology the researcher became increasingly interested in how moral purpose is expressed in education and the consequences of a focus on moral purpose for teaching and learning.

At the end of 2007, the researcher was involved in a program of professional learning focused on moral purpose and developed a particular interest in the role of values and ethics in bringing about school improvement. At this time the researcher's school was invited to participate in the second phase of Leaders Transforming Learning and Learners (LTLL), a project devised by the Centre for Creative and Authentic Leadership from Australian Catholic University, which explored how moral purpose (values and ethics), authentic learning and educative leadership operated together to transform learners. The findings of LTLL research included that 'there are lessons to be learned about the approach to transforming the schooling

process through a focus on the moral purpose embedded in the teaching and learning process' (Starratt & Bezzina, 2012, p. 155).

The LTLL findings supported the position of other leading researchers that education is essentially a moral activity (Greenfield, 2004; Johnston & Buzzelli, 2002; Starratt, 2012) concerned with values and ethics. These writers call upon educators to cultivate students' understanding of the universal values of everyday life such as care, excellence, truth, respect, responsibility, equity and tolerance. Other writers have focused on the particular ethics of teaching as focusing teachers on promoting the 'good' of learning (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001), which was viewed by others as being about upholding what is in 'the best interests of the child' (W. C. Frick, 2013; Stefkovich & Begley, 2007) in order for students to develop an understanding of how to participate in their natural, cultural and social worlds. High-stakes testing, large-scale centralised curriculum reform, standards for teachers and public scrutiny of school performance in Australia have placed pressure on this 'good' of learning or the moral dimensions of education and ultimately student learning<sup>1</sup> beyond academic performance (Lopez, 2013; Wrigley, Lingard, & Thomson, 2012).

There has been a major shift towards outcomes-based education in recent years with the end goal of career preparation for students rather than educating students to participate in an ethical society. The pressure placed on teachers and school leaders by the extremes of the accountability system has led to unethical practices such as 'teaching to the test' (Lingard, 2013). Patterns of a narrowed, teacher-centred curriculum may result in learning that is not authentic, not related to the students' present or future world and therefore meaningless for students' civic life. In recent years government standards for teachers' work could have the effect of shifting the focus in education away from student learning to the technical skills of teachers (Webster, 2009). In our technological age parents and the community have access to information allowing them to compare schools based on standardised testing, regardless of the particular school context. The instant access to this information places enormous pressure on school leaders to improve student performance in standardised tests at the expense of preparing students to be successful members of society (Ball, 2010).

Educational literature and academic research over the past two decades points towards the primacy of educational leaders' explicit attention to ethics and values or moral purpose as a driver for educational change; however, governments and school systems in today's neoliberal society have prioritised outcomes-based education over values-laden education, impacting on the work of teachers as leaders of learning (Duignan, 2006, 2012; Fullan, 2011b, 2016; Starratt,

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<sup>1</sup> Student learning as understood by Starratt (2012).

2012). Moral purpose and its impact on teaching, leading and learning will be at the core of this research.

As educators of 21st century learners in a world of rapid technological, environmental and economic change, teachers as leaders in schools are challenged to change the way they teach in order for students to participate successfully in our society. Schools are moving away from a traditional approach to change driven by an educational purpose that was often in the best interests of the school or teacher, to the moral purpose of change, which focuses on the current and future needs of the student (Dufour & Marzano, 2011; Fullan, 2011a, 2016; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Starratt, 2011). Teachers are confronted with the task of being able to name and live the ethics and values they teach to enable students to become effective contributors to our society. No longer is the change process about ends justifying the means. For change to be effective it must have meaning for those bringing about the change and for those experiencing its effects. Successful school improvement process is dependent on teachers having the end goal of making a positive difference in the lives of the students they teach and society as a whole (Fullan, 2001). In recent history, educational reform or change has refocused from beginning with an emphasis on getting the practical process right, to making a lasting and meaningful difference (Andrews & Lewis, 2004; Bezzina & Burford, 2010; Crowther, 2011).

Moral purpose and leading involves teachers being able to identify and live out the values and ethics they teach in the pursuit of transformed learners. Moral educational leadership is not another style of practical leadership such as servant, instructional or distributive leadership, although it may include characteristics of these many and varied styles. Moral leadership can be explained in terms of a ‘new professionalism’ in education or teachers’ moral courage – their individual disposition and capacity to function as a moral example (Klaassen, 2012, p. 26).

According to Bezzina (2010) the moral good being pursued in the educative process is the transformation of learners into ‘fuller, richer, deeper’ human beings. Starratt (2004) warns that when learning is simply viewed as the regurgitation of knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to pass a test then it misses the mark. He sees authentic learning as being characterised by students being responsible for learning that teaches them about who they are, how they are to live a humanly fulfilling life and how they are expected to deal with the challenges they might face.

This chapter will describe the context of this research in terms of the ethical dimensions of educational change in a globalised world, Australia and the local context of the study. The research problem that has emanated from this context, the purpose and significance of the

research, and the subsequent research question will be presented. A brief summary of the research design will be provided and an overall outline of the thesis.

## **1.1 GLOBAL CONTEXT**

The unethical actions of leading Wall Street bankers that led to the collapse of international banking systems in 2008 focused the world's attention on more moral leadership in the business world (Moberg, 2006). Numerous instances of recent ethical humiliations, in business, government, sports, and religious and non-profit organisations, have placed the spotlight on ethics and leadership (Brown & Trevino, 2006). We are conscious that within many domains of our lives people are behaving unethically and acting without clear moral purpose; schools are situated within such a domain and there is a press for an ethical stance on leadership (Begley, 2006; Begley & Stefkovich, 2004; Begley, Zdenek, & Schochor, 2007; Bezzina, 2008a; Bezzina & Burford, 2010; Bezzina, Burford, & Duignan, 2007; Starratt, 2004, 2011). Teachers, as leaders of learning, are central to this ethical stance.

Moral purpose has been made explicit in the context of school systems internationally. In London's Docklands a community development strategy to transform schools resulted in a shared philosophy and commitment to set and reach targets, so all stakeholders had ownership of them and a culture of mutual trust and respect amongst teachers (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). Shared commitment to student learning characterised by moral purpose was clearly evident in this reform. The large-scale public school system in Ontario, Canada has overtly attended to moral purpose as the core of improvement. The indicators of moral purpose in the Ontario project included the development of shared goals and a vision that the central purpose of schools is ensuring that all students learn, as distinct from all students should be taught (Fullan, 2011a).

Conversely, there are also examples in America and the United Kingdom of government-imposed school reform that is without clear moral purpose. The federal accountability system enforced in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 in the United States was driven by sanctions and quotas rather than internal ideals. Educators in disadvantaged schools were coerced rather than being inspired to improve student learning. As the government became more concerned with equity for students they also became more punitive (Mintrop & Sunderman, 2009). The advance of market forces and privatisation of education in England led to the 1992 Education (Schools) Act, which described the responsibilities of the Chief Inspector of Schools as being to inform the Secretary of State about the standards of education in schools; manage and regulate the national inspection system by independent inspectors; and produce and publish

reports on schools, including an annual report. The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) was established as a result of this act. It seems that the language of 'attainment' replaced that of authentic learning and personal development, while the 'managerialist' discourse, defining improvement in economic terms such as 'efficiency' and 'productivity' replaced language focused on human relationships (Case, Case, & Catling, 2000).

## **1.2 NATIONAL CONTEXT**

In the past decade Australian research has emerged in the area of moral purpose as related to the experienced classroom teacher or the teacher as leader in individual schools (Crowther, Ferguson, & Hann, 2009). The Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievement in Schools (IDEAS) Project developed in Queensland in 1997 emphasised teacher-centred whole school renewal, 'strongly focussed on creating an aligned organisation driven by a professional community with a common purpose and clearly articulated vision' (Andrews & Lewis, 2004). Research from the implementation of IDEAS from 2004 to 2008 resulted in schools identifying 'improvements in teacher morale and teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness' of their teaching' (Crowther, 2011, p. 19). This heralded the changed role of teachers in school improvement processes. While previously teachers were not the leaders, rather the led, there is now a strong culture of collaboration and trust where teacher leadership is 'asset-based rather than deficit-driven' (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009, p. xii). The National Quality Schooling Framework, a web-based platform to support evidence-based school development implemented in 2001 in 46 primary and secondary schools nationally, is a model that specifically mentions moral purpose. The learning outcomes for teachers included the 'development of shared beliefs and understandings' of student learning, 'enhanced commitment' to improved student learning and 'change in teachers' beliefs about students' capacity to learn and how students learn' (Cuttance, 2003, pp. 3–4).

The educational change driven by moral purpose described above is challenged by the increased focus on the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) in the context of a national Australian Curriculum. NAPLAN involves compulsory government testing for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. This high-stakes testing suggests a pedagogy of the repetition of knowledge that is not directly related to the world in which students exist. The national curriculum sets expectations for what all young Australians should be taught, regardless of where they live in Australia or their background. This compulsory, outcomes-based learning places expectations on teachers to teach students how to repeat the knowledge

that has been accumulated by somebody else (Starratt, 2012). Likewise, the *My School* website is another Australian Government initiative which publicly ranks schools according to student performance. The process of naming schools in terms of the results from standardised testing creates a dissonance between public accountability for learning and the approach of communal responsibility for learning that will benefit generations to come (Connell, 2013).

Teachers are recognised as having the most significant influence on student achievement (Hattie, 2009). In recognition of the importance of teacher quality the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) developed Australian professional standards for teachers. The framework is considered a public statement of what constitutes teacher quality with the purpose of developing effective teaching that will improve the educational outcomes for students. The AITSL framework encompasses seven standards that describe the knowledge, practice and professional engagement essential in spanning teachers' careers. The justification for these standards is to provide a common platform and language for teachers, teacher educators, teacher organisations, professional associations and the public to discuss teaching (AITSL, 2011, p. 2). These standards of 'best practice' for teaching have the potential to become means only for teachers to reach career milestones without the end result of valuable education for students (Webster, 2009).

### **1.2.1 The Catholic school**

The gradual withdrawal of religious congregations from teaching in Catholic schools over past decades in Australia has meant that some schools have lost touch with their founders and therefore their charism or reason for being Catholic in the first place. There has been a major push in recent years in Catholic education at a system level to rediscover the charism of schools. Celebrations of events and people such as significant saints who are important to a particular religious order help build community. As Starratt (1993) explained, 'When a community celebrates in story, music and ritual some valued event or character, then that sharing in a life larger than the individual simultaneously enhances the individual and bonds him/her to the community' (p. 38). Likewise, celebrations of experiences that enable students to share in the lives of others in Australia, such as National Reconciliation Day, which focuses on reconciling with the indigenous people whose land we occupy, and in the global community, such as World Environment Day, connects these learners with the wider community. Building community around shared norms involves each school emphasising values that are consistent with their own school ethos or vision and mission statement. The challenge for leaders is to empower teachers to put these values into practice. Eade (2008) suggested values both reflect and structure beliefs, as well as directing and being demonstrated in actions; however, no society



or individual can, completely, live up to an explicitly stated set of values. The Catholic Church recognises that its schools are striving to bear witness to the kingdom of God on earth, striving for the common good; however, this will never be fully realised, as Hollenbach (2002) pointed out when discussing Christian ethics and St Augustine's theory: 'There is a common good that humans can share together in history, even though it falls short of the full good of the Reign of God' (p. 124).

In recent years values-based education has been highlighted in Australia. The Australian Government paid particular attention to values-based education in 2003 with the commissioning of the *Values Education Study* (Australian Government Department of Education, Science & Training, 2003). The nine *Values for Australian Schooling* identified in the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* (Australian Government Department of Education, Science & Training, 2005) are as follows: care and compassion; doing your best; fair go; freedom; honesty and trustworthiness; integrity; respect; responsibility; and understanding, tolerance and inclusion (p. 4). In Catholic schools these values are identified and operationalised as Gospel values such as love, faith, forgiveness, justice, service, hope, respect and truth. Hawkes (2008) argued that if the universal values mentioned above are the foundation of a school's whole curriculum, then 'this process may well be the foundation for cultural transformation, emphasizing that the future of humanity depends on the universal adoption of positive human values' (p. 29). It follows then that in committing to Gospel values teachers in a Catholic school are instrumental in developing a values-based school, that is, a school where the whole staff agrees upon and is committed to teaching Christian values and modelling them in their own lives. This is reflected in the relationship between principles and values according to Catholic social teaching: 'These values require, therefore, both the practice of the fundamental principles of social life and the personal exercise of virtue, hence of those moral attitudes that correspond to these very values' (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004, no. 197).

### 1.3 LOCAL CONTEXT

The Catholic Education Office (CEO) Sydney is a large non-government system of schools comprised of 147 primary and secondary schools with more than 7000 staff. Recommendations from an external review in 2004 resulted in the development of a school self-review instrument, *How Effective is our Catholic School?* (CEO Sydney, 2011). This school-based reflection was aimed at building teacher capacity and strengthening schools as professional learning communities (Turkington, 2010). In discussion focused on school-based

evaluation processes, MacBeath (2010) noted that ‘self-evaluating schools are likely to be more effective and to improve more rapidly than ones that rely on external sources to validate their quality (Stoll & Myers, 1997; Ouston & Davies, 1998; Rosenthal, 2001)’ (p. 713). An explicit component in this process of review was Vision and Mission, which is prominent in *Catholic Life and Religious Education* (CEO Sydney, 2011) and the focus was on commitment to moral purpose rather than compliance. This study draws on a model of leading for learning which attempts to place moral purpose at the centre of education.

The case study school is a Catholic systemic co-educational school located in the outer suburbs of Sydney that caters for students in Years K–6. At the time of this research, the school had an enrolment of 826 students from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities and employed 62 staff comprising 45 teachers and 17 non-teaching staff. An expansive natural environment complements the well-resourced contemporary facilities. There are significant numbers of second-generation students in the school. There is a high level of parent participation and a great sense of family. A religious order founded the case study school, which follows in the tradition of their charism. This charism as both an educational philosophy and spirituality is known as the *Preventive System*, focusing on reason, religion and loving-kindness to transform the learner (Godfrey D’Sa, 2006).

## **1.4 THE CONTEXT OF THIS STUDY**

Moral purpose is described by Canadian researcher Fullan (2011a) in terms of student learning as ‘raising the bar and closing the gap ... It is about a better society for individuals and the collective’ (p. ix). System reform, for Fullan, involves leaders at all levels of the education system being ‘engaged and deeply committed’ to this realisation of moral purpose (p. xi). In the English education system, moral purpose is defined by Hopkins (2013) in relation to students’ ‘personalized learning’ and teachers’ commitment to making sure ‘every student reaches their potential’ (p. 308). Likewise, moral purpose as understood by Bezzina (2012) is concerning teachers’ commitment to the transformation of the learner and is contextualised in the LTLL project. The aim of the LTLL project was to investigate how leadership and learning practices based on a shared moral purpose might enable the work of teachers and leaders in enhancing student learning (Bezzina, 2012).

### **1.4.1 Leaders Transforming Learning and Learners project**

In 2004 a group of educators from Australia visited the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom on a quest to explore the impact of leadership on learning in schools.

Regardless of the increasing government and societal interest in leadership process, student outcomes and standards, this group, influenced by the research of Jerry Starratt from Boston University, decided to focus on ‘... the nature of authentic learning and the leadership processes that seemed to best influence such learning’ (Burford & Bezzina, 2014, p. 405). A conceptual model of leadership for learning was developed based on a shared understanding of authentic learning. Bezzina, Starratt, and Burford (2009) would argue that the questions, ‘What are we teaching?’ and ‘Why are we teaching it?’ are rarely raised by educators in light of a national curriculum, standardised testing and various reform agendas. They claimed there has been a failure to expose the moral purpose or core values of education with the same rigour as the means by which moral purpose is being realised (Burford & Bezzina, 2014). Starratt (2007) described this discrepancy: ‘Educators miss this connection because they are accustomed to view the learning agenda of the school as an end in itself, rather than a means for the moral and intellectual “filling out” of learners as human beings’ (p. 167).

The LTLL initiative was developed specifically for Catholic schools and included elements of research, school improvement and professional learning. The LTLL conceptual framework was developed in response to a ‘growing consensus’ in the research literature focused on leadership and learning behaviours that have appeared to improve student learning (Burford & Bezzina, 2014). Core to this model was the importance of transformational leadership (Burns, 1978, 2004; Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016) and educative leadership (Hattie, 2009, 2015; Leithwood & Louis, 2012; Leithwood, Sun, & Pollock, 2017). The theory of transformational leadership as described by James MacGregor Burns (1978) involves going beyond the day-to-day expectations of leadership ‘to respond to the higher levels of moral development, and to relate leadership behavior—its roles, choices, style, commitments—to a set of reasoned, relatively explicit, conscious values’ (p. 46). Educative leadership is explained by Leithwood and Louis (2012) in relation to two core functions: ‘*providing direction and exercising influence*’ (p. 4) and in terms of ‘leadership for learning’ as the activity of ‘(a) diagnosing the status of potentially powerful learning conditions in the school and classroom, (b) selecting those learning conditions most likely to be constraining student learning in one’s school, and (c) improving the status of those learning conditions’ (Leithwood et al., 2017, p. 39). An expert group of school and system representatives, who formed the steering committee for the pilot LTLL project, identified particular values and ethics that represent a shared sense of moral purpose and were fundamental to the project. Teachers’ explicit attention to moral purpose involved them focusing on key values and ethics as adopted by the case study school, the moral dimensions of leadership and learning as shown in Figure 1.1 (.

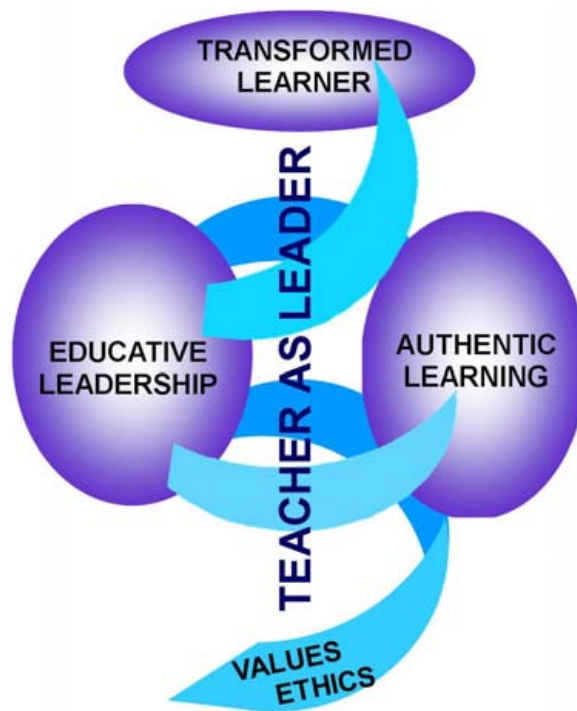


Figure 1.1. Leaders Transforming Learning and Learners conceptual framework (Bezzina, 2012, p. 4).

The elements of the conceptual framework – values, ethics, educative leadership, authentic learning, transformed learner and teacher as leader – will be described below in relation to the LTLL project. Schools involved in phases 2 and 3 of the LTLL project, including the case study school, were given ‘a detailed set of focuses for each element and indicators for each focus’ to utilise as a tool for reflection during the school improvement process (Bezzina, 2012, p. 5).

Values were seen as foundational in the conception of the framework since values shape behaviours (Ajzen, 2005). ‘If a school genuinely holds particular values, these should be visible in both the life and the rhetoric of the school’ (Burford & Bezzina, 2014, p. 409). Five values were suggested in the LTLL model as being basic to Catholic education. These values were Catholicity, justice, excellence, the common good, and transformation. An expert group of senior system representatives, school personnel and Australian Catholic University faculty involved in the study discerned these values. The creators of LTLL recognised that schools may identify with different values as fundamental to the life of their particular school. ‘The critical issue is not the *nature* of the values but that there is an explicit and owned value platform’ (Burford & Bezzina, 2014, p. 409).

Ethics are the method of enacting ‘concepts of the desirable’ or values (Hodgkinson, 1996, p. 105) into our principled lives. They are the ‘norms and virtues’ by which a community is bound to a ‘moral way of living’ (Starratt, 2004, p. 6). Three ethics were chosen in the

development of the LTLL model as espoused by Starratt (2004) and adopted for this research as they were in the lexicon of participants. These ethics are ‘authenticity (calling for integrity in interactions), presence (calling for relationships that are open and engaging), and responsibility (recognizing personal and corporate responsibility)’ (Burford & Bezzina, 2014, p. 410). These ethics were chosen in preference to the more commonly used educational ethics of justice, care, critique and the profession expounded by Shapiro and Stefkovich (2001) because the participants had been introduced to these constructs through the LTLL process.

The values and ethics particularly chosen to form the foundation of the LTLL conceptual framework led to a specific set of ends or characteristics for the learner. Grounded in Fink’s (2013) taxonomy, transformed learners were seen as enjoying both the subject and the process of learning and taking responsibility for learning as part of a lifelong journey. Fink’s approach sees transformed learners as understanding how to learn to become a self-directed learner and committed to their own growth, respectful of other learners and active citizens who want to make a difference in society. In the LTLL model moral purpose is given expression through educative leadership, authentic learning and the teacher as leader.

Educative leadership is understood in the context of the LTLL project as ‘the capacity to influence others to enhance student learning’ (Burford & Bezzina, 2014, p. 410). The indicators of educative leadership described in the LTLL reflection tool were derived from research centred on good leadership of learning (Leithwood & Louis, 2012; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Robinson & Timperley, 2007). These are ‘leadership through collegiality, leadership based on evidence, leadership for professional learning, leadership for sustainability, leadership building culture and community, leadership for change, leadership through networking, and leadership building capability’ (Burford & Bezzina, 2014, p. 410).

In the LTLL conceptual framework authentic learning is at the very core of schooling and the deepest expression of the moral purpose, which is encapsulated in the vision of transformed learners. The set of features which have been shown to impact positively on learning outcomes according to LTLL research (Cuttance, 2003; Hattie, 2009; Marzano et al., 2005) are ‘standards for learning, organizing for learning, pedagogy, student engagement, and assessment *for* and *as* learning’ (Burford & Bezzina, 2014, p. 411). Each of these features is described as potentially influencing the authenticity of learning when implemented with the adoption of ethics and core values and the educative leadership behaviours described previously.

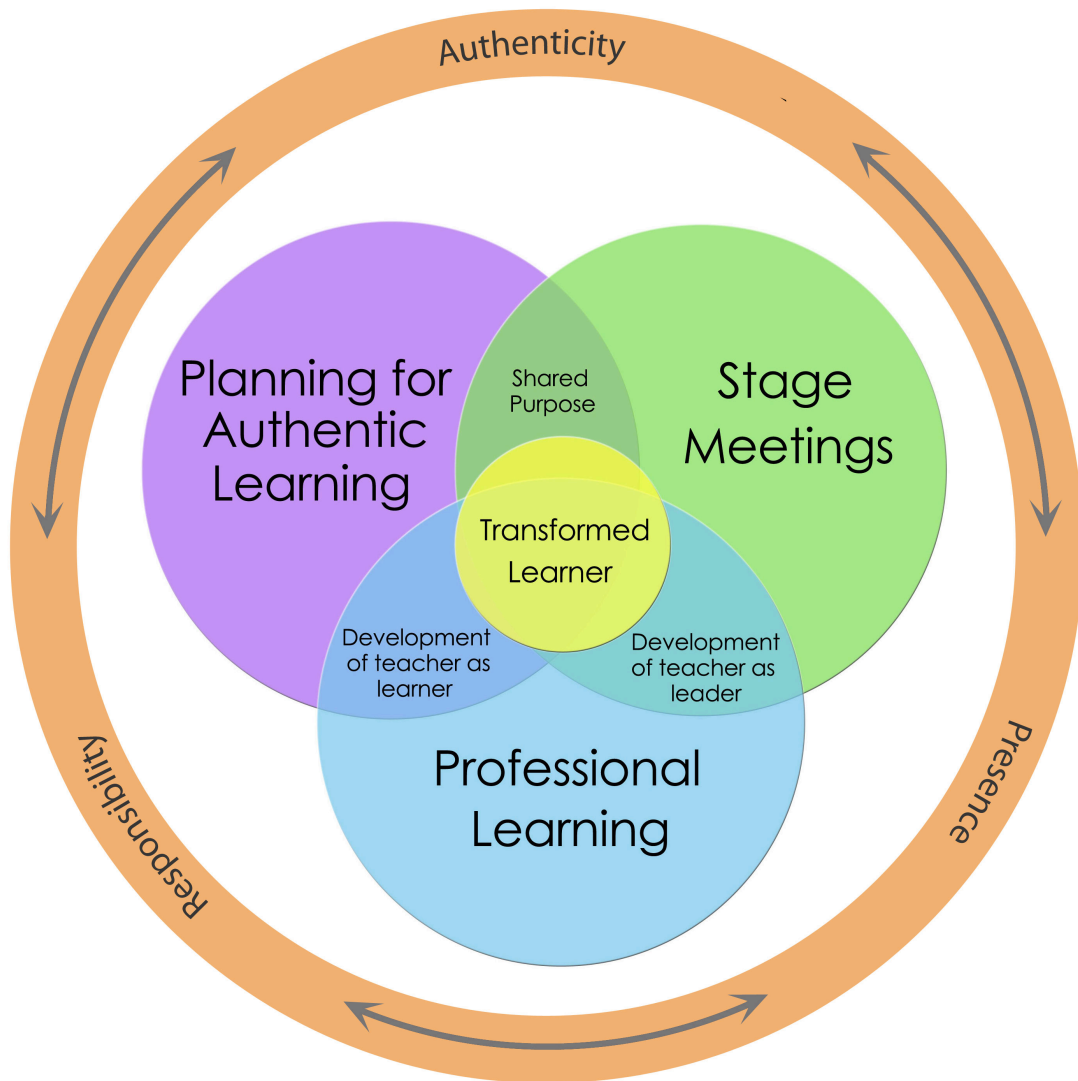
In the process of transforming the learning of students, teachers are confronted with the task of engaging in new, more authentic leadership. The LTLL project proposes that this

transformation will only happen if teachers live out their ethics and values as educative leaders in providing authentic learning for students:

Teachers as leaders have a clear and explicit understanding of the nature of the transformed learner. They are explicit about and committed to the values and ethics underpinning the development of transformed learners. They are skilled in the creation of authentic learning experiences and are contributors to the educative leadership of the school. (Burford & Bezzina, 2014, p. 411)

#### **1.4.2 A model for leading learning**

Using the conceptual framework of LTLL the case study school worked to develop its own approach to educational change driven by moral purpose. An explicit three-pronged approach to transforming learning and learners at the school was developed and named the Planning for Authentic Learning Model (PALM). The core team who attended LTLL professional learning sessions were initially concerned with implementing various projects; however, after much discussion and debate over a six-month period it became apparent that, rather than action in the form of projects, the school community needed shared understanding. The core team soon came to the realisation that they ‘couldn’t lie straight in bed anymore’ knowing the teachers in their school were not being responsible, present and authentic in their teaching and learning. Figure 1.2 represents the conceptual learning model developed to guide the implementation of the school improvement process where authentic learning was explicitly identified as the moral purpose being pursued in the school. The PALM approach included (a) staff professional learning, (b) Planning for Authentic Learning (PAL) sessions, and (c) Stage meetings. The central focus was always on the transformed learner and the shared dialogue and practices involving the ethics of authenticity, presence and responsibility (Starratt, 2004).



*Figure 1.2. Planning for Authentic Learning Model (PALM).*

The first component of the school improvement process began with reflection about the authentic learning that was taking place in the school. Teachers used the LTLL reflection tool to focus on key elements of the LTLL Framework particularly, Focus 3 and Focus 4 (see Appendix A) that highlight the ethics of authenticity, presence and responsibility; and the values of Catholicity, excellence, justice, transformation and the common good as they were evidenced in the school. The use of reflection was intended as a means for engaging teachers in the transformation of classroom practice and of teachers as practitioners (Christie, 2007). Staff members were encouraged to see the ‘big picture’ or whole school approach to change. The school adopted an Appreciative Inquiry approach to change using positive psychology techniques from the business world. Reflecting on what works well in contributing to authentic learning, teachers were working on the assumption that this school and the people working in it were a mystery to be embraced rather than a problem to be solved (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005).

The second and third components of this school model involved explicit attention to moral purpose (values and ethics). These values and ethics were discussed in the differentiated learning teams including PAL sessions and were led by a staff member who had some expertise in the curriculum area. These sessions were timetabled during the school day and structured so teachers were encouraged to reflect on what was working well in their teaching according to evidence supporting this and discern what could be changed. The professional learning that formed the school improvement process included breakfast meetings. Staff attended voluntarily and discussed a professional reading or video clip centred on change in education led by a volunteer staff member. School-based professional development days were compulsory for all staff, organised by the core group and led by the core team and a professor from the Australian Catholic University. These days were focused on developing shared understanding of the ethics and values expressed in commitment to the transformed learner. Staff were given time to dialogue about *what* they were teaching and learning and *why* they were teaching and learning it. This shared purpose and collegiality was intended to contribute to the promotion of a sense of teachers as leaders. The relationship between shared understanding and explicit attention to moral purpose may be illuminated in this research. Bezzina (2008b) advocated that shared leadership infers ‘... commonality of purpose, clarity of conceptualisation and a shared language – which feature strongly in the experience of shared moral purpose’ (p. 50).

## 1.5 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Education in our neoliberal age appears to be focused more on individualism than the common good with the ultimate purpose being to satisfy a global economic market rather than education as a moral pursuit. In recent years educational leaders in Canada, the United States and Australia have recognised the significant role moral purpose plays in school improvement focused on school leaders. There is very little research about how moral purpose influences teachers and in particular whether it makes a difference to their teaching, leading and learning.

The literature and research in the field points towards the importance of moral purpose as a driver of educational change, especially as it relates to educational leaders (Andrews & Lewis, 2004; Conway & Andrews, 2016; Burford & Bezzina, 2014; Duignan, 2006, 2012; Fullan, 2011a, 2011b; Fullan & Quinn, 2016; Starratt, 2011). However, the absence of evidence of how moral purpose impacts on teachers as leaders of learning is the problem that will be addressed in this research.



## **1.6 RESEARCH PURPOSE**

The purpose of this research is to investigate how explicit attention to moral purpose within a model of leading for learning influences teachers' perceptions and practice in teaching, leading and learning.

## **1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

Literature and research reveals the importance of moral purpose and leadership in terms of developing shared moral purpose, both when leading systems of schools (Fullan & Quinn, 2016) and as principals leading schools (Crowther, 2011). There is little research for school and system leaders about how teachers are impacted in terms of their teaching, leading and learning.

Therefore, this case study of teachers as leaders of learning is significant research as it adds to the body of knowledge for school leaders in understanding the gap between teachers' exposure to the moral imperative of education and teachers' action out of moral purpose to bring about change in schools.

## **1.8 RESEARCH QUESTION**

The research question is: *How has explicit attention to moral purpose within a model of leading for learning influenced teachers' perceptions and practice?* This question and subsequent areas of interest within it will be investigated in Chapter 2 and will lead to a series of sub-questions for the research design.

## **1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The epistemological lens of constructionism has been chosen for this research in order to obtain meaning from teachers' constructions of moral purpose as part of their lived experience. A theoretical perspective of interpretivism is adopted to gain 'empathetic' understanding of teachers' everyday lives (Neuman, 2007). The symbolic interactionist theoretical approach of this study lies within interpretivism and enables the researcher to discover teachers' perspectives on how they make meaning of their work. The case study methodology adopted for this research includes one-to-one interviews, a focus group interview and document analysis. The data will be reported using aspects of the *LTLL Reflection Guide* as an analytical lens.

## 1.10 OUTLINE OF THESIS

This chapter has introduced and placed in context the researcher's interest in the role of moral purpose within a model of leading for learning, presented the question driving the study, and clarified the purpose. Chapter 2 presents a review of the research literature that is relevant to the question guiding this study. There is an exploration of the literature focused on the shift away from a focus on moral purpose, moral purpose and education in general, teaching and leading for moral purpose, and school improvement focused on moral purpose. The function of this chapter is also to demonstrate the researcher's understanding of the literature. Chapter 3 deals with the methodological matters related to the study. It provides a theoretical rationale for the selection of research methods that best fit the purposes of the study. The qualitative research approach is explained and an overview of the data analysis process is provided. The results of the research, discussion and findings are then described in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, focused on moral purpose and teaching, moral purpose and leadership, and moral purpose and learning respectively. These chapters include tables that illustrate responses to the interview questions and provide information from the documentary data to further illustrate and contextualise the results. The chapters explore the findings of the study, with the literature discussed in Chapter 2 used to illustrate the findings. Chapter 4 discusses the role of authentic reflective practice in teaching, the nature of valuing relationships and shared understanding of good teaching and learning. Chapter 5 examines responsible leadership of learning and the nature of leaders' integrity when giving explicit attention to moral purpose. Chapter 6 focuses on professional learning as a moral issue including the nature of a professional learning community and teachers' understanding of authentic learning and owned sense of moral purpose. Finally, Chapter 7 presents the conclusions from this study and identifies future research directions. This chapter concludes with some recommendations for the education sector regarding the role of moral purpose within school improvement models focused on leadership for learning.

The appendices contain copies of documents used and generated in the conduct of the research and the data analysis. These examples serve to illustrate the progress of the study and the processes undertaken.

## Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

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The purpose of this research was to investigate the role of moral purpose within an improvement model of leading for learning specifically with a focus on how this influences teachers' perceptions and practice. This literature review will identify and examine the scholarly literature in the field, which will inform the study through the identification of questions and areas of interest.

In post-modern, liberal societies there appears to be a dissonance between current understandings of the moral purpose of education, and the practice in schools. Research reveals that high-stakes testing, national and international ranking of countries and/or schools on educational outcomes, and other government and school system initiatives towards accountability can be considered obstacles to ethical teaching (Lopez, 2013; MacBeath, 2007). Some research and literature focusing on school improvement processes places emphasis on moral purpose as a catalyst for educational leaders to influence change in schools (Andrews, 2008; Burford & Bezzina, 2014; Fullan, 2011a; Fullan & Quinn, 2016; Starratt, 2011). The problem identified in these studies is a lack of evidence of how issues related to the ethical and moral dimensions of education impact on the work of teachers, which was the focus of this research. The literature and research included in this review is concentrated on school improvement and moral purpose. Much of the available research focused on this matter relates to principals or head teachers rather than classroom teachers. The issues contained above and outlined in Chapter 1 seem to relate to the following themes and these will become the focus of the literature review and the generation of sub-questions for the study;

- the shift away from a focus on moral purpose,
- moral purpose and education,
- teaching and leading for moral purpose,
- school improvement and moral purpose.

The first theme relates to the issue of education being viewed as fundamentally a moral pursuit. However, the pressures of competition and individualism inherent in government high-stakes testing and teaching standards that are characteristic of today's neoliberal society may hinder teachers' commitment to authentic learning for their students. This movement away from a focus on moral purpose in educational change will be examined in the next section.

## **2.1 THE SHIFT AWAY FROM A FOCUS ON MORAL PURPOSE**

The purpose of this section of the literature review is to examine the broader educational context where there has been a move away from viewing the purpose of education as an intellectual and moral pursuit and towards education characterised by narrowly defined benchmarks for learning as part of a global education market (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012; Lingard, 2013; Sahlberg, 2011). Benchmarking is an industrial term and involves comparing school improvement or learning from other countries or systems of schools in terms of similar strategies (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012). The tensions between this driver for educational reform and processes driven by moral purpose are that countries are ranked against each other causing international angst and competitiveness driven by fear, with ideologies aligned to political agendas rather than student learning, and whole models for change are taken out of context without regard for the new context in which they are being made (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012). This suggests that within the present study some specific attention should be given to teachers' beliefs about learning and the influence of political and international educational contexts.

International measures of student achievement such as the OECD's PISA and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) place pressure on governments of various countries to produce the best workforce in order to be economically competitive in a globalised world. School systems, school administrators and ultimately classroom teachers as leaders of learning share this pressure (Lingard, 2010). Literature and research describes educational change in the context of a neoliberal environment typified by markets, performativity and managerialism (Apple, 2006; Ball, 2003, 2008, 2010; Davies & Bansel, 2007; Savage, Sellar, & Gorur, 2013; Stevenson & Wood, 2013) and how this environment influences the work of teachers (Ball, 2003; Connell, 2013). This particular insight of educational change is highly relevant to the present research in that in this study moral purpose is considered the driver of educational change.

### **2.1.1 The neoliberal environment**

Over the last few decades, educational organisations throughout the world have been influenced by the increase in neoliberal thought and practice in government and all areas of public and private life. Neoliberalism, broadly defined, refers to 'the agenda of economic and social transformation under the sign of the free market' (Connell, 2013, p. 100). In a neoliberal 'free market' the assumption is that education is a private good profiting the individual consumer above the community. In this context of school improvement students are viewed as customers in transactional relationships rather than 'citizens with rights and community connections' (Gross & Shapiro, 2016, p. 3). The assumptions associated with individualism in

the literature focused on neoliberalism have ramifications for the present study in terms of how teachers view education. In discussion focused on the role of democratic education in social transformation, Apple (2011) described neoliberalism as ‘possessive individualism in the context of a (supposedly) free market economy’ (p. 21). Simultaneously, education is used as a tool to differentiate people according to their economic value in the form of high-stakes testing, satisfying the needs of the market rather than the needs of a human community. Educational systems and schools are considered inefficient or ineffective if they do not achieve certain economic targets and teachers are ultimately held accountable (Rizvi & Lingard, 2009). In this neoliberal environment both government and society are primarily concerned with their economic relationships (Davies & Bansel, 2007) rather than authentic human relationships. Ethical and cultural concerns are still considered relevant to education within the neoliberal paradigm; however, Rizvi and Lingard (2009) would suggest they ‘must always be linked to the instrumental purposes of human capital development and economic self-maximization’ (p. 81). In contrast to neoliberalism, the concepts of human community and authentic human relationships should be examined in this study, as they were foundational to the moral purpose being sought within the school improvement process.

Performativity is the approach to state regulation, which Ball (2003) argued allows for governance in a neoliberal way where personal beliefs and commitment characteristic of moral purpose are replaced by calculation. He defines performativity as ‘a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgments, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change based on rewards and sanctions (both material and symbolic)’ (p. 216). These performances by individuals and/or organisations become gauges of productivity and are then representative of the individual or organisation. In Australia, the ranking of schools on the *My School* website according to results in NAPLAN against national averages and also the school’s performance measured against 60 socio-economically ‘like schools’ is an example (Lingard, 2010). The quality and worth of the individual, school and system of schools can be judged on these results. The effects of performativity in education according to Ball (2010) are that ‘the social and moral purposes of scholarship and teaching that have no immediate measurable performative value are put under threat .... [and] we make ourselves calculable rather than memorable’ (p. 126). Given that a culture of performativity exists in Australian education reform, where governments are primarily concerned with calculating teaching and learning, it was important in the present study that some evidence be sought as to the extent of an ethical culture in the case study school concerned with teaching and learning that is transformational. Research conducted by Keddie, Mills, and Pendergast (2011) explored teachers’ and school leaders’ thoughts and concerns associated with issues of

pedagogy, assessment, equity, school climate and school reform at Lemontyne College, a large government school situated in a master-planned community in Australia. Ball's (2003) theorising of performativity and fabrication was used to analyse this school's adoption of the status-oriented business dialogue of performance, competition and accountability. Keddie et al.'s (2011) case study research provides 'further insight into the ways in which performative and competitive schooling cultures continue to: undermine teacher professionalism, capabilities and autonomy; narrow pedagogy and curriculum and sideline important social and equity concerns' (p. 89). This research is significant as it describes the influence on teachers of a school culture driven by performance, competition and accountability. In contrast, it is important in this study to investigate the influence on teachers of a school improvement process and culture driven by moral purpose.

Marketisation and managerialism are processes reinforced by a strong commitment to high-stakes testing leading to increased control over teachers' work (Apple, 2011; Davies & Bansel, 2007; Stevenson & Wood, 2013). The neoliberal restructuring of schools in the English school system in the form of Ofsted inspections has led to managerialism, according to Stevenson and Wood (2013), characterised by 'narratives of failure, fragmentation and fear' (p. 53). Likewise, increased experiences of accountability and competition in the Australian and American education systems have led to standardisation of the curriculum and performance goals for teachers. These educational reforms are not necessarily in opposition to the moral purpose of education; however, the pressure they provide can lead to unethical actions by teachers such as teaching to the test or providing fictitious evidence when reporting on teacher proficiency according to the national Australian professional standards for teachers devised by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL, 2011). In discourse focused on teacher professional standards, accountability and ideology, Tuinamuana (2011) confirmed that 'it is possible that we too may become embedded in the managerial discourse and performativity expectations' (p. 79). Ball (2003) described these phenomena as fabrications, 'versions of an organization (or person) which does not exist – they are not “outside the truth” but neither do they render simply true or direct accounts – they are produced purposefully in order “to be accountable”' (p. 224). Teachers in Australian schools would not be immune to the notion of fabrications in education, therefore the literature suggests that teachers in the present study be questioned about honesty or the influence of the ethic of authenticity in regard to their work. Starratt (2004) drew on the work of Charles Taylor (1991) for a philosophical analysis of authenticity. Taylor (1991) suggested the moral ideal of the ethics of authenticity involves an individual way of being human that is not in imitation of anyone else or simply being 'true to myself' (p. 29). Likewise, the concepts of marketisation

and managerialism in relation to accountability and control over teachers' work are relevant to the present study and imply teachers be asked a question in regard to the ethic of responsibility in teaching. The neoliberal environment focused on markets, performativity and managerialism has consequences for teachers' teaching, leadership and learning and will be discussed in the next subsection.

### **2.1.2 Consequences for teachers**

The world can learn from educational change in Finland, according to Pasi Sahlberg (2011), who commentates on a phenomenon known as the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) characterised by standardised teaching and learning, narrowed focus on literacy and mathematics achievement, teaching to set targets, accountability based on tests, increased government and administrative control, pay based on teacher performance and borrowing other countries' reform models, rather than generating and owning one's own (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012). Two assumptions made by educational administrators implementing GERM are that 'external performance standards, describing what teachers should teach and what students should do and learn, leads to better learning for all' (Sahlberg, 2011, p. 179) and 'that competition between schools, teachers, and students is the most productive way to raise the quality of education' (p. 179). While student outcomes will not be examined in the present study, this literature is helpful for investigating teachers' perceptions of authentic learning inside a school improvement process within a system of schools influenced by GERM. Fullan (2011b) supports Sahlberg's arguments in his work concentrated on the wrong drivers for system reform, focusing on accountability instead of capacity building, individual quality as opposed to the quality of the group, technology instead of good pedagogy and fragmented strategies instead of systems thinking. Hargreaves and Shirley (2012) agree in their description of the *Global Third Way* of educational change and add two developments that directly place pressure on teachers, that is, 'the use of data to drive decisions and discussion about student learning and achievement; and the spread of digital technology into the everyday life of classrooms and schools' (p. 8). Research literature in relation to the right drivers for educational system reform has implications for the present study in terms of understanding the pressures placed on teachers within a school improvement process focused on moral purpose. Sergiovanni (2007) described this as the *lifeworld* and *systemsworld* operating in schools and borrowed these terms from Jiirgen Habermas (1987). 'The lifeworld provides the foundation for the development of social, intellectual, and other forms of human capital that contribute, in turn, to the development of cultural capital', while the systemsworld is 'a world of efficiency, outcomes and productivity' (Sergiovanni, 2007, p. 148). He would argue that both worlds have value; however, the lifeworld should be at the centre providing purpose to education and driving the

systemsworld rather than being dominated by it. Sergiovanni's theory focuses particular attention on the linkage between the values domain of the lifeworld and moral purpose as it is promoted in the school improvement process within this study.

Due to the wide recognition of international testing, reading, scientific and mathematical literacy can become the main indicators of students', schools', school systems' and particularly teachers' success or failure (Sahlberg, 2011). Scientific evidence can be seen to undermine opportunities for professional teacher judgement (Biesta, 2015). This literature was helpful in the present study because of the exploration of teacher professionalism in terms of what teachers value, as they can be placed in the predicament of whether to value good education or value what is being measured. The shift away from a focus on moral purpose in today's neoliberal society is exaggerated in Ball's (2010) literature concentrated on school reform and performativity, where teachers'

sense of moral purpose and of responsibility for their students and for 'truth' is distorted.

Practice can come to be experienced as inauthentic and alienating. Commitments are sacrificed for impression. Social structures and social relations are replaced by informational structures. (p. 126)

The implication for this study was that the moral purpose described here (reiterating Starratt's ethics of teaching), in terms of responsibility, authenticity and presence or social relations, was to be examined and therefore included in the research questions. Teachers in this environment are faced with learning the skills of making themselves 'look good' or appear successful according to their students' standardised test results rather than educating students to lead good lives. Karl Weick (1995) describes this as "sensemaking in organisations" or the process of creating reality as an ongoing accomplishment that takes form when people make retrospective sense of the situations in which they find themselves, shaping organisational structure and behaviour. Contrary to the focus on performativity was the introduction of 'personalised learning' into the English education system in 2004 incorporating a standard curriculum with individual student learning needs. 'Moral purpose was defined by the commitment to ensure that every student reaches their potential and through making satisfactory progress year-on-year' (Hopkins, 2013, p. 308). The research focused on personalised learning is relevant to the present study in terms of teachers' understanding of moral purpose as a commitment to the transformation of individual learners.

The Council of Australian Governments has been instrumental in the achievement of the national agenda, according to Lingard (2010), for 'test-focused schooling, with a consequent narrowing of curricula and pedagogies' (p. 131). Pedagogy is a term that has been traditionally understood as 'the art of teaching'; however, definitions focused on the 'science' or 'theory' of teaching have concentrated more on the 'means' or process of education rather than the 'ends',



as Webster (2009) pointed out: ‘pedagogy is being employed as a form of management for effectiveness rather than as an aspect of education’ (p. 42). Teachers are not being given professional autonomy, rather they are being held accountable to government standards for best practices in teaching (Connell, 2013). Teachers within Australian schools are operating within this regime of accountability, therefore this literature suggests that within the present study some specific attention should be given to checking whether their perceptions of professionalism are influenced by explicit attention to moral purpose within a model of leading for learning. The development of AITSL professional standards, intended to promote excellence in the profession of teaching and school leadership, have produced inevitable tension for teachers. They can be considered a means of ‘surveillance’ while at the same time being a storehouse of ‘practical know-how and occupational identity that have quite different bases’ (Connell, 2013, p. 108). The clear parallels between teachers’ motives for engaging with professional standards as a means to the end of advancing their teaching career or as a means to transform learners for a better society, and teachers’ motivation for engaging in moral purpose, suggested this literature was relevant to the present study.

To summarise this section, there is evidence that characteristics of today’s neoliberal society including performativity, marketisation and managerialism place pressure on teachers to focus on the means rather than the ends of education. The consequences for teachers are tension between accountability and responsibility, fabrications and authenticity, informational structures and social structures, scientific evidence of learning and professional teacher judgement. Teachers’ explicit attention to moral purpose within the school improvement process examined in the present study may address these tensions. The next section will attend to moral purpose as expressed in education and in particular the unique expression of moral purpose in the Catholic school. Various interpretations of how moral purpose is understood in educational research and literature will be discussed in this section in terms of the historical context and the interrelationship between moral purpose, values and ethics.

## **2.2 MORAL PURPOSE AND EDUCATION**

The issue of moral purpose and education has its roots in the historical context of the study of philosophy and it is important to be aware of how moral purpose has been understood throughout history. Christian Reus-Smit (1999), in his work *The Moral Purpose of the State*, referred to this as ‘the institutionalization of ethics’ (p. vi). Theorists in this field have embedded their work in the ancient Greek philosophers of Socrates and Plato, who tried to define the *nature* of ethics, while Aristotle could not separate ethics from *behaviour*, which he

coined ‘practical wisdom’ (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001). While Socrates believed that people ‘would act morally as a simple consequence of knowing how to act morally, or even of just knowing how to articulate convincing moral judgments’ (Kristjánsson, 2010, p. 398), some Aristotelian theorists have described a gap that exists between moral thought and action, and question how the motivation to act morally occurs. Although Socrates’, Plato’s and Aristotle’s writings centred on the Greek State over two thousand years ago, the works of these ancient philosophers have implications for education today and in recent times have been followed by researchers such as Piaget (1932) and Kohlberg (1981) in regard to moral judgement and Bandura (2002) in relation to moral agency. Within the present study Bandura’s agentic theory of human development will be used to examine moral purpose and teachers’ practice of teaching, leading and learning.

In the modern era John Dewey described education as primarily a moral pursuit (Dewey 1938). Dewey’s views regarding moral wisdom and the democratic principles in education are still relevant for educators, as noted by Willower (1994), Furman (2004), Allen and Brooks (2007) and Gross and Shapiro (2016). Willower refers to Dewey’s conception of reflective methods in educational administration that guide practice and behaviour; Furman focuses on the ethic of community and Dewey’s democratic principles in relation to moral leadership practices and social justice; Allen and Brooks reinforce Dewey’s ultimate purpose of education grounded in democratic principles for educational leadership; and Gross and Shapiro discuss Dewey’s understanding of ethics as ‘the science that deals with conduct’ (p. 10) in viewing ethical dilemmas through multiple paradigms. In terms of the present study it would be interesting to determine whether teachers share Dewey’s understanding of education as a moral pursuit. Lawrence Kohlberg, the moral theorist most commonly linked to the modern moral education movement, who focused mostly on the area of moral development amongst children, had a profound effect on education regarding ethics, particularly the ethic of justice (Kohlberg, 1981). He did not see justice as simply a ‘set of rules’ but rather as principles of ‘justice, equity and respect for liberty’ to help solve problems within a school (Shapiro & Gross, 2008, p. 23). It would be interesting to discover whether teachers view justice in schools as simply ‘rules to be obeyed’ or as Kohlberg sees it, as a guide to the rights of learners.

Currently there has been debate about moral purpose being viewed as ‘means’ and ‘ends’ in education. Educators often consider school learning as an end in itself rather than a moral as well as an intellectual pursuit (Starratt, 2007). Some educators take a different perspective. Starratt (2007) considers the challenge for educators is to connect the ‘learning agenda of the school to the central moral agenda of the learners during their 13 or more years in school, namely

the agenda of finding and choosing and fashioning themselves as individuals and as a human community' (p. 167). Consequently, moral purpose for teachers involves asking constantly not only '*What* are we teaching?' but also '*Why* are we teaching it?' The influence of teachers' focus on the bigger picture of education rather than simply the content being taught is of particular relevance to this study as it relates in some way to what they believe education is about.

Adding to the lack of clarity, moral purpose is not well defined in educational research and literature. Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) describe moral purpose in terms of teachers moving 'beyond the basics' and providing a curriculum that is 'varied, complex, challenging and deep' (p. 77). Sergiovanni (2007) describes moral purpose in terms of leadership practice, with leaders striving to build 'covenantal' school communities through shared ideas, principles and purposes (p. 2). These descriptions of moral purpose still seem to be more about the end product, action or result rather than the substance.

Alternatively, moral purpose as understood by Australian researchers Burford and Bezzina (2014) is '... the commitment to ends which express underlying values and ethics. In the particular context of schools, the commitment is ultimately to the transformation of the learner into a fuller, richer, deeper human being' (p. 406). This approach seems to be focusing on the nature of the human condition in a learning environment with a clear emphasis about what educators value about life. Dempster (2009), in research focused on leadership and learning, supports this description of moral purpose as the 'improvement of students' lives through learning' (p. 8). Much of the literature about school settings and reform sees moral purpose as characterised by shared goals and vision. This is best reflected in the research of Andrews and Lewis (2004) and Conway and Andrews (2016) related to the reform model IDEAS (Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in Schools). However, Burford and Bezzina (2014) challenged this perspective, claiming it is not enough for schools to have a comprehensive set of objectives and goals in common, 'there needs to be clarity and detail in the way the purpose is understood, and in particular about the values that underpin it' (p. 407). The nature of teachers' understanding of moral purpose has particular significance for this study, which concentrates on teachers' explicit attention to values and ethics within a school improvement process and the implications of this understanding on their practice. Knowledge and understanding which leads to action, including showing respect for the subject and process of learning, being a responsible lifelong learner and being actively engaged in society in order to make a difference, seems to be a part of the nature of moral purpose and this is described by Burford and Bezzina (2014) as the transformed learner.

This approach with explicit attention to values and ethics in the quest to transform learners is the moral purpose incorporated in this study. This approach to the interrelationship between moral purpose, values and ethics will be explored in the next subsection.

### **2.2.1 Moral purpose, ethics, values and their interrelationship**

The relationship between ethics and values theory in education is an area often debated amongst scholars, who approach it from various perspectives including philosophy, social justice, legalistic, and moral theory (Stefkovich & Begley, 2007). For the purposes of this research, ethics and values will be defined from a philosophical viewpoint and in particular the philosophy of organisational life, such as that found in schools, known as axiology (Hodgkinson, 1996). Axiology is the philosophical study of value and is guided by the fundamental questions, ‘What is good? What is right?’ (p. 10) for an organisation and its members. The study of value is concerned with what is *good* and *bad* while ethics is concerned with ‘human value problems’ or what is *right* and *wrong* (Hodgkinson, 1996, p. 107) in specific contexts.

Using this philosophical intent, researchers such as Starratt (2011) believe a school community should be clear and explicit about its agreed moral purpose as a ‘means’ of developing the good in learners or as Starratt (2011) put it, ‘intelligent human beings who know how the world works and are prepared to participate in the world as healers of its ills and stakeholders in its development’ (p. vii). The commitment to this ‘end’ is viewed as resting in specific ethics and values. The following two subsections focus specifically on this relationship of moral purpose with ethics and values as they relate to students and learning.

### **2.2.2 Moral purpose and ethics**

The interrelationship between moral purpose, values and ethics described by Starratt (2004) is that ethics are the method of enacting values into a moral way of living. Starratt’s work informed the school-based improvement process within this study and is therefore important to how teachers may perceive moral purpose and ethics. Furthermore, Starratt (2004) suggested that ethics ‘are norms and virtues by which members of a community bind themselves to a moral way of living because they seem both reasonable and necessary to promote a richly human and civil public life’ (p. 6). Strike (2006) is in agreement, describing the communal nature of ethics in literature focused on ethical leadership and principals asking the basic question: ‘How shall we live well together?’ (p. 20). For Strike (2006), this involves educators discerning what constitutes a good school community in terms of the essential aims of the community and the shared understandings that facilitate social collaboration. This

particular insight of Strike's was highly relevant to the present research in that in this study the school improvement process involved teachers discerning *shared* moral purpose.

Human beings are relational by nature. Jerry Starratt (2012), an educator and philosopher who has contributed a great deal to the field of ethical leadership in transforming schools, theorised that if ethics are the way we endorse values into a moral lifestyle, then:

Ethics is what our community and culture and society has come to recognize and name as what violates that relationality as well as honors that relationality. What choices and experiences grow us as fuller, more intentional human beings we call good and desirable; what choices and experiences frustrate or suppress us as fuller, more intentional human beings we call bad or evil, undesirable, dysfunctional, and unworthy of our humanity. (p. 20)

This particular insight of Starratt's was highly relevant to the present research in that in this study teachers' explicit attention to ethics may have led them to reflect on their own 'humanness' and/or the foundational qualities of being an ethical person. Starratt (2014) described three predispositions to becoming an ethical person; autonomy, connectedness and self-transcendence. Autonomy involves taking individual responsibility for one's actions within authentic relationships. Ethical actions for autonomous teachers would be motivated by courage to be oneself rather than fear or obligation. Connectedness concerns knowing that we belong to the cultural, social and natural world, which is 'inside us, defining us, gifting us, challenging us, nurturing us and offering us possibilities' (p. 48). Self-transcendence, according to Starratt, includes 'striving for and achieving a level of excellence' (p. 51) and 'moving beyond an exclusive concern for one's own survival and necessities of life to an effort to serve a larger common good' (p. 52). The implication of this work for the present study is that teachers' explicit attention to ethics within the school improvement process involved professional learning and a reflective exercise focused on Starratt's work, therefore it is important to examine how these views influenced teachers' perceptions and practice in teaching, leading and learning.

Many scholars (W. C. Frick, 2013; Shapiro & Gross, 2013; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016; Starratt, 1993, 2012) have proposed that particular ethics are vital in the educational enterprise; these are the ethics of justice, care, critique and the profession. In this study, teachers' understandings of these ethics in regard to their teaching, leadership and learning were investigated.

The ethic of justice influences policies and procedures in schools and deals with rights and laws as part of a liberal democratic tradition (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). There are two schools of thought regarding the ethic of justice according to Starratt (2012), one beginning in

the 17th century incorporating the work of Hobbs and Kant and in more recent history Rawls and Kohlberg; the other established in the work of philosophers Aristotle, Rousseau, Hegel and Dewey. In the first instance the individual is central and considered prior to society, therefore social relationships are seen as a social contract where the individual uses human reason to determine their commitment to social justice. The second school of thought places society as prior to the individual and advocates that ethics are learned through living in community. Starratt (2012) argued that both understandings of justice are needed in school settings: 'The ethic of justice demands that the claims of the institution serve both the common good of the community and the rights of the individual in the school' (p. 41). Given that the ethic of justice requires fairness and equity in the way a school runs on a daily basis and stresses a balance between the rights and responsibilities of both teachers and students (Starratt, 2014), it was important to the present study that some evidence be sought as to the influence justice had on teachers' work. According to Starratt (2014), the ethic of care complements the contractual, legalistic ethic of justice.

The ethic of care has its foundation in neither the individual nor the collective; it is founded on the premise that human beings are born from and into relation (Noddings, 2010). This ethic focuses on the demands of relationships in which the dignity and integrity of each person is privileged with a desire for that person to enjoy a fully human life (Starratt, 2014). Feminist scholars first described the ethic of care in research related to Kolberg's stage theory of moral development and the inadequate expression to the experience and concerns of women (Gilligan, 1977). This research proposed that women's moral development is more focused on care and responsibility to other human beings than men's. While for the purpose of the present study theories of moral development are not being addressed, it is of interest that 12 of the 14 interview participants were women and explicit attention to moral purpose within the school improvement process may lead to discussion focused on the ethics of care and responsibility. In contrast to the ethic of justice that emphasises individuality and human rights in conflict with the community's ownership of the individual, the ethic of care is concerned with 'the rationality that binds humans together, and the attendant responsibility of responding to the other's needs as another human person' (Starratt, 2012, p. 37). Teachers who pay particular attention to the ethic of care will prioritise students as human beings over their achievement (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). This suggests that within the present study some specific attention should be given to checking whether teachers recognised the ethic of care in their work. Noddings (1992) placed caring at the top of the school hierarchy of ethics. Starratt (2012) advocated that in an ethical climate of care teachers will view students as sacred rather than as a means to an end, that is, an end such as improving efficiency or productivity. He described the ethic of care

as characterised by open and trusting communication, therefore in the school context teachers would be mindful not to dominate, intimidate or control others. Noddings (2010) agreed and pointed to the very purpose of schooling: ‘Every lapse of caring in their own practice represents a potential failure in moral education’ (p. 394). Finnish educators Tirri and Husu (2002) identified the moral stances of care and responsibility as basic elements in teachers’ professional morality in research involving 26 early education and elementary (or primary) teachers. They asked the teachers to write about a real-life moral dilemma they had experienced in their work and to provide a just solution to it. The results showed that all teachers described dilemmas that involved human relationships and their various ways of identifying the best interest of a child: ‘teachers recognized children’s needs to be safe, to be led and to be loved as the primary challenges in their work’ (p. 77). The clear parallels between teachers being asked to describe their professional morality in the ‘best interests of the child’ and explicit attention to moral purpose in terms of the transformation of the learner suggested that these research findings were relevant to the present study.

Despite being people of hope, Starratt (2012) suggested that educators are not blind to the unethical actions of leaders in our world in political, religious, financial and sporting institutions and therefore are called to challenge the structural injustice that infiltrates society including the process of educating. The ethic of critique focuses on ‘structures and procedures and policies that affect whole groups of people unfairly on a regular basis’ (p. 49) and is based on ‘critical theory’ from the Frankfurt School of philosophy that examines social class and its inequalities (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016; Starratt, 2012). Educators’ explicit attention to the ethic of critique involves facing ‘the moral issues involved when schools disproportionately benefit some groups in society and fail others’ (Starratt, 2012, p. 50). In the school setting an example would be when a disproportionate amount of time and resources are allocated to students who are considered ‘gifted’ in preference to students with specific learning needs. Literature focused on the ethic of critique was helpful in the present study because of the exploration of responsibility in terms of teachers giving explicit attention to their social responsibility to individual students, the school, school system, education profession and most importantly to the society in which they belong and in which their students will make a difference in the future. Starratt (2012) would argue that the ethics of justice, care and critique complement and enrich each other:

The ethic of critique assumes a point of view about social justice and human rights and about the way communities ought to govern themselves; the ethic of justice assumes an ability to perceive injustice within established patterns of the social order; the ethic of

caring does not ignore the demands of community governance issues, but claims that caring is the ideal fulfillment of all social relationships. (p. 52)

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) agree with Starratt; however, they suggest that these ethics are not sufficient when educators are faced with ethical decisions in school settings and propose a fourth paradigm focused on those moral aspects particular to the profession of education which result from educational leaders becoming more aware of their personal and professional codes of ethics. Research conducted in Israel by Eyal, Berkovich, and Schwartz (2011), focused on 52 leaders in principal training programs, found educational leaders mostly implemented the ethic of critique when solving ethical dilemmas followed by the ethics of care and the profession. Although this research involved school principals it is relevant for this study, which seeks to probe how teachers as leaders of learning were influenced in their teaching, leading and learning by explicit attention to values and ethics.

The ethic of the profession is a dynamic, multidimensional paradigm that requires educational leaders to reflect on their professional code of ethics in light of their own personal code of ethics (built on individual values and experiences) and teacher standards as set out by the profession, then place students at the centre of any ethical decision-making process while also considering needs of the school community (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). As a central concept in the ethic of the profession, ‘the best interests of the student’ is not clarified in the educational literature. Stefkovich and Michael O’Brien (2004) attempted to define the ‘best interests of the student’ in regard to ethical decision-making in schools in correlation with U.S. court decisions. They found three essential components in deciding what is in the best interests of the student, that is, the three Rs – rights, responsibility and respect. The clear parallels between ‘best interests of the student’ and ‘transformed learner’ as a central concept in ethical decision-making suggested that these research findings were relevant to the present study. Research focused on 11 secondary principals’ perceptions regarding the phrase ‘the best interests of the student’ as a workable professional ethic for educational leadership (W. C. Frick, 2009) found that all principals valued rights, responsibility and respect in determining what is in the best interests of a student. However, findings confirmed the expression ‘serve the best interests of the student’ should not be used as the only ‘rule of thumb’ for ethical decision-making by educators (W. C. Frick, 2011). The ramification for this study was the need to examine not just how teachers’ understanding of the transformed learner influenced their work but also the influence of their participation in a school improvement process of leading for learning.

Gail Furman (2004) proposed the ethic of community to complement and extend other ethics in education that emphasises the communal over the individual as the ‘primary locus of



moral agency in schools' (p. 215). The community in this context is the setting in which the ethics of justice, care, critique and the profession are situated when educational leaders are making decisions in the constantly changing school environment. This notion of community is very different from the existence of covenantal community described by Sergiovanni (2007) characterised by 'shared ideas, principles, and purposes that provide a powerful source of authority for leadership practice' (p. 2) and Shapiro and Stefkovich (2001) who view community in connection to the individual. Furman (2004) argued that if social justice is the moral purpose being sought after in schools, democratic communal processes are needed to meet this end. As in other studies, Furman's work was focused on school leaders; however, the concept of an ethic of community is relevant for teachers and the present study because it is situated in a Catholic primary school where it is an expectation that the principles of social justice are taught. Furman's (2004) definition of community includes 'the moral responsibility to engage in communal processes as educators pursue the moral purposes of their work and address the ongoing challenges of daily life and work in schools' (p. 215). The clear parallels between shared moral purpose as described in the PALM process, and communal engagement specific to the ethic of community, justified attention to this ethic in the study. Furthermore, J. E. Frick and Frick (2010) described the ethic of connectedness in terms of community building and welfare as central to moral thought and action. Their research in a small Pennsylvania school district focused on school leaders nurturing and building the ethic of connectedness in school community and found 'that moral purpose and connectedness are linked in principle and practice' (p. 128). This research raised the implication of the influence of community and connectedness on teachers' teaching, leading and learning.

While Starratt (2012) saw the professional ethics of teaching as tied to the ethics of learning and focused on avoiding 'harm' in the practice of educating whilst advancing the good concerned with education, in discussion focused on the ethical practice of teaching and learning there are assumptions about how knowledge is cultivated. Starratt (2012) described knowledge as dependent, independent and interior. Dependent knowledge is objective content knowledge teachers organise from the national school curriculum that is judged by how students perform on tests such as NAPLAN with no subjective understanding; independent knowledge requires teachers as professionals to discern and make 'real' learning from the curriculum that is suited to their particular learners; and interior knowledge nurtures learners' understanding of their social, cultural and natural worlds. This view of knowledge is fundamentally connected to the moral quality of learning, since 'there is a dialogue between the knower and the known. The intelligibility of the known enhances the intelligibility of the knower' (p. 111). Fink (2013), in his taxonomy of significant learning, expressed this paradigm shift in the context of tertiary

education. He advocated the difference between content-centred and learning-centred approaches to teaching is that the first approach focuses on foundational knowledge as the only dimension of learning, while the latter focuses on learning how to learn, caring, the human dimension, integration and application of learning (p. 61). A case study by Marilyn Cochran-Smith et al. (2009), part of a larger longitudinal qualitative case study focused on pre-service and early career teachers' understanding and practice of 'Good and Just Teaching', also concentrated on ethical teaching and learning. Cochran-Smith et al. found that each of the 12 participants emphasised pupil learning when asked what it meant to teach for social justice. In terms of pupil learning teachers highlighted affirming and building on differences, teaching basic skills, promoting critical thinking, expanding pupils' worldviews and maintaining high expectations for all pupils. While mindful the participants in the present study have varying years of teaching experience, this research was helpful in the present study because of the exploration of pre-service and early career teachers' commitment to ethical teaching and learning as a result of explicit attention to teaching for social justice. It will be of interest to discover whether explicit attention to certain values and ethics in this study influence teachers' perceptions and practice in teaching and learning.

Starratt (2012) described the particular virtues that facilitate the ethical work of teaching as authenticity, presence and responsibility. Authenticity involves being true to yourself or being real, presence suggests a 'dialogical relationship between the learner and the material under study' (Starratt, 2012, p. 121) and responsibility requires teachers to be 'responsible to what one is teaching about in the worlds of nature, society, culture and history' (p. 121). The virtue of presence provides the link between authenticity and responsibility. There are three distinctions to presence in the pursuit of learning; affirming, enabling and critical presence. Affirming presence is accepting 'the person or the event as it is, in its ambiguity, its incompleteness, its particularity, its multidimensionality' (p. 122); enabling presence is being 'open to the possibilities of the person or event to contain or reveal something special, something of deep value and significance' (p. 122); and critical presence anticipates 'to find both negative and positive features in persons and events' (p. 122). Starratt (2011) distinguished virtue ethics from ethical rules or principles as they are about seeking moral good rather than avoiding moral evil (p. 89). The implication for the present study is that teachers engaged in professional learning focused on these virtue ethics as part of the school improvement process and this understanding may change their teaching and learning.

### 2.2.3 Moral purpose and values

Social psychologists and educational researchers have recognised the role values play in shaping behaviours (Ajzen, 2005); that is, values are not nouns, rather, consigning value and valuing are things that people do (W. C. Frick, 2009). From a philosophical point of view values can be described as ‘concepts of the desirable with motivating force’ (Hodgkinson, 1996, p. 110). The motivating force may be religious, political, spiritual, ecological, legalistic, or a combination of these. The nature of the motivating force aspect of adopting a particular value, according to Begley (2010), ‘shapes attitudes and potentially influences subsequent actions’ (p. 42). Hodgkinson (1996) suggested that there are four basic motivational bases or ‘grounds of value’. These are individual or personal preference; consensus or the will of the majority; analysis of the consequences; and acceptance of a principle. Within the present study Hodgkinson’s theory will be used to examine teachers’ motivation for values that influence their perceptions and practice in teaching, leading and learning. In a review of research focused on learning and teaching about values, Halstead and Taylor (2000) defined values as ‘the principles and fundamental convictions which act as general guides to behaviour, the standards by which particular actions are judged as good or desirable’ (p. 169). Much of the definitional work was completed by Milton Rokeach (1973), who conducted extensive research examining the nature of human values with students from Michigan State University. Rokeach saw values as an end state as either instrumental or terminal, that is, ‘beliefs concerning desirable *modes of conduct* or desirable *end-states of existence*’ (p. 7). The distinction between means and ends values has been reflected in the work of Begley and Johansson (2008) in their study of the influence of personal values on decision-making for educational administrators from Canada and Sweden; Notman (2014) in regard to the relationship between values-based leadership and ethical decision-making; and Branson (2014) in terms of how a structured self-reflection process demonstrates both the power and potential of personal values. This research informed the nature of how educational leaders viewed values. Various researchers in the field recognise it is vital for leaders ‘to understand how values reflect underlying human motivations and shape the subsequent attitudes, speech, and actions of personnel’ (Begley, 2006; Hodgkinson, 1978; Lipham & Hoeh, 1974; Rokeach, 1973). The issue of teachers’ understanding of values and how this influences their work is a focus of this study.

Seminal research conducted by Begley and Johansson (1998) regarding the significant influence of Canadian and Swedish educational administrators’ personal values on problem solving led to Begley’s (2006) findings that ‘the achievement of self-knowledge, capacity and sensitivity to others can be best achieved in professional settings through strategies of personal

reflective practice, and sustained dialogue on moral issues and the ethical dilemmas of educational practice' (p. 570). Begley's values syntax (2003) which built on Hodgkinson's (1996) model conceptually places values within the context of one person and was developed in order to identify the relationship between motivation and values and between values and moral administrative action (Begley, 2010). The implication of this research for the present study is that the relationship between explicit attention to values and change in teachers' perceptions and practice as leaders of learning was to be examined. The model poses the following areas of analysis; teachers' observable actions, attitudes, values held by the individual, understanding of these values, motives for action and the formation of self. Branson (2014) argued that 'the self' incorporates both self-esteem and self-concept, while Burford and Pettit (2015) described this as the interior context of moral discernment in their values taxonomy. The formation of self, or one's values position, is influenced by various groups, professional contexts, organisational contexts, culture and notions of the transcendental, according to research by Begley and Stefkovich (2004). What is of interest to this study is the importance of focusing on self-analysis from a values perspective to get to the heart of what is actually generating people's actions and motivations in teaching.

Much of the educational research and literature is concerned with values alignment or clarification as a driver for change in relation to the role of school leaders (Branson, 2007, 2014; Higham & Booth, 2016) rather than classroom teachers. Research involving seven Catholic primary school principals in Brisbane, Australia, set out to verify whether it is possible to develop authentic leadership practices by increasing the leaders' explicit knowledge of their personal values. Evidence from this research supports 'the use of deeply structured self-reflective processes as an effective means for providing a leader with the necessary self-knowledge that allows them to fully understand their inner Self and, thereby, to know how their values are influencing their behaviour' (Branson, 2007, p. 238). Fundamental to this research is the recognition that unrecognised values can impact on and control behaviour, while those values we recognise as 'right' can lead to ethical behaviour (Branson, 2014). Despite being centred on school leaders, Branson's work is of particular interest in this study as the classroom teachers involved were in effect leaders of learning within their classrooms and in collaboration with their peers. Their understanding of the recognised values and their impact on their behaviour could be crucial to this research.

Research and literature regarding school improvement processes identifies the need for leaders to develop an agreed set of core values in a school community (Andrews & Lewis, 2004; Bezzina & Burford, 2010; Crowther, 2011; Degenhardt & Duignan, 2010). These

researchers raised the implication of the influence of explicit attention to core values for teachers involved in school improvement processes. Degenhardt and Duignan (2010) described shared core values in terms of providing a yardstick for decision-making in times of crisis or change. At the centre of the IDEAS process for school improvement, a reform model created for Australian schools, is the development of a school-wide vision or approach to pedagogy that relies on the alignment of values and beliefs (Andrews & Lewis, 2004; Conway & Andrews, 2016; Crowther, 2011). This literature suggests that teachers' shared understanding of core values was fundamental in their commitment to the transformed learner or moral purpose and therefore should be a focus of this study.

Qualitative study of values-led school improvement involving 10 head teachers from the United Kingdom in the context of accountabilities from Ofsted and their local authority led to the recognition of the importance of inclusive, democratic and sustainable school improvement plans (Higham & Booth, 2016). A framework of explicit values, entitled *Index for Inclusion*, supported collaborative self-review, detailed planning and implementation of school improvement plans allowing head teachers to resist local pressures and still conform to Ofsted obligations. Although this research involved head teachers, it will be interesting to discern whether the classroom teachers' explicit attention to values in the present study influences autonomous school improvement plans in the context of national testing and a national curriculum.

Research from Finland, one of the highest performing countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) nations according to the Program for International Assessment (PISA) scores (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012; OECD, 2014), is focused specifically on teachers' findings resulting from values clarification processes (Husu & Tirri, 2007). The elementary teachers in Husu and Tirri's (2007) research were encouraged to recognise and articulate their own values and beliefs related to their professional morality and to their school community. This study found that teachers' school values reflected individual, social and relational values. Values clarification provided an opportunity for teachers to take the first step on the journey of getting to know pedagogical values – and ultimately, to live with them. This work of Husu and Tirri (2007) is highly relevant to the present study for two reasons. Firstly, most of the research focused on values and education involves school leaders and the participants in this study were primary (elementary) teachers like those at the case study school. Secondly, the collaborative process of reflecting on values and beliefs was akin to the explicit attention being given to moral purpose as part of the school improvement process within this study. This suggests that within the present study some

specific attention should be given to checking whether teachers' recognition and articulation of personal beliefs and core values influenced their perceptions and practice in teaching.

In summary, research reveals that moral purpose is made explicit through the articulation and ownership of values, which drive behaviour. While much of the research literature is focused on principals or head teachers' recognition, reflection and alignment of personal and school values in the pursuit of school improvement, some research from Finland described the importance of values clarification processes involving classroom teachers for school improvement. This is of particular relevance to the present study where teachers reflected on core values.

In relation to moral purpose and education, it has been argued that education is essentially a moral pursuit as shown throughout history from the Greek philosophers to the present day. However, in research focused on moral purpose as a driver for school improvement some educators focus more on the means of educating rather than the bigger picture of successful participation in humanity. Secondly, the interrelationship between ethics, values and moral purpose is explored since research has found that when educational leaders reflect on, name and own values this process is integral to being ethical and living morally. Teaching and Leading for Moral Purpose

There has been a focus over the past two decades on the importance of teacher leaders understanding the moral purpose for education. MacBeath (2006, 2007) described moral purpose in terms of an implicit and on occasion explicit ethic of the common good or subversive activity; Woods, Husbands, and Brown (2013) expressed moral purpose in regard to school vision or sense of identity; and Starratt (2004, 2011, 2012) explained moral purpose in terms of human resource development.

MacBeath (2007) focused on a three-year international research project, the Carpe Vitam – Leadership for Learning Project, conducted on eight sites in seven countries, which investigated the process by which schools made and grew the connections between leadership and learning and found that human agency embedded within moral purpose was the link. This research primarily involved school leaders; however, it suggests for the present study there is some potential in exploring the relationship between moral purpose and leadership for learning as it applies to teachers. Woods et al. (2013) described moral purpose in regard to the Tower Hamlets story, which involved the poorest performing school district in London transforming education for all within a ten-year period. Interview and documentary data suggested the transformation of schools in this London borough was due to ambitious leadership at all levels, very effective school improvement, high-quality teaching and learning, high levels of funding,

external integrated services, community development and partnerships, and a resilient approach to external government policies and pressure (p. 18).

Starratt (2012) proposed that the moral purpose of education is shaped by teachers' understandings of *why* we prepare students for life, the beliefs, values and ethics that transform the student into a valuable member of society. Thus, in the context of education, moral purpose refers to a commitment to values and ethics which will eventually transform the learner into a responsible member of the natural, cultural and social world (Starratt, 2014). The implication for the present study is that some specific attention should be given to investigating the ethics and core values which seem to be most critical to teachers involved in a school improvement process.

If teachers are focused on moral purpose, some research literature identifies three concepts in the progression from a sense of moral purpose to action (Bezzina & Tuana, 2014). These are (a) an awareness and understanding of the ethical dimensions of the work of education or *moral literacy* (Begley & Stefkovich, 2007; Brooks & Normore, 2010; Leonard & Begley, 2007; Tuana, 2007); (b) ownership of the ethical concepts involved in a situation, a sense of efficacy and the courage to act or *moral potency* (Hannah & Avolio, 2010; Hannah, Avolio, & May, 2011; Hannah, Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2011); and (c) ultimately taking ethical action or *moral agency* (Bandura, 2006; Biesta, Priestley, & Robinson, 2015; Campbell, 2004). This research literature raised the implication of the influence of moral literacy, moral potency and moral agency on teachers in this study, which is examining the connection between moral purpose and action.

Since this study is being conducted in the unique context of a Catholic primary school where religious and cultural principles may contribute to moral literacy, moral potency and moral agency, it would be of interest to understand whether there are specific values important to these teachers because of the Catholic nature of the school. Explicit attention to moral purpose and the Catholic primary school will be discussed in the next subsection.

## **2.2.4 Moral purpose and the Catholic school**

D'Orsa and D'Orsa (2010), in literature focused on mission theology for Catholic educators, suggested post-modern society can be characterised as suffering from value confusion, since 'from an early age post-moderns have been exposed to multiple and competing value systems' (p. 69). They advocated that this confusion is evident in all aspects of social life including and not limited to a Catholic primary school. The Congregation for Catholic Education, in the document *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997), reinforces this negative view of value structures in the context of education in modern

times: ‘First and foremost, we have a crisis of values which, in highly developed societies in particular, assumes the form, often exalted by the media, of subjectivism, moral relativism and nihilism’ (no. 1). According to Church documents, Catholic values with a particular relevance to education include the Catholic tradition, human person, justice, transformation and the common good (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004). In the present study, it will be interesting to determine whether teachers recognise these Catholic values when giving explicit attention to moral purpose in their work.

The Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Schools Board (CEO Sydney, 2011) recognises that the work of teachers in Catholic schools is based on the person of Jesus Christ and enlivened by the Gospel, and therefore shares in the evangelising and educational mission of the Church and wider society. The specific nature of the Catholic school is described in the *Archbishop’s Charter for Catholic Schools* (CEO Sydney, 2015) published by the Archdiocese of Sydney as a response to *Catholic Schools at a Crossroads: Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of NSW and the ACT* (Bishops of NSW and the ACT, 2007), which recognised the changing educational and cultural context of Catholic schools, including the rising proportion of nominally Catholic and other-than-Catholic enrolments, and the under-participation of students from poorer families. The Archbishop’s Charter describes 11 ways that Catholic schools can live out their mission and is considered a means ‘through which parents, teachers and support staff can be informed about the core principles of Catholic education, and inducted into the school’s Catholic culture’ (CEO Sydney, 2015). Mission theologians such as D’Orsa and D’Orsa (2010), Rymarz (2010) and Convey (2012) acknowledge there is a gap between this proposed mission of the Church and how teachers construct their Catholic identity within a contemporary Catholic community. This literature focused on the values inherent in Catholicity is of interest to the present study in terms of teachers’ understanding of the nature of the Catholic school.

Grace’s (2010) research centred on the emergence of spiritual capital draws on the experiences of 60 Catholic secondary school leaders from inner city and disadvantaged communities in the United Kingdom. This research found vocational commitment amongst these head teachers, since

the majority of these head teachers, in their demanding work in challenging urban schools, were clearly drawing upon a spiritual and religious resource that empowered them and gave them a sustained sense of mission, purpose and hope in their work.  
(p. 118)



The clear parallels between spiritual capital and moral purpose suggest that these findings are relevant to the present study. It will be interesting to explore whether teachers' motivation to act morally is drawn primarily from a religious source or an understanding of values and ethics.

Begley and Stefkovich (2007) proposed that moral purpose is expressed in education when teachers ask the question, 'Why do we teach this curriculum in this way?' The process for answering this question involves gaining skills in moral literacy, which will be defined in the next section.

### **2.2.5 Moral literacy**

Moral literacy is considered significant for educational leaders according to various researchers. Tuana (2007) considers moral literacy a skill that must be created and enhanced by students with the support of teachers who are knowledgeable in moral matters. Begley and Stefkovich (2007) suggested moral literacy frameworks are essential when teaching about values and valuation processes at a tertiary level. Likewise, Leonard (2007) described moral literacy in terms of teacher and leader dispositions as part of tertiary programs. Brooks and Normore (2010) categorised moral literacy as a knowledge domain in the integration of local and global forces to enhance leadership pedagogy and practice. In the present study teachers are considered educational leaders within the school improvement process, therefore moral literacy may apply to teachers. According to Tuana (2007), 'moral literacy involves three basic components: ethics sensitivity, ethical reasoning skills, and moral imagination' (p. 364) and these components are interrelated, equally supporting one another.

Ethics sensitivity as understood in Tuana's (2007) work is made up of three competencies; (a) the capacity to govern whether a situation involves ethical issues; (b) knowledge of the moral intensity of the ethical situation; and (c) the skill to identify the moral virtues or values underlying an ethical situation. Likewise, research dating from the 1980s by Rest (1983) and consequently Bebeau, Rest, & Narvaez (1999) concentrated on the basic component processes upon which morality is built, described moral sensitivity as the first step in moral education because it is essential to be able to interpret the situation and become aware that a moral issue is involved. The particular insights of Tuana (2007) and Bebeau et al. (1999) are highly relevant to the present research in that in this study teachers' explicit attention to moral purpose in the school context may highlight their ability to discern whether a situation involves an ethical issue. Conversely, teachers can be desensitised or 'blind' to the ethical significance of their actions (Bezzina & Tuana, 2014; Moberg, 2006). Through the lens of structured self-reflection, Branson (2014) describes ethical insensitivity as self-deception, where 'our true beliefs can be held unconsciously

while we act on a consciously held false belief' (p. 272). The ramification of Branson's research for this study was the need to examine moral purpose not just in terms of teachers' values and ethics but also their personal beliefs. Australian research focusing on school improvement processes, such as the LTLL project, which intended to explore how leadership and learning practices based on shared moral purpose may enable the work of teachers (Bezzina & Burford, 2010), and IDEAS, which aims to develop school-wide pedagogy and vision, culture building and organisation-wide learning through parallel leadership (Lewis & Andrews, 2009), reinforce that the process of explicitly naming and identifying a school community's shared values or vision is central to the engagement of teachers in moral literacy. The implication for the present study was that the school improvement process was developed as a result of direct involvement in the LTLL project, therefore teachers' experience of naming and identifying shared values will be of interest.

Tuana's (2007) theory of ethical reasoning skills involves three capabilities; (a) an understanding of the different ethical frameworks; (b) the ability to identify and assess the legitimacy of facts relevant to the ethical situation, as well as assessing any implications from such facts; and (c) the ability to identify and assess the values that an individual or group holds to apply to the ethical issue under deliberation. Ethical frameworks that Tuana (2007) believed should be considered in developing ethical reasoning skills include consequentialist, duty-based thinking, virtue ethics and more recently care ethics (Noddings, 2012) as discussed previously. Although Tuana's (2007) research is focused on teaching students the skills of ethical reasoning as an element of moral literacy, the motive to produce productive and responsible citizens may resonate with teachers' explicit attention to moral purpose in the present study.

Tuana also emphasised the importance of moral imagination, which she referred to as the 'ability to imaginatively discern various possibilities for acting in a given situation and to envision the potential help and harm that are likely to result from a given situation' (Tuana, 2007, p. 374). For the purposes of this study, teachers may recognise an ethical issue and be able to apply ethical reasoning skills; however, they may not have any personal commitment to acting ethically. Bandura's (2001) agentic perspective of social cognitive theory describes moral imagination as the 'exercise of forethought' since teachers 'motivate themselves and guide their actions in anticipation of future events' (p. 7). Bandura's theory has ramifications for the present study in so much as a forethoughtful perspective may provide direction, meaning and purpose for teachers or an affective commitment to being ethical.

Stefkovich and Begley (2007) referred to research conducted by Begley and Johansson (1998) in literature focused on ethical educational leadership and defining the best interests of

the student. This research found that the significance of ethics to a given administrative situation seems to be prompted in the minds of school leaders by particular conditions. These conditions include where an ethical position is socially appropriate; where consensus is perceived as difficult or impossible to reach; or when high-stakes urgency necessitates decisive action. According to Stefkovich and Begley (2007) there is a press for leaders to discriminate between using ethics and being ethical: 'We need the capacity to discriminate actual intentions *within ourselves* and among others. This is not moral relativism, nor is it value absolutism; it is critical thinking and moral literacy' (p. 211). Teachers as leaders of learning in schools would be morally literate when they understand how to act in a principled way and articulate an understanding of their motivations for acting that way. Moral literacy has been described as the cognitive foundation for morality (Bandura, 2006).

Moral knowledge and the principles about how teachers should behave create the foundation for moral purpose and have been referred to as moral potency (Hannah & Avolio, 2010). Moral potency and its component elements will be considered in the following subsection as another step in teaching and leading for moral purpose.

### **2.2.6 Moral potency**

Moral potency has not been specifically researched in the area of education; however, research focused on building capacity for character-based leadership in the military (Hannah & Avolio, 2010) defined moral potency as,

a psychological state marked by an experienced sense of ownership over the moral aspects of one's environment, reinforced by efficacy beliefs in the capabilities to act to achieve moral purpose, and the courage to perform ethically in the face of adversity and persevere through challenges. (p. 291)

Research from the Netherlands (Klaassen, 2012) involving 92 teachers from trade schools identified three components of the moral courage of teachers,

(1) ... the courage to keep to certain professional and moral standards and to promote the development of moral norms and values in one's students; (2) ... the perseverance to adhere to the goals that are oriented towards the well-being of the pupil who is in need of the daily help and strength of the teacher to reach the cognitive, social and moral goals in the school; and (3) ... the will and competence to function as a moral example. (p. 26)

This research, focused on moral courage and professionalism in education, suggests that teachers' individual disposition and capacity or competence may be influenced by explicit attention to moral purpose.

In the educational context, moral potency may be evidenced by teacher leaders' understanding of their ownership of the moral aspects of schooling and a self-belief in their capacity to transform the learner despite unethical influences. Research assessing the dimensions of moral potency (Hannah & Avolio, 2010; Hannah, Avolio, & May, 2011; Hannah, Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2011) seeks to partially address the gap between knowing and doing what is right. There has been much research conducted in the field regarding the development of the ability to make moral judgements (described as moral literacy previously); however, there is little research about how those judgements become intentions or behaviour (Duignan, 2006; Hannah & Avolio, 2010; Starratt, 2004). Basically, 'a leader may know something is not ethical, but whether he or she has the conation or impetus to act on that judgement is still unknown' (Hannah & Avolio, 2010, p. 291). In earlier research that proposed an action model for moral education, Bebeau et al. (1999) suggested moral motivation and moral character are part of the Four Component Model, which includes moral sensitivity and moral judgement. These researchers described moral character as 'having the strength of your convictions, having courage, persisting, overcoming distractions and obstacles, having implementing skills, having ego strength' (p. 22). In terms of this study, the role of moral character in relation to teachers' explicit attention to moral purpose will be examined.

Moral potency has been seen by several researchers and writers to have various components; moral ownership, moral courage (Klaassen, 2010; Shields, 2014), moral efficacy (Hannah & Avolio, 2010) and moral hope (Tuana, 2014). Hannah and Avolio (2010) proposed that the goal for moral ownership is the 'ethical nature of actions' of self (teachers), others (students) and the organisation (school). In the context of a model of leading for learning, moral ownership may have an effect on shared leadership and a shared moral purpose. According to Hannah and Avolio, moral courage is preceded by moral literacy. Leaders need to be able to 'perceive an event' as a situation of moral courage, previously described as moral literacy, 'take responsibility' and 'feel competent' to act (p. 295). This insight of Hannah and Avolio is highly relevant to the present research in that in this study teachers' explicit attention to the ethic of responsibility may influence their perceptions and practice of teaching.

Moral efficacy is described by Bandura (2006) as the personal belief in oneself that is motivated by the desire to act with persistence in the face of adversity. Put simply, for teachers this is the belief in their ability to 'make a difference' in the lives of their students (Frost, 2006).

Tschannen-Moran and Barr (2004) adopted Bandura's notion of collective teacher efficacy, 'the collective perception that teachers in a given school make an educational difference to their students' (p. 189). In their research regarding collective teacher efficacy and student achievement, Tschannen-Moran and Barr found positive relationships between the two. This may suggest that perceived collective moral purpose developed through a school improvement process would be an important factor in both encouraging an individual sense of moral purpose and influencing student outcomes. Bandura (2006), in his theory of human development, adaptation and change, proposed that personal efficacy beliefs are the foundation of human agency. By extension, within this research the issue was therefore raised as to whether a school community's collective sense of moral purpose within an ethical culture encourages individual moral purpose.

Tuana (2014) would argue that moral potency is the combination of moral courage and moral hope; therefore, apart from the courage to risk adversity in the quest for what is right in education, teachers also have an optimistic expectation or moral hope that what is right will occur. Moral hope is described as a 'disposition to act' rather than a 'belief' (Tuana, 2014, p. 172). In terms of school improvement research, specifically LTLL, hope is described as relational, arising from continual discourse between teachers and school leaders about a school vision for transformed learners (Bezzina & Tuana, 2014). Moral hope is not considered simply wishful thinking or a shared idealistic vision, as it brings about hope-filled thinking and deliberate hope-filled action (Bezzina & Tuana, 2014; Conway & Andrews, 2016; Crowther, 2011; Sergiovanni, 2007). Moral potency is necessary but not sufficient in the quest for moral purpose as the literature suggests moral agency is needed for teachers to act morally.

### **2.2.7 Moral agency**

Bandura (2006) suggested the moral knowledge and principles about how individuals should behave constitute the cognitive basis of morality. In the advancement of moral agency, teachers 'adopt standards of right and wrong that serve as guides and deterrents for conduct' (p. 171). This clearly has relevance to the present study since change in teachers' perceptions and practice as a result of explicit attention to moral purpose could be due to the *self-reactive* property of human agency. Put simply, for teachers this may be the process of knowing something is unethical and having the courage to act on it, moving from the 'head' to the 'heart and hands' (Goleman, 1995).

Palmer (2008) supports the notion of guiding teachers to be 'agents of institutional change' rather than simply training teachers to be better at their jobs (p. 12). Moral agency is described in this context in terms of teacher spirituality (Palmer, 1999, 2003, 2007). Spirituality

is not being referred to here in a religious sense; rather, it is a belief in something bigger than us that is 'existential rather than creedal. It grows out of the individual person from an inward source, is intensely intimate and transformative, and is not imposed upon a person from an outside authority or force' (Tacey, 2003, p. 8). Palmer (1999) conducted research into the spiritual dimensions of a teacher's life by initiating 'The Courage to Teach' program run in partnership with the Fetzer Institute from 1993–1998 with teachers from K–12 in various parts of America. He reported the outcomes of teachers who participated in this program as being 'more grounded in their own selfhood', sensing that 'they are better teachers', and that 'they are better citizens of their own workplaces' (p. 11). The result of this spiritual reflection was collegial community that Palmer insists led to the transformation of teachers and consequentially students. While the concept of teacher spirituality has generated some interest, in the present study there is a preference for using teacher self-reflection in terms of explicit attention to moral purpose and this will be elaborated on later.

Bandura (2006) proposed that when individuals develop standards of right and wrong that influence or deter behaviour they are developing personal moral agency. Palmer (2008) suggested that teachers can become agents of change in our individualistic world through 'personal moral agency', 'the personal capacity to sideline one's ego for the sake of a larger good', particularly when it is grounded in 'collegial community', 'the collective capacity to collaborate rather than compete' (p. 13). Collaboration in this context involves individuals choosing to value collective practices, values and beliefs over individual ones (Elmore, 2005; Fullan, 2016; MacBeath, 2007; Sergiovanni, 2007). In contrast to collegial community, Keddle et al.'s (2011) Australian research as mentioned previously reveals that 'performative and competitive schooling cultures of high accountability and compliance suggest an undermining and mistrust of teachers and their practice and a denial of teacher agency' (p. 76). This research was helpful to the present study because of the exploration of moral agency in terms of teachers' valuing collaborative practices.

The issue of the teacher as moral agent is referred to in the literature as associated with professional role (Campbell, 2004, 2006, 2008); manner in teaching (Fallona, 2000; Fenstermacher, 2001; Richardson & Fallona, 2001); and reflective professional responsibility (Fenstermacher & Amarel, 2013; Fenstermacher, Osguthorpe, & Sanger, 2009). In regard to teachers' professional role as moral agents, Campbell (2006) described two commitments on behalf of teachers; upholding the ethical principles and virtues of a moral person and modelling purposeful teaching as a moral educator. 'The connection between these two aspects of moral agency is evident as teachers live out through their actions, attitudes, and words the same virtues they hope to instill in their students' (p. 32). In two case studies as part of a broader three-year

‘Manner in Teaching’ study, Richardson and Fallona (2001) found that research regarding what makes an expert teacher has focused on behavioural and cognitive psychology rather than the moral aspects of teaching and the teacher as a human being. As part of the Manner in Teaching project, Fenstermacher (2001) conducted research with 11 teachers in two very different schools and found six ways teachers nurture moral conduct and moral development in the classroom. He concluded as follows:

Moral agency is that quality possessed by a person to act morally. Moral development is the bringing about in others of moral agency. Breaking these concepts apart permits us to ask some vexing but exciting questions about how fully developed a moral agent must be in order to be good at moral development. Put another way: how much manner is required to engage effectively in methods for moral development? (p. 650)

Fenstermacher et al. (2009) distinguished between teaching morally and teaching morality. They stressed the importance of teachers understanding both the moral content of classrooms and how their manner in teaching is part of the moral dimensions of schooling. Fenstermacher and Amarel (2013) described teachers as ‘agents of the school’ or ‘proximal actors’ in their discussion about the tensions between interests in schooling (p. 65). The teacher is described in this context as a moral agent who is responsible for resolving the conflict between the means and ends of education or aligning the interests of the student, state and humanity. Researchers have compared the Hippocratic oath taken by doctors to preserve human life and a lawyer’s oath to uphold justice, with the notion that teachers have a responsibility to teach ethically for the preservation of a just and democratic society (Campbell, 2006; Cochran-Smith et al., 2009). While many educational systems provide codes of ethics and conduct procedures that can be characterised as either ‘aspirational’ or ‘procedural’ policies, Forster (2012) argued that there are currently few structures to support values-based practice or an explicit focus on ethical action in teaching. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) maintained that if there is a moral imperative for the profession of teaching, it is to serve the ‘best interests of the student’ and this can be achieved by viewing moral dilemmas through multiple ethical paradigms as discussed previously. The research discussed regarding teachers’ professional role as a moral agent suggests that within the present study some specific attention should be given to checking whether teachers’ explicit attention to the ethic of responsibility has influenced their perceptions and practice; however, teachers’ manner in regard to the morality of their teaching will not be examined.

There is much literature that gives importance to the role of self-reflection in allowing teachers to teach and lead with moral purpose. Bandura (2006) indicated that moral thought becomes action through self-regulatory mechanisms; therefore, after teachers accept a certain

standard of morality, their negative self-sanctions for behaviour that violates their personal values and their positive self-sanctions for actions authentic to their moral standards function as regulatory influences. Bandura (2006) suggested that ‘the capacity for self-sanctions gives meaning to moral agency’ (p. 9). Researchers advocate the need for structured teacher self-reflection focused on the intellect, emotion and the spirit of teaching to enhance moral consciousness (Branson, 2007; Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Palmer, 2008). Research also suggests that personal reflective practice is one of the prerequisites to authentic leadership (Begley, 2006; Branson, 2014) and teaching (Sellars, 2012). Sellars’ study describes regular authentic reflection as the means for teachers to engage in the ‘holy trinity’ of teaching, which involves knowing the content and how to teach it, knowing students and how they learn, and in particular knowing yourself, ‘your values and your capacity for reflection and ethical decision making’ (p. 462) leading to changed practice. Self-reflection in this context is concerned with obtaining and communicating a values-based, moral purpose for improvement as discussed previously. This research focused on authentic teacher reflection is highly relevant to the present study as it describes a deliberate shift away from self-reflection focused on the external factors of how to teach to a broader focus on why we do what we do as teachers.

A study of a group of teachers from a New Jersey school district in the United States, who used reflection to transform classroom practice and themselves as practitioners, found that communicating a values-based moral purpose for improvement allowed teachers to shift the blame for poor achievement from external factors and focus on self-assessment (Christie, 2007). Both Fullan (2001) and Hargreaves (1997, 2010) refer to this focus on interpersonal skills as developing emotional intelligence. In recent years psychologists have argued that traditional IQ tests which reveal mathematical and linguistic skills are a poor indicator of a person’s emotional intelligence or the skills they need to live life successfully (Goleman, 1995). Emotional intelligence can be defined within four abilities; self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social skills (Goleman, 1995). Shapiro and Gross (2008) provided the ethical framework discussed previously to help educational leaders solve dilemmas and in so doing cited Goleman (1995), who described rational and emotional ways of knowing as ‘Our Two Minds’. In terms of leadership some researchers suggest the most effective leaders are not necessarily the smartest but those who combine intellect with emotional intelligence to give educational change more depth (Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, & Hann, 2002; Fullan, 2001; Hargreaves, 1997; Palmer, 1999).

Recapitulating, the approach to moral purpose in the present study is not from a psychological position, rather a philosophical values position. While the models of Goleman



(1995) and Crowther (2011) basically give a more psychologically focused opinion about the nature of emotional intelligence as being at the core of the process of developing teachers as leaders, the works of Tuana (2007, 2014), Begley (2006) and Branson (2014) point towards the importance of valuing at the heart of the decision-making process and the self-awareness process. The next section of the review will examine literature and research associated with understanding the ethical dimensions of educational practice and in particular ethical educational leadership.

### **2.2.8 Ethical Leadership**

Begley and Johansson (2008) and Begley (2006) focus on the cognitive processes of school leaders involved in problem solving, while Ehrich, Kimber, and Cranston (2009) and Cranston (2013) give specific attention to understanding the ethical dilemmas faced by school leaders in regard to professional responsibility as opposed to external accountability. Langlois and Lapointe (2010) and Campbell (2004, 2008) view the ethical dimensions of educational practice in terms of applied ethics and moral theory; Shapiro and Stefkovich (2001, 2016) take a legal perspective, while Shapiro and Gross (2008, 2013) examine ethics in education in terms of social justice. Starratt (2004, 2012, 2014) approaches ethics in education from a philosophical viewpoint. While ethics will be viewed from a philosophical stance in this case study, each of these researchers' findings and their relationship to the study at hand is relevant and will be discussed in the next section.

A model established for exploring the influences on ethical decision-making processes for Australian school leaders (Ehrich, Kimber, & Cranston, 2009) found that the professional ethics of school leaders, with a strong sense of duty of care to young people, played a significant role in their decision-making. In today's climate of external accountability, Cranston (2013) advocated that school leadership should emanate from educators' professional responsibility rather than be driven by forces outside the school. The school improvement process undertaken at the case study school was founded on a model of leading for learning where change is created from within the school. The significance for this study is whether teachers take on school leadership due to professional responsibility influenced by explicit attention to moral purpose as part of an internal site-based model for school improvement, or whether teachers take on leadership due to influences outside the school.

Qualitative and quantitative results from a three-year action-research project involving 30 educational administrators in Canada showed the impact a training program based on ethics as a reflective critical capacity had on improved ethical awareness, judgement structuring, a sense of

responsibility, and overall professional conduct (Langlois & Lapointe, 2010). The training program, called TERA (Trajectory: Ethics, Responsibility and Authenticity), aimed to explore the impact of leaders' ethical decision-making processes on people, their organisation, and their community. These are the same ethics found in Starratt's (2004) ethical leadership design and incorporated into Bezzina and Burford's (2010) LTLL model and are therefore significant to the present study. The three-step process included; (a) knowledge or ethics sensitivity involving the ethics of justice, care, and critique; (b) volition highlighting the axiological dimensions; and (c) action or ethical conduct. This research was primarily concerned with the ethical leadership of educational administrators rather than teachers as leaders of learning. However, the findings that this program allowed participants to develop a greater understanding of the ethical stakes involved in their educational leadership practices and increased their ethical awareness are of relevance to this study. Campbell's (2004) qualitative research in the area of teacher education, focused on the ethical bases of moral agency in teaching, found that teachers '... seemed to show a self-conscious awareness of what they try to do in their capacity as moral agents' (p. 425). The clear parallels between teachers' ethical knowledge and ethical behaviour suggest that these research findings were relevant to the present study and will be discussed further in relation to how moral purpose is expressed in education.

In terms of organisational learning theory, Argyris and Schon (1996) suggest practitioners should not be 'passive recipients of expertise' (p.35) rather, they should be active inquirers generating both thought and action. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2001, 2016) advocate reflective practice for educational leaders through a case study approach and have developed a theoretical model for guiding educators as they confront ethical dilemmas in their schools. The end goal proposed for teachers as part of the PALM process in the case study school was the transformation of learners, which often involves teachers choosing between right and right. Shapiro and Stefkovich proposed that rather than responding to these dilemmas as 'moral absolutists' or as 'moral relativists' educators should use a multiple ethical paradigms process. The conceptual framework they developed incorporates Starratt's (1993) ethics of justice, critique and care and includes in addition an ethic of the profession. In this process educators are challenged to reflect on their own professional and personal codes of ethics in addition to the standards as set out by the profession and place 'the best interests of the student' at the centre of any ethical decision-making. Shapiro and Stefkovich's theoretical perspectives were helpful in the present study as they draw on the same ethics proposed by Starratt (2012) in cultivating an ethical school and are incorporated within the LTLL model, which influenced the reflective nature of the school improvement process. When determining what exactly is in the best interests of the student, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) take a legal stance similar to the

way a child is viewed in a court of law, ‘incorporating individual rights; accepting and teaching students to take responsibility for one’s actions; and respecting students’ (p. 27). The perceptions of both teachers and the core group on the nature of responsibility will form part of the research process.

Shapiro and Gross (2013) suggested that ethical decision-making using multiple ethical paradigms is enhanced by Turbulence Theory, or the ‘ability to calibrate the severity of the issue at hand’ (p. 9). Gross studied ten schools and districts that had developed curriculum, instructional and assessment innovations for several years and found that all sites experienced some form of ‘turbulence’ that could be categorised into one of four levels, allowing for further contextualisation of the dilemma. In addition, Gross and Shapiro (2016) described connecting social justice and democracy for educational leaders engaged in school reform. The New DEEL (Democratic Ethical Educational Leadership) is a framework for leaders that supports democratic citizenship and social responsibility. While this framework was not incorporated within the present study, a sense of moral purpose for teachers could be evident in the characteristics of educational leaders who subscribe to the New DEEL vision. That is, a leader of learning who is guided by an inner sense of responsibility; is able to build community within turbulence; gives equal attention to the concepts of social justice, democracy and school improvement; and has a well-developed sense of mission (Gross and Shapiro, 2016). Turbulence and ethical lenses are of interest to this study as the participants experienced such turbulence and challenges in the reform project at the core of the research. Transformative leadership and learning are inherent in an examination of teaching and leading for moral purpose and will be discussed in the next subsection.

### **2.2.9 Transforming leadership and learning**

Teachers’ commitment to particular ethics and values in an endeavour to transform students into richer, fuller, deeper human beings may be activated by moral leadership and in particular transformational leadership (Avolio, 2004). The origins of transformative leadership can be found in the seminal work of James MacGregor Burns (1978), who explained the difference between transactional leadership and transforming leadership. Transactional leadership, according to Burns, is focused on leaders and followers exchanging one thing for another, and transforming leadership is where leaders seek the possible motives of followers, fulfilling higher needs and involving the whole person of the follower. Burns proposed that ‘the result of transforming leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents’ (p. 4). The relevance of Burns’s theory of transforming leadership to this study is that school leaders’ explicit

attention to moral purpose within a school improvement process may change teachers into moral agents. Various educational researchers have drawn on Burns's leadership theory in an effort to understand the link between leadership and school improvement (Leithwood, 2017; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Shields, 2014, 2018). Leithwood and Jantzi's (2006) research involving 2,290 teachers from 655 primary schools in England found that a model of transformational leadership had a significant effect on teachers' classroom practices, that is, their 'motivation, capacities, and work settings' (p. 201). Leithwood and Sun (2012), in their research involving 79 unpublished studies, described the nature of transformational school leadership and its influence on teachers, students and school organisation. They found that several of the most commonly promoted models of effective educational leadership actually include many of the same practices, such as developing people by 'providing a model of high ethical behavior, instilling pride, respecting and trusting in the staff, symbolizing success, and demonstrating a willingness to change one's own practices as a result of new understandings and circumstances' (p. 400). Leithwood and Sun's research has particular relevance for the present study, since explicit attention to moral purpose may involve the core group modelling effective transformational school leadership practices such as the characteristics of ethical behaviour described here.

Shields' (2014) research focused on how educational leaders can create democratic, socially just learning environments that prepare students for citizenship in our global world and she believes 'ethics are at the heart of good leadership' (p. 24). Shields argued that moral courage is fundamental to a critical transformative approach to ethical leadership in conjunction with 'deep and equitable change, and for both critique of our current beliefs, approaches and systems and action that promises hope and a better, more equitable future' (p. 40). In more recent literature, Shields (2018) makes the distinction between transformational and transformative leadership, recognising that researchers in educational administration tend to use these terms interchangeably. She advocates for transformative leadership in a world characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (p. 4). This approach reflects the work of Starratt's Ethical leadership (2004) where he discusses the transformative and ethical nature of transforming the learner. According to Shields, transformational leaders focus first and foremost on the organisation including organisational climate and organisational problem solving, whilst transformative leaders focus primarily on social and democratic practices. This distinction may have relevance to the present study in terms of teachers' perceptions of moral leadership as focusing more on the organisation of the school or focusing primarily on the experiences and backgrounds of members of the school community (p. 20).

Day et al.'s (2001) empirical research moved beyond the divided constructs of transactional and transformational leadership, challenging the conventional view of effective school leadership. They found that 'morality, emotion and social bonds provide far more powerful stimulants to motivation and commitment than the extrinsic concerns of transactional leadership in which leaders and followers exchange needs and services to achieve independent objectives' (2001, p. 52). Robinson et al.'s (2008) meta-analysis of the impact of different forms of leadership on student outcomes found that instructional leadership had a greater effect on student outcomes and concluded that 'the more leaders focus their relationships, their work, and their learning on the core business of teaching and learning, the greater their influence on student outcomes' (p. 636). Leithwood (2017), in regard to the Ontario Leadership Framework, and Day et al. (2016) proposed that both transformational and instructional leadership practices are necessary for school improvement. Day et al. (2016) found common strategies used by principals whose schools had shown improvement over the three-year period of the 'Impact study' in England, including shared values and traits such as a clear vision, and 'their work was informed and driven by strong, clearly articulated moral and ethical values that were shared by their colleagues' (p. 251). The reminder that effective school leadership involving a shared commitment to explicit values is consistent with moral purpose justified attention in this research to the Impact study.

Leadership is second only to classroom teaching in terms of influencing student learning, according to Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) and Day et al. (2016). In research focused on high-impact instructional leadership, John Hattie (2015) suggested high-impact leaders see themselves as change agents because they are of the belief 'that success and failure in student learning is about what *they*, as teachers or leaders, did or didn't do' (p. 38). Hattie (2015) portrays both teachers and students as 'visible learners'. Teachers are considered to be visible learners when they are 'invested in learning, can evaluate their own learning, know what to do when they get stuck, and collaborate with others to pursue their learning' (p. 39). Likewise, students are thought to be visible learners if they 'clearly understand what they're learning, know where they are in the learning progression, and can articulate their personal learning goals' (p. 40). These ideas are built on Hattie's (2009) synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses involving student achievement where he described a model of learning that incorporates both surface information and deep understanding, 'leading to students more successfully constructing defensible theories of knowing and reality' (p. 28). The research regarding learning practices as described by Hattie (2015) in terms of teachers seeing themselves as change agents and responsible for student learning indicates that within the present study learning practices in relation to moral purpose should be explored.

Stoll, Fink, and Earl (2003), in literature focused on students', teachers' and leaders' learning, expressed the view that quantitative knowledge-based learning is no longer suitable for our changing, developing and interdependent world. Wrigley et al. (2012) are in agreement, arguing that high-stakes assessment, centralised control over the curriculum, and teacher inspection in English schools should be replaced with 'pedagogies of transformation' that involve 'reflecting on society, values, history, environment and learning itself' (p. 99). Wrigley et al. (2012) and Starratt (2012) both refer to *connectedness* in learning; Wrigley et al. in terms of learning connected to students' lifeworlds, and Starratt in regard to students' connectedness to their cultural, social and natural worlds as ethical beings. The literature concentrated on the ethical nature of transforming learning suggests that within the present study teachers' perceptions of learning should be investigated.

Summarising the implications of section 2.3 for this present study, the research literature suggests teachers' explicit attention to moral purpose in teaching and leading may be characteristic of moral literacy or being sensitised to and understanding whether a situation involves a moral issue; moral potency or having the courage, hope and efficacy to act morally; and moral agency or essentially making a change for the better. In the context of a Catholic school, teachers' motivation to act morally could be tied primarily to religious beliefs or an understanding of values and ethics (Grace, 2010). On balance, an examination of teacher self-reflection seems to be pertinent in determining how explicit attention to ethics and values (moral purpose) has influenced teachers. The literature indicates that beliefs focused on transforming leadership and learning may be relevant to teachers' explicit attention to moral purpose.

There is considerable research and literature concentrated on educational leadership and school improvement processes that focus on moral purpose (Burford & Bezzina, 2014; Conway & Andrews, 2016; Duignan, 2006, 2012; Elmore, 2016; Hopkins, 2013). The following section will address the influence of school improvement and moral purpose for teachers.

## **2.3 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND MORAL PURPOSE**

There are various school improvement models that are reportedly driven by moral purpose, including the 'London Challenge' focused on system leadership to transform schools within a region of the United Kingdom (Woods & Brighouse, 2014); the York Region District School Board in Ontario, Canada (Fullan, 2011b), concentrated on developing strong two-way partnerships and targeted individual and collective capacity building; IDEAS centred on parallel principal-teacher leadership and implemented in over 300 schools throughout Australia and internationally (Conway & Andrews, 2016); and LTLL, a five-year project implemented

in Catholic schools throughout New South Wales, Australia, focusing on the link between leadership and learning (Burford & Bezzina, 2014). Although a plethora of research has been directed towards the role of principals as leaders in the school improvement processes driven by moral purpose, there is a dearth of evidence about how this influences teachers.

### **2.3.1 System leadership**

As reported in Brighouse and Woods (2013), the London Challenge began in 2003 initially to bring about a change in the success of London's secondary schools and led to the involvement of over 2500 schools, including 1813 primary schools when it ceased in 2012. Woods and Brighouse (2014) list the first key element of the Challenge program as 'a compelling and inclusive moral purpose and moral capital with strong, shared values, principles and beliefs' (p. 17). Brighouse & Woods (2013) would argue that this initiative was driven by moral purpose in terms of valuing the common good and ensuring that all students are given the opportunity to succeed. According to international PISA testing focused on the United Kingdom as a whole rather than London specifically, the UK shifted from ranking 26th and not statistically significantly different from all 72 participating OECD countries and economies in 2012 (OECD, 2014) to being ranked 15th in 2015 with top performers above the OECD average and low achievers below the OECD average (OECD, 2016).

Baars et al. (2014) conducted case study research focused on the causes and nature of changes in London schools from 2000 to 2014 based on a review of literature, data on school and pupil performance, semi-structured interviews with leading experts in the London story and senior local authority directors, and focus group interviews with teachers and senior leaders from five schools. They found four key interventions to school improvement in the London Challenge, including (a) the importance of data and data literacy, (b) the need for a new culture of accountability, (c) the power of highly effective practitioner-led professional development, and (d) effective leadership at every level of the system. Each of these interventions will be discussed in turn. In regard to data-driven leadership, moral purpose was closely linked to student achievement:

Access to robust comparative data fuelled a 'righteous indignation' that students' precious life chances were being blighted by existing poor provision. This allowed leaders to create a powerful case for change based on the proposition that: 'Our children can achieve better, and that what they're achieving is scandalous and that what we have to do is make a difference'. (p. 110)

Baars et al. (2014) reported that the concept of 'moral purpose' was explicitly or implicitly communicated by several of the people interviewed in terms of recognising previous

underperformance and illustrating the ‘ambitious culture and moral purpose’ of London’s workforce as a result of the London Challenge (p. 109). They suggested that some forms of professional development that occurred as part of the London Challenge represented a paradigm shift in the way professional learning was perceived. Brighouse and Woods (2013) recounted that National Leaders of Education and National Support Schools were first established in 2006 for the purpose of raising standards by utilising the skills and experience of the best school leaders, as well as their schools, to support those that needed to improve. Baars et al. (2014) argued that giving outstanding practitioners the opportunity to improve performance levels across a community of schools led to the idea that school improvement should be driven by the system itself rather than top-down approaches. The qualities of effective leadership recognised in this research include transformational leadership driven by moral purpose in terms of a leader’s first responsibility being to improve outcomes for learners and not to promote the ‘provider interest’ represented by underperforming groups or professionals either at a school or local authority level (p. 108). The group of leaders interviewed believed moral purpose could be interpreted as effective leadership action through the ‘relentless’ and ‘forensic’ use of data about student performance to challenge authorities, schools and individual teachers. There was a recognition that challenge must be combined with support and that support was based on a reasonable ‘theory of change’, that is, providing professional learning specific to the underperformance. Baars et al. (2014) described the London Challenge as ‘the most sustained and wide-ranging mission-driven attempt to build collective moral purpose’ (p. 111) and recounted practices that built a sense of possibility and collective moral purpose, such as employing language that emphasised London’s shared identity, using inspirational, aspirational language and targets, branding the most challenging schools ‘Keys To Success’ rather than ‘failing schools’, celebrating headteachers’ achievements, promoting a culture of thanking people and challenging limiting beliefs about learners (p. 112). This research was helpful in the present study because of the exploration of explicit attention to moral purpose and school improvement; however, all of the interview participants held some sort of formal leadership position during the London education reforms and therefore it is difficult to discern how classroom teachers in particular were influenced by their explicit attention to moral purpose.

London Challenge advisers gained the trust of headteachers and local authority officers, as recognised in the Ofsted (2010) evaluation:

Over time, that message of commitment and encouragement has been repeated consistently by the London Challenge leadership team. These endeavours have reinforced a clear sense of moral purpose among teachers and school leaders to close attainment gaps between London and the rest of the country. The staff in almost every



school that contributed to this survey expressed their commitment to London children, not simply to those in their own school. (p. 4)

An evaluation of the London City Challenge by Hutchings et al. (2010) reported that trust was possibly the most effective aspect of this reform, citing that when ‘people and schools feel trusted, supported and encouraged’ they are inclined to succeed, and that ‘the ethos of the programme, in which successes were celebrated and it was recognised that if teachers are to inspire pupils they themselves need to be motivated and inspired, was a key factor in its success’ (p. x). Empirical evidence supporting this type of collaboration to bring about change comes from Bryk and Schneider (2003) in their case study research and longitudinal statistical analysis involving over 400 elementary schools in Chicago during the 1990s focused on student success. They found that external variables such as curriculum and professional development could not predict student success; however, ‘relational trust’ in terms of teacher attitudes towards other teachers, parents and students improved student learning. Relational trust could be considered the ‘connective tissue’ that binds people together in the advancement of moral purpose (p. 44).

Liu, Hallinger, and Feng (2016) also examined the role of teacher trust and learning-centred leadership in fostering teacher professional learning in Chinese schools. They collected survey data from 1,259 teachers in 41 primary and secondary schools in three different Chinese provinces and found that ‘building trust’ is a useful strategy for principals who seek to establish productive learning environments for their teachers. ‘This is a potentially significant finding in a society where the use of top-down directives and reliance on legitimate authority by leaders can rob teachers of the motivation and initiative that undergirds sustainable professional learning’ (p. 661). This research from London, Chicago and China focuses specific attention on the linkage between teacher trust and student success which may be of interest when examining the influence of moral purpose on teachers.

### **2.3.2 Capacity building**

Moral purpose is used widely by Michael Fullan (2001) in regard to school system reform and initially defined in terms of leadership practice in a culture of change as about both means and ends. The means of educating was then emphasised by Fullan (2011a) in regard to student learning as ‘raising the bar and closing the gap’ (p. ix), which seemed to view moral purpose as achievement or measurable student learning. In more recent years Fullan and Quinn (2016) have proposed a coherence framework for leaders to improve learning using the ‘right drivers’ and established that good system, district and school leaders must first understand their own moral purpose. This involves leaders connecting others to their motives for becoming educators and for doing what they do with children, ‘Then they learn and build capacity and commitment

through purposeful doing’ (p. 19) or developing shared moral purpose. Although this literature is focused on school system reform, it may be of interest in the present study in terms of shared moral purpose being developed through ‘purposeful doing’ as part of the school improvement process. Fullan (2011b) suggested the right drivers for educational change in terms of whole system reform can be measured by teachers’ and students’ intrinsic motivation, continuous improvement of instruction and learning, collective or team work and all teachers and students being affected by the change. He considers the ‘desired goal’ of reform as ‘the moral imperative of raising the bar (for all students) and closing the gap (for lower performing groups) relative to higher order skills and competencies required to be successful world citizens’ (p. 3). Recapitulating, the concepts of ‘raising the bar’ and ‘closing the gap’ are inherent in valuing the common good and foundational to this study’s approach to moral purpose; it may be of interest to explore teachers’ perceptions of ‘successful world citizens’.

Sharratt and Fullan (2012) describe a district reform strategy that identifies 14 parameters or drivers and keys to classroom, school, district and state improvement as a result of a literacy initiative in the York Region then as a whole system of schools in Ontario, Canada. The York Region District School Board is a large multicultural urban district that is part of the greater Toronto area with 130,000 students, 8,800 teachers and 192 schools in Ontario (Fullan, 2011a). According to the Education Quality and Accountability Office standardised test for Grade 3, after one year, district results began to improve and the 17 schools that made up the ‘literacy collaborative’ outperformed both state and district schools. There were nine high-focus schools that were initially amongst the lowest performing schools in the district, however, they engaged with the parameters and moved beyond the state and district averages after a short period of time and maintained their achievement levels over a six-year period (Sharratt & Fullan, 2012). International PISA test results of students from the whole country of Canada, rather than Ontario specifically, showed improved ranking from 13th of 72 participating OECD countries and economies, with top performers above the OECD average and low achievers below the OECD average in 2012 (OECD, 2014), to being ranked 7th in 2015 (OECD, 2016). The McKinsey report, *How the world’s most improved school systems keep getting better*, included the Ontario education system in a list of school systems that have sustained improvement with three or more data points over five or more years (Mourshed, Chijioke & Barber, 2010, p. 115). The 14 parameters Sharratt and Fullan (2012) advocate are as follows:

shared beliefs and understandings, embedded literacy/instructional coaches, daily sustained focus on literacy instruction, principal leadership, early and ongoing intervention, case management approach, professional learning at staff meetings, in-school grade/subject meetings, centralized resources, commitment of district and school

budgets for literacy learning and resources, action research/collaborative inquiry, parental and community involvement, cross curricular connections and shared responsibility and accountability. (p. 11)

Research focused on the 14 parameters is helpful in the present study because of the exploration of shared responsibility and accountability in relation to each parameter, which Fullan (2011b) considers is the personal and group commitment to the moral imperative of education and how to achieve it. Sharratt and Fullan (2011) described these parameters as deep and sustainable collective capacity building, while Fullan (2010) reported that collective capacity enables ordinary people to do extraordinary things through the availability of knowledge and effective practice, and working together creates commitment. ‘Moral purpose, when it stares you in the face through students and your peers working together to make lives and society better, is palpable, indeed virtually irresistible. The collective well seems bottomless. The speed of effective change increases exponentially ...’ (p. 72).

### **2.3.3 Collaborative culture**

In regard to leading with moral purpose, Fullan and Boyle (2013) agreed that it is not enough for leaders to have a shared vision for educational reform: ‘Realising moral purpose – actually accomplishing it in practice – is at the heart of effective leadership’ (p. 1). Furthermore, Fullan (2015) surmised that individual responsibility detached from any group will not result in school improvement, rather, ‘the cultural shift needed is toward the development of collaborative cultures that honor and align individual responsibility with collective expectations and actions’ (p. 108). MacBeath (2007) found in research emanating from the Carpe Vitam Project that a key principle of leadership for learning involves accountability in terms of ‘embedding a systematic approach to self-evaluation at classroom, school and community levels’ (p. 260). The appreciative inquiry process (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005) borrowed from the business sector suggests that building on collective strengths allows an organisation to not only perform but transform. MacBeath (2006) argued that ‘appreciative inquiry and self-evaluation is the process by which schools make their intellectual and moral journey measuring the distance they have travelled ... with the tools of authentic, professionally driven inquiry’ (p. 7). MacBeath’s (2006) insights in relation to the role of appreciative inquiry in building collaborative culture may be relevant to the present study as teachers participated in an appreciative inquiry approach to school improvement within PALM.

Muijs and Harris’s (2007) research, involving three case studies of schools in the UK focused on developing teacher leadership, found that shared beliefs, a collaborative culture built on trust and providing structures that support collaboration changed school culture and

practices. Elmore's (2016) arguments regarding the implementation of education policy appear to support these findings as he describes capitalising on 'institutional infrastructures' and developing a culture of professional practice in preference to forming educational policies in the change process (p. 531). The OECD (2011) background report for the International Summit on the Teaching Profession found, in regard to teacher engagement in education reform, that 'teachers need to be active agents, not just in the implementation of reforms, but also in their design' (p. 55). Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, and Thomas (2006) and Dufour and Marzano (2011) suggested that professional learning communities (PLCs) are linked to individual and group capacity building for improved learning in schools. Leithwood and Louis (2012) concurred, and highlighted the considerable influence of principal leadership. According to the literature in the field, Stoll et al. (2006) recognise a PLC as one

... in which the teachers in a school and its administrators continuously seek and share learning, and act on their learning. The goal of their actions is to enhance their effectiveness as professionals for the students' benefit; thus, this arrangement may also be termed communities of continuous inquiry and improvement. (p. 223)

Harris and Jones's (2010) research involving six schools in Wales, entitled Leading Learning for School Effectiveness pilot project, ensured 'change and improvement through the development of professional learning communities *within, between and across* schools' (p. 176) and highlighted amongst other characteristics the need for a shared vision and sense of purpose in a professional learning community. Fullan, Rincon-Gallardo & Hargreaves (2015) discussed the professional capital of teachers as accountability. Professional capital consists of human capital (the worth of the individual), social capital (the value of the group), and decisional capital (the growth of expertise and professional judgement of individuals and groups to make more and more effective decisions over time) (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Fullan et al. (2015) suggested that the more teachers take on internal accountability or intrinsic motivation the more willing they are to engage with external accountability. The clear parallels between shared moral purpose, developing teacher leadership and collaborative cultures suggest this literature and research findings are relevant to the present study.

#### **2.3.4 Parallel leadership**

Conway and Andrews (2016) described the IDEAS school improvement process as based on building teacher capacity through parallel leadership, mutualistic goal setting and collective responsibility that is reinforced by commitment to an explicit set of values guided by a vision for learning. Crowther (2011) expressed values in terms of the 'emotional commitment' that moves people and systems to concrete action (p. 29) while Deal and Peterson (2009) described

values in terms of shaping school culture as more than goals or outcomes: ‘Without an existential commitment, everything is relative; values focus attention and define success’ (p. 66).

Conway and Andrews’s (2016) case study research focused on five schools engaged in the IDEAS process and used data such as school-based evidence of success, including student achievement data and documentation of teacher planning and action learning; extensive interviews with teachers, students, heads of departments, teacher leaders, and the principal; and focus groups. The research found that ‘each teacher leader demonstrates recognised qualities of critical self-reflection, networking, and advocacy for improved student achievement from a contextually relevant vantage point of moral purpose’ (p. 175). The reminder that building teacher capacity and commitment to explicit values is consistent with moral purpose justified attention in this study to the IDEAS process.

### **2.3.5 Leadership for learning**

The relationship between leadership and learning has been examined by various researchers in the field, including Robinson (2011), Leithwood and Louis (2012), Dufour and Marzano (2011), and Burford and Bezzina (2014). Burford and Bezzina (2014) set out to investigate the link between leadership and learning, paying particular attention to teachers’ perceptions of elements of moral purpose in the LTLL school improvement process contextualised in Chapter 1 of this thesis. Data was gleaned from case study research with the use of a reflection guide built around the LTLL conceptual framework and in-depth interviews of 45 teachers, including 11 principals, from 11 schools involved in Phase 2 (2007–2009), and 269 teachers and 17 principals from 17 schools in rural New South Wales involved in Phase 3 (2011–2012). The results of the LTLL project were mapped against the four phases of the model (i.e., moral purpose, educative leadership/teacher as leader, authentic learning, and transformed learner) and revealed four components to participant engagement: attention, reflection, response, and outcome. The link between moral purpose and learning is evident in literature and in the LTLL research, ‘with 7 of the 11 schools in LTLL 2 and 15 schools in LTLL 3 indicating that moral purpose was now at the center of what they did’ (p. 419). Sergiovanni (2007) recognised this link, describing the school’s role to provide authentic learning: ‘The school’s job is to transform its students not only by providing them with knowledge and skills but by building *character* and instilling *virtue*’ (p. 22). Burford and Bezzina (2014) suggested that authentic learning is concerned with the transformation of the learner and noted that 16 of the 17 schools reported that ‘students were more motivated and engaged’ (p. 414) and ‘10 of the 11 schools importantly said that LTLL helped to transform learning in their school’ (p. 419).

Developing a shared understanding of moral purpose has been a focus in school improvement literature (Andrews & Lewis, 2004; Bezzina, 2008b; Conway & Andrews, 2016; Fullan, 2001; Fullan & Quinn, 2016) and Burford and Bezzina (2014) argued that unless there is shared moral purpose in terms of ownership of goals and processes in the learning community authentic learning cannot occur. This LTLL research is supported by the studies of Harris (2006), Crowther et al. (2009) and Bezzina and Burford (2010) in regard to the notion of ‘teacher as leader’ being crucial to the promotion of learning in a school and was seen through sharing leadership and collective responsibility for student learning. Eight of the 11 schools involved in LTLL 2 and 16 of the 17 schools in LTLL 3 suggested there had been an increased focus on teacher leadership (p. 414). In summary, the findings from LTLL 2 and 3 ‘showed that teachers and leaders, when focusing on moral purpose, learning outcomes, leadership, and classroom behaviours, all tended to return to the capacity of moral purpose to trigger renewal and improvement’ (Burford & Bezzina, 2014, p. 423).

In establishing the connection between leadership and learning, Burford and Bezzina (2014) used a conceptual model linking moral purpose, leadership and authentic learning and found that moral purpose is integral to the relationship between leadership and learning. They reported that, ‘given the significance of moral purpose, there is comparatively little research data about how teachers understand it and how they see it operating in their schools’ (Bezzina & Burford, 2010b, p. 272). According to Bezzina (2012), moral purpose is made explicit through the naming and owning of values, which are foundational for teachers to make a difference in the lives of students. Shared values are placed at the centre of the LTLL conceptual framework where the relationship between moral purpose and values is clearly described in relation to the transformed learner. Moral agency is described as a capacity, and more significantly, a commitment, to acting out of moral purpose (Bezzina & Burford, 2010a). The call for more examination of teachers’ explicit attention to moral purpose is clear:

The emerging appreciation of the notion of moral agency as the trigger for the morally motivated behaviours may well be the most important legacy of this study, and would benefit from further investigation of the reasons why a more explicit focus on moral purpose, and a greater sense of moral literacy triggers moral agency in the way it has done in this study. (p. 19)

This research literature is highly relevant as it suggests moral purpose has to be engaged with (Begley & Stefkovich, 2007; Leonard & Begley, 2007; Tuana, 2007); committed to (Hannah & Avolio, 2010; Klaassen, 2012; Klaassen & Maslovaty, 2010); and connected to purposeful behaviour (Bandura, 2006; Campbell, 2008; Fenstermacher, 2009; Moberg, 2006; Weaver, 2006), suggesting that within the present study specific attention should be given to

how explicit attention to moral purpose in terms of values and ethics influences teachers' perceptions and practice of teaching, leading and learning.

In summary, Woods and Brighouse (2014) considered moral purpose in terms of transformational leadership with deep-seated, shared values, principles and beliefs. In particular, the London Challenge emphasised valuing the common good in regard to all students, despite their socio-economic background, achieving their potential. Fullan (2001, 2011a) highlighted moral purpose as a core competency in organisational change; Fullan and Quinn (2016) then referred to moral purpose as integral to a process for purpose-driven action. Conway and Andrews (2016) drew attention to moral purpose in terms of parallel leadership or building teacher capacity and commitment to improve student achievement, while Burford and Bezzina (2014) viewed moral purpose as the connection between leadership and learning in regard to teachers naming and owning shared values.

## 2.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research and literature around school improvement processes that focus on moral purpose emphasise teachers' commitment to shared values and ethical teaching in the quest to improve students' learning, leading to the first research sub-question: *How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions and practice in teaching?*

The research and literature in the field also point to building teacher capacity and the professionalism of teachers as leaders of learning. Therefore, in the present study it is necessary to include the research sub-question: *How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions and practice in leading?*

Finally, attention to moral purpose and school improvement in the research and literature is focused on the connection between teachers' self-reflection and professional learning and students' learning, leading to the third research sub-question: *How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions and practice in learning?*

## 2.5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The assumption guiding this review of literature and reflected in the conceptual framework depicted in Figure 2.1 is that moral purpose exists in various organisations including schools and is enacted to a greater or lesser extent by members through their value judgements

and ethical behaviour. The challenge for school leaders from this rationale is to challenge teachers' engagement, commitment and enactment of moral purpose as a driver for change in schools. It is the core of this rationale that teachers who are exposed to the moral imperative within models of leading for learning draw on their personal beliefs and experience to understand what moral purpose is in terms of ethics and core values, and have an ethical imperative to provide authentic learning for their students. Teachers may become more responsible for the transformation of the learner and own this as their particular issue. The social dynamic of developing moral purpose is reflected in the outer circle. The individual teacher's self-reflection and professional learning may be influenced by the ethical culture and climate of the school community engaged in a school improvement process.

The impact of teachers' exposure to the moral imperative of education in terms of teaching, leading and learning has not been well explored in education. Research regarding school improvement processes in relation to educational leaders reports that moral purpose will precipitate action (Andrews, 2008; Conway & Andrews, 2016; Fullan & Quinn, 2016; Starratt, 2014) but the impact on teachers is not as well researched.

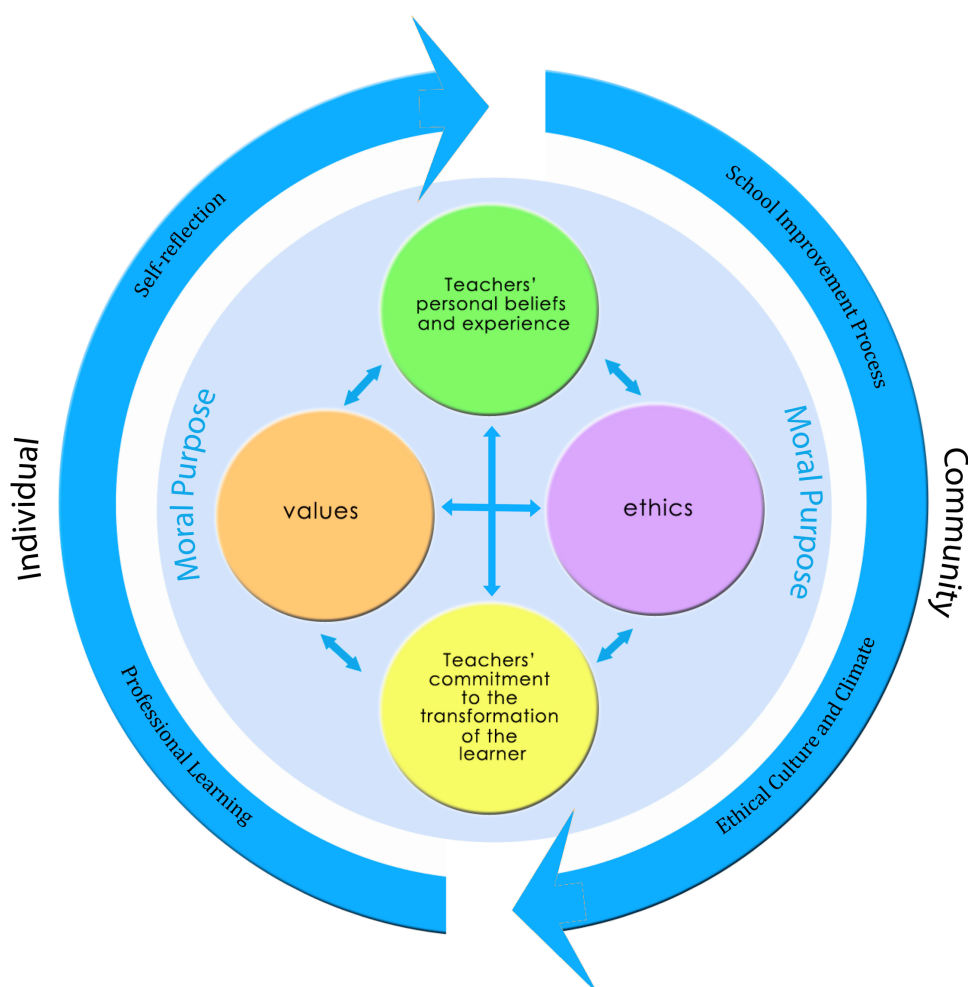


Figure 2.1. The conceptual framework.







## Chapter 3: Design of the Research

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This research is designed to highlight the beliefs and realities experienced by teachers who have explicitly attended to moral purpose within a model of leading for learning. The problem invited an interpretive approach using a range of data collection methods. This allowed the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of how teachers construct events and experiences in their lives related to their teaching, leadership and learning.

### 3.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework identifies the ‘philosophical worldview’ or fundamental beliefs the researcher brings to the research (Creswell, 2009). This study is grounded in social cognitive theory, and particularly Albert Bandura’s agentic theory of human development, adaptation and change (Bandura, 2006). The purpose of the research and the explicit research questions inform the choice of theoretical framework (Crotty, 1998). Because this study sought to access teachers’ perceptions and the ways in which they influence behaviour, an epistemological lens of constructionism was chosen as seen in the *Research Framework* below (Figure 3.1). Such an approach focused on meaning, which humans construct from interaction with other human beings and their world (Crotty, 1998). The researcher intended to obtain meaning from teachers’ constructions of moral purpose as part of their lived experience. A theoretical perspective of interpretivism was adopted in this study to gain ‘empathetic’ understanding (*verstehen*) of teachers’ everyday lives (Neuman 2007). The symbolic interactionist theoretical approach employed lies within interpretivism and enabled the researcher to discover teachers’ perspectives on a phenomenon (O’Donoghue, 2007). This social research into the ways in which teachers interpret and implement understandings from involvement in the Planning for Authentic Learning Model (PALM), which included professional learning, Stage meetings and PAL sessions, was ultimately about teachers making meaning of their work. Case study with multiple methods of data collection was used as the research methodology since it drew on the disciplines of anthropology, psychology and sociology and is the epistemological and theoretical perspective of this study (Merriam, 1998, 2009). The complex phenomenon of moral purpose, as teachers within PALM perceive it, was investigated using a variety of data collection strategies. These included one-to-one interviews, a focus group interview and document analysis. The case study method stems from a symbolic interactionist perspective as it enables the researcher to ‘understand complex social phenomena,’ allowing the investigator

‘to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events’ (Yin, 2009) such as the behaviour of this particular group of teachers at this primary school.

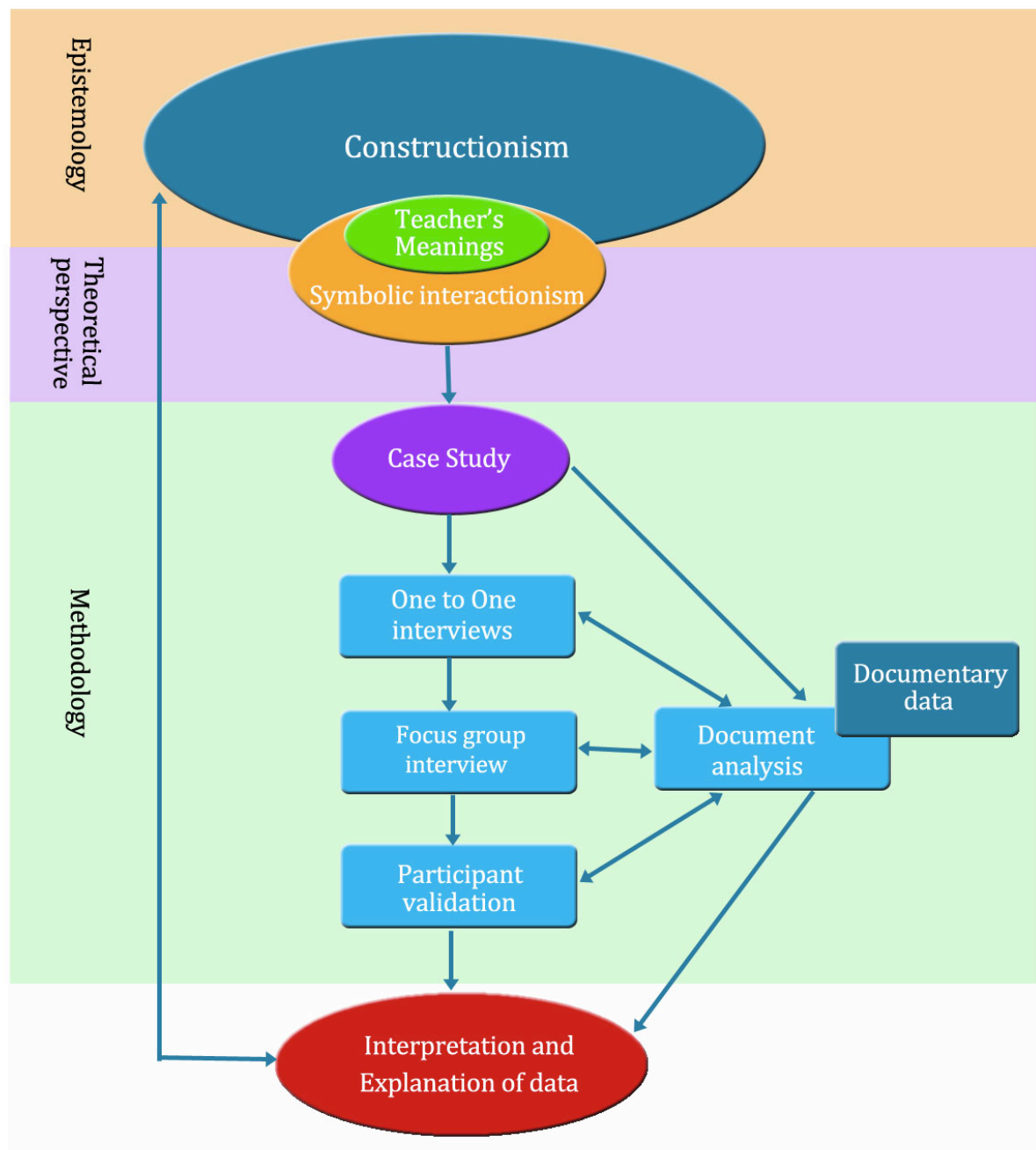


Figure 3.1. Research framework.

### 3.1.1 Epistemology

Research along with experience and reasoning is a fundamental way people endeavour to understand their world (Candy, 1989). There are various underlying assumptions about the study of how knowledge is created and accepted as valid and about the rationale for research (O'Donoghue, 2007). These basic assumptions reflect the epistemology that underpins the

research. Epistemology describes ‘the nature of the relationship between the knower (the inquirer) and the known (or knowable)’ (Gough, 2002).

Constructionism was chosen as an appropriate epistemology for this case study research as it focuses on teachers’ truth or reality that comes into existence as individual and groups of teachers give explicit attention to moral purpose in their experiences of teaching, leading and learning. This epistemology is founded on the understanding that human beings construct meaning as they interact with their environment and with one another. In this view of knowledge there is no objective reality waiting to be discovered. On the contrary, meaning is created as part of a continuing and dynamic process between human beings and the world they are interpreting (Crotty, 1998). Constructionism is centred around ‘the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context’ (Crotty, 1998, p. 42).

Social constructionism is another name given to the epistemological lens of constructionism because it focuses on ‘social reality’ (Darlaston-Jones, 2007). In this research process, each teacher’s explicit attention to moral purpose has something to add to the staff’s shared understanding of the role of moral purpose within PALM. There is agreement amongst many constructivists that meaning is generated in and out of interaction with a ‘human community’ (Creswell, 2009, p. 9; Crotty, 1998; Neuman, 2007; Stahl, 2003). The individual and community are both needed to create meaning and neither can exist in isolation. Since meaning is constructed through the process of dialogue and communication (Stahl, 2003), teachers’ personal and shared values, attitudes and beliefs were articulated as they responded to the PALM experience. The development and transmission of knowledge is achieved through the scientific process of interpreting understandings. ‘Knowledge accumulates only in a relative sense through the formation of ever more informed and sophisticated constructions via the hermeneutical/dialectical process’ (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Constructionism is the epistemology supporting this study. The epistemology informs the theoretical perspective, therefore in this study constructionism informs interpretivism.

### **3.1.2 Theoretical perspective**

The theoretical perspective is ‘the philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria’ (Crotty, 1998, p. 3). The goal of this study, as interpretive research, is to develop an understanding of an aspect of social life, in this case teachers’ experience of teaching with explicit attention to moral

purpose, and discover how they constructed meaning within a school-based model of leading for learning. ‘The interpretive approach is the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds’ (Neuman, 2007, p. 88) This research is not about reinterpreting the understandings and actions of participants, but rather using a full and systematic report of experiences from the point of view of the participants (Candy, 1989) to illuminate a deeper understanding of the case in question. In this study the particular interpretive theoretical perspective informing the research is symbolic interactionism because it seeks to understand the human being as a social person, a thinking person, a person who defines his/her environment, and as an active being in relation to his/her environment (Charon, 2010). This study sought to understand teachers’ perceptions of themselves and their work after being exposed to the moral imperative of education. This research is concerned with the shared and individual understandings of teachers working in the school-based model for change, PALM.

### ***Symbolic interactionism***

Symbolic interactionism is the appropriate theoretical perspective for this study because it focuses on how people understand their reality and choose to act in response to it in their own situation. In essence, this research is about how teachers make meaning of their work. Symbolic interactionism concentrates on the importance of interaction as the foundation for what constitutes persons and societies, and that interaction is at all times symbolic. Significant symbols include language and any other tools we use to communicate (Charon, 2010; Crotty, 1998). Teachers within the PALM experience are constantly making and remaking their own meaning and purpose for teaching as individuals and as a school community. Because moral purpose in organisations is ultimately a shared phenomenon, a stance like symbolic interactionism, which recognises the shared construction of meaning through interaction, is considered to be relevant. The concept of ‘self’ is fundamental to understanding the symbolic interactionist research methodology: ‘the concept of self relates directly to the way people attach meaning to, and act towards particular objects and phenomena’ (O’Donoghue, 2007, p. 18). The focus of this research is the meaning individual teachers attach to their perceptions and experiences of teaching with explicit attention to values and ethics in the quest to transform learners – moral purpose. Symbolic interactionism can initially be found in the work of George Herbert Mead (1863–1931), a pragmatist philosopher and social psychologist from the University of Chicago. Herbert Blumer, a student of Mead, described three fundamental beliefs of interactionist researchers;

- that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meaning those things have for them;
- that the meaning of such things is derived from, and arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows;
- that these meanings are handled in and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters. (Blumer, 1969, p. 2, as cited in Crotty, 1998)

Blumer's first belief is relevant to the phenomenon of moral purpose because it reinforces that teachers choose to act in certain ways towards 'things', in this case, teaching, learning and leading, according to the meanings they attribute to them. Teachers may choose to act as a moral agent due to their PALM experience. Secondly, these meanings are attained from a person's experience of the world and others with which they are continually interacting in order to modify, confirm, reinforce or change their meanings. Understandings of teaching, learning and leadership may change due to the teachers' involvement in PALM. And finally, individuals then transform this meaning according to the unique social situation in which they are placed. Shared meanings are ascribed to various actions and objects as a result of this interpretive and interactive procedure. Individuals align themselves with others and groups as a result of this process. In the unique context of the primary school community teachers may develop a shared understanding of moral purpose.

The importance of implementing an interpretivist approach in this study and the symbolic interactionist approach within it is that it recognises the fundamental importance of shaping meaning in community (O'Donoghue, 2007). This approach is particularly important in the context of this research as a whole of school phenomenon focused on moral purpose. 'People interact over a period of time; out of that interaction they come to share a perspective; what they see will be interpreted through that perspective; often each perspective tells us something very different about what is really true' (Charon, 2010, p. 2). Perspectives are expressed in words. The analysis of teachers' words through interviews allowed the researcher to make sense of their perspective. That is, of how explicit attention to moral purpose within PALM has influenced their teaching, their leadership and their learning. These interviews involved learning the individual's motives for their feelings, which influenced decisions to act in certain ways, or an empathetic understanding.

Weber (1864–1920) and Dilthey (1833–1911) maintained that there were two different types of science; one based on 'abstract explanation' (*erklarung*) and the other entrenched in 'empathetic understanding' – taking the role of the other (*verstehen*). This case study research recognises the importance of taking the role of the other, being non-interventive and focusing on

process over outcomes (Charon, 2010; Gibbons & Sanderson, 2002; Stake, 1995). A significant aspect of this social research was to use methods that are ‘sensitive to context, that get inside the way others see the world, and that are more concerned with achieving an empathetic understanding than with testing law-like theories of human behavior’ (Neuman, 2007, p. 94).

### **3.1.3 Research methodology**

Research methodology is defined as ‘the reasoning that informs particular ways of doing research, or the principles that inform its organization’ (Gough, 2002, p. 5). Methodology provides a rationale for the orchestration of specific research methods that are theoretically supported by an epistemology and aligned with a particular research purpose in the ‘real-life’ context of the research problem (Flyvberg, 2006; Yin, 2009). The methodology chosen in the context of this study allowed the researcher to accomplish an in-depth investigation of the experiences of explicit attention to moral purpose for teachers within PALM and recognise themes which emerged from the analysis of data. An orchestrating perspective of case study was adopted in this research since it is consistent with the epistemology of constructionism and the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism. Case study is an empirical inquiry approach to research that investigates a present-day phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident requiring the use of multiple sources of information (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2009).

#### ***Case study***

Case study methodology was chosen for this research since it deals with a unique circumstance, which occurred in only one school. A case study approach allowed for a systematic way of observing situations, gathering data, analysing the data and reporting the results. ‘The case study offers a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon. Anchored in real-life situations, the case study results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon’ (Merriam, 2009, p. 50). This case study approach allowed the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and its significance for those involved. A case study approach has three distinct characteristics, which support the proposal that case study is appropriate for this research. These features are that case study is particularistic, descriptive and heuristic (Merriam, 2009).

1. The particularistic character of case study means that it focuses ‘on a particular situation, event, program or phenomenon. The case itself is important for what it reveals about the phenomenon and what it might represent’ (Merriam, 2009, p. 43). This study focused on a single initiative in a single school.



2. This research provided rich, thick descriptions of moral purpose as teachers perceived it, or ‘the complete literal description’ of their experience (Merriam, 2009, p. 43). This study focused on ‘the particular perceptions of the actors’ (Stake, 1995, p. 42) of their PALM experience.
3. The heuristic character of case study involves extending the reader’s experience or confirming what they already know (Merriam, 2009). This case study has enabled readers to broaden and deepen their understanding of leading learning from moral purpose through an in-depth exposure to the experience of teachers in PALM. This process of transferability (Gomm, Hammersley, & Foster, 2009) has been described as ‘illuminating’ the reader’s understanding of a particular phenomenon, and labelled ‘naturalistic generalization’. Stake (2007, p. 3, as cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 44) clarifies:

A case study provides vicarious instances and episodes that merge with existing icons of experience .... Sometimes an existing generalization is reinforced; sometimes modified as a result of the case study, sometimes exploded into incomprehensibility .... Qualitative case study is valued for its ability to capture complex action, perception and interpretation.

This research focused on the perceptions and behaviour of teachers from one Catholic primary school on the southern outskirts of Sydney, Australia. The participants in this research are the core team who led the development of PALM and full-time classroom teachers who were directly engaged in the PALM initiative and hence have first-hand knowledge and experiences of the phenomenon being studied. This research made use of multiple sources of information from 14 full-time classroom teachers employed at this Catholic primary school. Because the researcher was involved in the implementation of a school improvement model at this school it was chosen as the case study site.

An important preliminary task of case study research lies in delimiting the object of study, the case, as a single entity around which there are natural boundaries (Merriam, 1998). Stake (2005) recognised three types of case studies classified according to these natural boundaries of the researcher’s interest – intrinsic, collective, and instrumental. Intrinsic case study is when the researcher has a particular interest in a case. Collective case study involves exploring multiple case studies to illustrate an issue. Instrumental case study, which shapes the methodology of this research, involves the researcher focusing on one issue or concern, and then selecting one bounded case to illustrate this issue (Creswell, 2007). The issue of moral purpose within a model of leading for learning was explored with teachers from one Catholic primary school in this research.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of case study methodology. These are (a) the matter of generalisability from a single case, (b) case study research could corroborate the researcher's predetermined ideas, and (c) the complexity of synthesising case study research into overall concepts (Flyvberg, 2006; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). Each of these limitations will be described, along with the way in which these limitations are addressed in this study.

A common concern about case studies is that generalisations made from a single case may not contribute to scientific progress. Yin (2009) argued that case studies 'are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes' (p. 15). The aim of this study was to develop and contribute to the understanding that exists around the influence of moral purpose on teachers' perceptions and practice and not to count incidences (statistical generalisation) of this occurring. This allows readers to transfer the knowledge gained from this case to their own context.

A second common concern is that case study research may confirm the researcher's preconceived notions (Flyvberg, 2006). As the filter for data collection and analysis, the researcher comes with both strengths and limitations. The limitation of potential bias is addressed in this study through adherence to systematic procedures (Yin, 2009) including enlisting two critical friends who were involved in the process to oversee the research as member checks. Each interview participant was given a coded copy of his or her interview transcript to read and review for potential bias. The researcher's detailed knowledge of the case including her 'insider status' as a driver of PALM is advantageous to this study, as she 'can "close in" on real-life situations and test views directly in relation to phenomena as they unfold in practice' (Flyvberg, 2006, p. 235).

In summary, case study was chosen as the methodology for this research because as a strategy of inquiry it allowed the researcher to explore in depth teachers' perceptions of moral purpose within a model of leading for learning in a Catholic primary school. The process of this research is clearly illustrated in the words of Merriam (1998):

A case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. Insights gleaned from case studies can directly influence policy, practice, and future research. (p. 19)

The rationale for the inclusion of participants in this case study will be reviewed in the following section whilst, specific data gathering techniques employed will be discussed later in this paper.

### **3.2 PARTICIPANTS**

The major research question guides this study to investigate how explicit attention to moral purpose within a model of leading for learning has influenced teachers' perceptions and practice in teaching and learning. The aim of this research is to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular instance rather than generalisations in a statistical sense, therefore purposeful sampling of participants was the method of choice (Merriam, 2009). The strength of purposeful sampling sits in selecting 'information-rich' cases for in-depth study. 'Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry' (Patton, 2002, p. 230).

The three focus group participants, the principal and two classroom teachers who were part of the core group driving the development of PALM, were purposively chosen as a way of triangulating the data. The 14 one-to-one interview participants were purposively selected based on a set of criteria which ensured that participants had as full an experience of the PALM initiative as was possible. These criteria are set out below;

- classroom teacher – responsible for teaching a particular class group;
- full-time teacher – teaches at the school five days a week;
- participation in professional learning, PAL sessions and Stage meetings; and
- not a member of the core group which developed PALM.

Because they did not satisfy all of these criteria, the following key stakeholders in PALM were excluded; the Assistant Principal (AP), Religious Education Coordinator (REC), Teacher Librarian and Special Needs teacher. The resulting sample included those teachers who had a full engagement with PALM, but did not come to the process with the kind of 'ownership' that being a member of the core group might bring. Two participants had worked at the school for more than 15 years whilst the remaining participants had worked at the school for 3-10 years.

### **3.3 DATA GATHERING STRATEGIES**

Data collection procedures and the consequent data analysis were guided by the research design and aligned to the research problem and subsequent purpose of the investigation. The case study approach 'has no specific methods of data collection or of analysis which are unique to it as a method of inquiry' (Bassey, 1999, p. 69). Strategies employed for this research, as an interpretive case study, were intended to reveal teachers' understandings of how explicit attention to moral purpose has influenced their perceptions and practice. Case study evidence can come from various sources including interviews, questionnaires, documentation,

observation, archival records, audiovisual materials and physical artefacts (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). The techniques selected for this study were one-to-one interviews, a focus group, and document analysis.

The research sub-questions that focused the research action are listed below (Bassey, 1999, p .68).

- *How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perception and practice of teaching?*
- *How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perception and practice of leading?*
- *How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perception and practice of learning?*

Table 3.1 provides a summary of the research design outlining how the research questions relate to the data collection strategies.

Table 3.1

*Overview of the Research Design*

| Research questions  | Document analysis | Core group focus group | One-to-one interviews | Participant validation |
|---|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions and practice of teaching? | ✓                 | ✓                      | ✓                     | ✓                      |
| How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions and practice of leading?  | ✓                 | ✓                      | ✓                     | ✓                      |
| How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions and practice of learning? | ✓                 | ✓                      | ✓                     | ✓                      |

As this research was being conducted within a social constructivist epistemology it involved a heavy reliance on the spoken word through focus group and one-on-one interviews (Darlaston-Jones, 2007). Qualitative data are data conveyed through words and as such comprises 'direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge' gained through interviews and 'excerpts, quotations or entire passages' gleaned from various types of documents (Patton, 2002).

Firstly, the researcher conducted 14 participant one-to-one interviews that provided evidence of how teachers' explicit attention to moral purpose has influenced their perceptions and practice of teaching, leading and learning (see Appendix B for the interview questions).

The researcher then led a focus group interview with the core PALM group members asking the same questions above from the core group perspective. That is, instead of providing samples from their own experience they were asked to provide examples in which teachers reflected each of the ethics (see Appendix C). Subsequently the researcher analysed hard-copy and electronic school documents related to the PALM process that provided evidence of how teachers' explicit attention to moral purpose has influenced their perceptions and practice of teaching, leading and learning.

The timeline for the collection of data is presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

*Stages for Data Collection*

| <b>Data collection strategy</b>   | <b>Stages for data collection</b> | <b>Participants</b>                        | <b>Purpose</b>   |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| One-to-one interviews   | September – November 2011         | 14 full-time classroom teachers            | This is over half the available sample of classroom teachers. Teachers were asked questions A–F.               |
| Initial focus group interview   | July 2012                         | Core group who led the development of PALM | The detailed knowledge of the core group provides a different perspective of PALM from the classroom teachers. |
| Participant validation  | November 2014                     | 14 one-to-one interview participants       | Each participant was given a coded copy of their interview transcript to read and validate.                    |
| <b>Document analysis</b><br>Various documents including Stage meeting agendas and minutes, the LTLL journal, evaluations of PAL sessions, a staff survey, a school self-portrait, <i>LTLL School Reflection Guide</i> , teacher video interviews and a blog post were analysed to triangulate data generated from the interviewing process. |                                   |  |  |

### 3.3.1 Document analysis

The researcher analysed certain types of documents as a data gathering strategy. The focus in examining the documents was those aspects that reflected moral purpose. Documentation including public records, personal documents, and physical material already existing in the school, provided valuable information for the case study researcher to help her understand the fundamental phenomena of moral purpose (Creswell, 2008; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). The documents accessed for this study included staff collaborative websites, reflective journals, Stage meeting agendas and minutes, planning notes for professional

learning, PowerPoint presentations, and evaluations of Staff Development Days. Historical data or archival records were analysed by the researcher to place this case study in context. The historical data for this study as represented in Figure 3.2 included records of the school's participation in the Australian Catholic University (ACU) LTLL project from 2007 until 2009, and the subsequent development of the school-based program of leading for learning (PALM) from 2009 to 2011. These records comprise video interviews with staff, staff surveys, evaluations of the LTLL project.

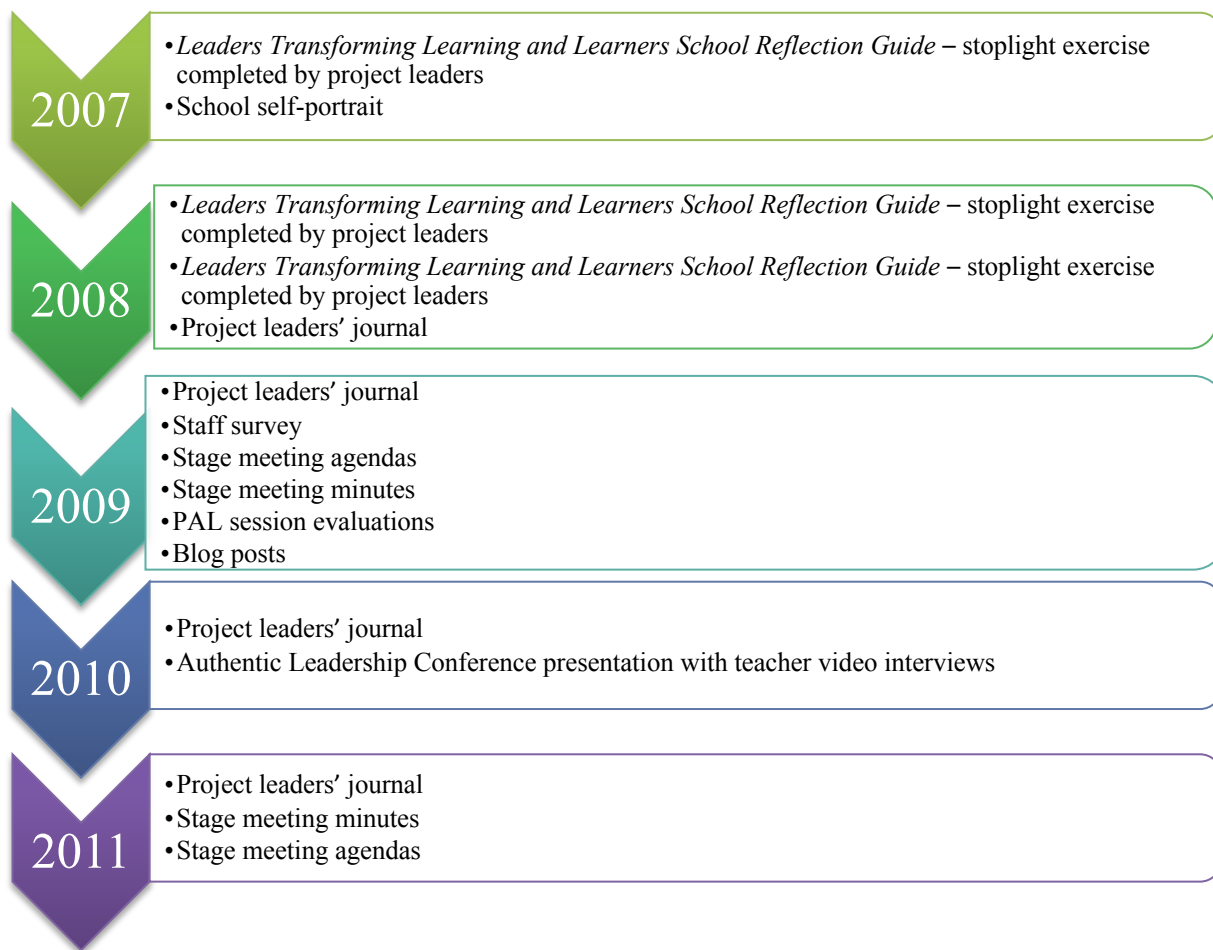


Figure 3.2. Historical documentary data.

Documentation provided evidence of what happened in the school before this research began. The 'paper trail', and increasingly the 'electronic trail', provided evidence of things that could not be detected from the focus group and one-to-one interviews. The electronic trail in this research was interaction amongst teachers supported by staff blogs, wikis and email communication. In this study, visual documents in the form of video interviews were viewed, providing information through gestures, emotions and facial expressions. Documents offer insights into the research problem and are helpful, 'not only because of what can be learned from them but also as a stimulus for paths of inquiry that can be pursued only through direct observation and interviewing' (Patton, 2002, p. 294). Documents are grounded in the real world

because they are a result of the context in which they were created. The documentary evidence in this study was used to inform, corroborate and verify data obtained from the focus group and one-to-one interviews. 'For case studies the most important use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources' (Yin, 2009, p. 103).

There are two limitations identified by the researcher in using documentary evidence as a data gathering strategy. Documents may be difficult to gather and obtain (Creswell, 2008). Many of the documentary and historical records for this research have been stored electronically on the school server or 'in the cloud' using web 2.0 technologies and were therefore easily accessed by the researcher. However, several of these historical documents did not relate directly to the research of the case study, so the 'investigator is a vicarious observer' discerning communication between teachers with different objectives from the research purpose (Yin, 2009, p. 105). The researcher needed to continually identify the intent of each document for its relevance to the research questions.

### **3.3.2 One-to-one interviews**

The interview is one of the most important sources of case study information. One-to-one interviews are 'guided conversations rather than structured queries' (Yin, 2009, p. 106). Fourteen semi-structured interviews were conducted in this research. This represented over half of the possible research participants and provided a good cross-section. The kinds of questions asked of teachers were regarding their experience, opinion and values, knowledge, feelings and senses. Interviewees were invited to describe their personal *experience* of PALM, including a descriptive history. Teachers were asked about their beliefs or *opinions* concerning the influence of moral purpose within PALM on their teaching, leadership and learning. Questions regarding teachers' *knowledge* of the school improvement process were asked to ascertain their actual factual understanding of this phenomenon.

The participants were teachers who were employed when PALM was being developed and after PALM was developed. These volunteers were selected according to their experience with PALM in the hope that this would provide various perspectives and rich data. The researcher asked open-ended questions as they can promote discussion that flows naturally, producing descriptive data and possibly stories about how moral purpose is expressed in education (Merriam, 2009).

One-to-one interviews are an excellent data gathering strategy for the following reasons; (a) they allow interviewees to give a more detailed response than in a questionnaire, providing richer, more contextual data; (b) the interview is a particularly useful tool for the researcher to

gain ‘empathetic understanding’ of the actions and experiences of each unique participant (Stake, 1995); and (c) one-to-one interviews allowed the researcher to probe teachers’ views and monitor their non-verbal communication. Interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder and transcribed into field notes ready for data analysis. Comparisons were made between themes and concepts extracted from one-to-one interview data and those themes developed from the document analysis, including historical data, as to whether they supported or contradicted each other.

The limitations of one-to-one interviews lie in the qualifications of the interviewer. Experience and expertise in good interviewing skills including listening, restatement, clarification and persistence are required. In this study, the person conducting the interviews possesses these skills and is well versed in the type of questioning needed to provide rich, thick data (Stake, 1995). Finally, a disadvantage of using one-to-one interviews could be the time-consuming task of transcribing each interview. In this study the researcher ensured all interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder and transcribed using an online service. The study is limited to 14 such interviews.

### **3.3.3 Focus group**

A focus group was used in the data gathering strategy as a means of triangulation, gaining the core group’s detailed knowledge and different perspective from classroom teachers. The use of a focus group as a technique in this study is justified below.

A focus group is a data gathering strategy in which particular groups of people who have knowledge about a topic are questioned about that research topic (Krueger, 2008, as cited in Merriam, 2009; Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook, 2006, as cited in Merriam, 2009). The types of questions asked were focused on experience and behaviour, opinion and values, knowledge, and background or demographics (Merriam, 2009). Questions were designed to invite openness and avoid bias in an interactive group setting where participants were free to talk with other group members (Grudens-Schuck, Allen, & Larson, 2004). A constructionist perspective inspires this data collection process because the data gained from a focus group is socially constructed within the interaction of the group. Undoubtedly much of the meaning was socially constructed before participating in the focus group. In contrast to a succession of one-to-one interviews, focus group participants were able to listen to each other’s responses and react to each other accordingly. There is no expectation for agreement or disagreement amongst participants. The aim is to get high-quality results by encouraging divergent thinking and the



disclosure of personal perceptions and behaviours as a result of interaction (Larson, Grudens-Schuck, & Allen, 2004; Patton, 2002).

The core group who led the development of PALM comprised the school principal and two coordinators from the school executive who were also classroom teachers. The three members of this focus group had comprehensive knowledge of the school improvement process (PALM) and so provided another perspective from the full-time classroom teacher. The researcher led this focus group interview in order to gain an empathetic understanding of the data presented. The focus group interview was recorded using a digital voice recorder then transcribed in preparation for data analysis.

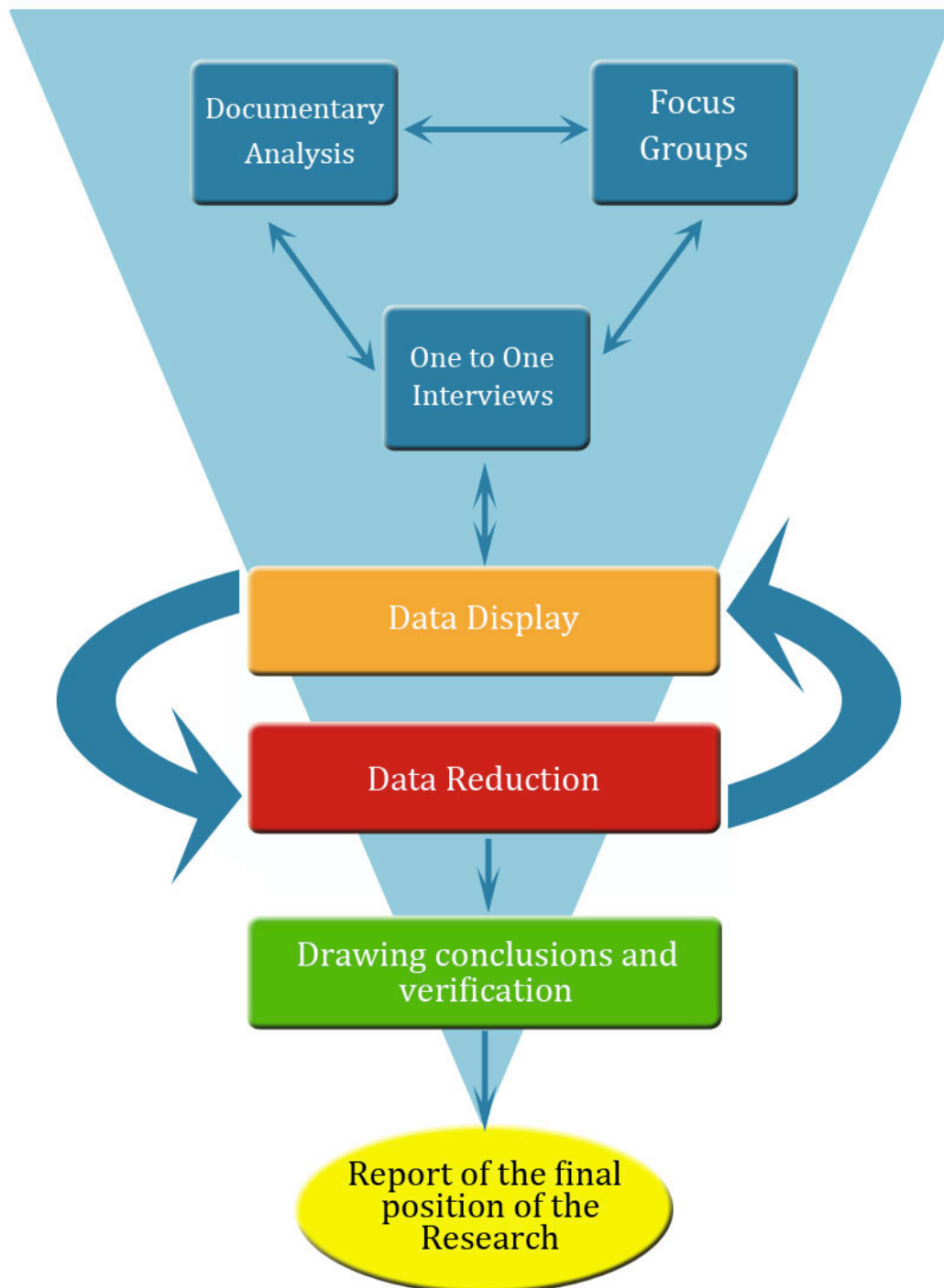
There are three limitations of this data gathering strategy. The first is the facilitating skills of the researcher, who should consider group dynamics and allow all voices to be heard in the interview discussion rather than those of one or two dominant participants (Kruegar, 1998, as cited in Whitney, 2005; Morgan, 1997, as cited in Whitney, 2005). The researcher as an experienced teacher and education adviser possesses these skills. Secondly, the literature recognises problems with transcription (Creswell, 2008; Kruegar & Casey, 2000); these can be overcome with the use of a transcription service. Finally, researcher bias, predispositions and attitudes may affect the interaction and the data obtained (Merriam, 2009). Despite these limitations the focus group provided quality data that addressed the research purpose.

### **3.4 ANALYSIS OF DATA**

Since data analysis is a complex process used to answer research questions, the researcher in this study systematically consolidated, reduced and interpreted what participants have said and done in relation to the research purpose. ‘The core of qualitative analysis lies in these three related processes of describing phenomena, classifying it, and seeing how our concepts interconnect’ (Dey, 1993). Data analysis has taken place iteratively with the design and interpretation of subsequent stages of data collection (Creswell, 2007, 2008; Lichtman, 2006; Merriam, 2009). Figure 3.3 demonstrates the process of data analysis for this study. This method of gradually developing categories of information is known as the constant comparative approach to data analysis established by Glaser and Strauss (1967).

The qualitative research that is central to this case study is oriented to inductive concept building rather than developing substantive theory (Merriam, 1998). The constant comparative approach is well suited to concept building as it involves comparing one piece of data to another and determining the similarities and differences. Data items were grouped together on the basis of similarity. This grouping was then given a name and became a category. The general aim of

this analysis was to find patterns in the data. These patterns were placed in relationship to each other by the researcher. Miles and Huberman (1994) described the data analysis process as ‘consisting of three concurrent flows of activity’ (p. 10), that is, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. These simultaneous activities are evident in the following description of the data analysis process adopted for this study.



*Figure 3.3. Interactive process of data analysis.*

The data analysis process as illustrated in Figure 3.3 began with the data collection where focus group and one-to-one interviews were recorded and transcribed into field notes. The

numerous pages of text data gathered from the interviews were then divided into many segments of information. Data coding was the next step in this process. Documentary data including historical data were coded simultaneously into categories, which encapsulated significant characteristics of the document's content. This process known as content analysis is relevant to all the qualitative data in this study (Merriam, 2009). The coding procedure above involves making sense out of data by dividing them into segments, labelling these segments with codes, investigating these codes for connections and redundancy, then collapsing these codes into broad themes. Coding will be explained further in the next subsection. In this research study data reduction followed coding. This form of analysis involved reducing and transforming the data through selection, summary or paraphrase, and allowing it to be subsumed into larger patterns, which were consistent with the research design, conceptual framework and research questions. The data display is 'an organized, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action' (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 11). The categories created were then interpreted into findings in the next step of the process using direct quotations from the participants. The researcher wrote memos or notes during the research process to expand on ideas about the data and the coded categories. Memoing is intended to 'help direct the inquirer to new sources of data, shape which ideas to develop further, and prevent paralysis from mountains of data' (Creswell, 2008, p. 448). The case study or story began to emerge and was constantly refined throughout the analysis procedure. From the beginning of the data collection the researcher was interpreting data to draw preliminary conclusions. Finally, the researcher explained the findings including the theoretical relationship between the research findings, the theoretical perspective and the literature review. In this case, the relationships between symbolic interactionism, information from the literature around how explicit attention to moral purpose has influenced teachers' teaching, leadership and learning and the research findings were established. Inconsistencies and ambiguities within the presentation of findings were identified and explanations offered (Creswell, 2008).

This research process ends with the final research report (this thesis), which makes 'grounded and explicit' (Miles & Huberman, 1994) conclusions that may have been vague during the first steps of the data analysis process.

### **3.4.1 Data reduction and data coding**

A coding system was used to organise focus group and one-to-one interview data into categories or themes ready for analysis. 'Coding is the process of segmenting and labeling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data' (Creswell, 2008, p. 251). The process of

coding in this study involved the researcher sifting and sorting portions of text that were potentially relevant for answering the research questions (Lichtman, 2006; Merriam, 2009).

This study used the three phases for coding as developed by Strauss and Corbin (1990). The process for developing categories of information is known as *open* coding, interrelating the categories is known as *axial* coding, and constructing a ‘story’ that joins categories is known as *selective* coding (Creswell, 2007). The process of open coding was used in this study as it involved reducing the database to a small number of concepts after any new information obtained did not add to the understanding of teachers’ experiences within those categories – reaching a saturation point. The researcher then engaged in axial coding and chose one concept, category or central phenomenon and reviewed the database or collected new data to gain insight into that particular phenomenon. This entailed discovering the conditions that caused this phenomenon including context, overriding conditions and consequences. The final coding phase included selecting the central phenomenon, ‘systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships’ and further refining the story of the case study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 116).

Initially the interview and documentary data were categorised according to the areas of teaching, leadership and learning, then further categorised according to the ethics (authenticity, presence and responsibility) and the core values (transformation, justice, excellence, Catholicity and the common good) as understood and defined in the *LTLL Reflection Guide*. These data were then compared to the indicators for each core value and ethic within the reflection guide and new categories/themes were identified according to participant responses. The interview data were validated by classroom teacher and focus group participants. The three data sets were then triangulated within each area of teaching, leading and learning and recurring themes were identified. Finally, the data were synthesised into four themes that represent teachers’ experience of the moral imperative of education within the school improvement process – answering the major research question.

### **3.5 TRUSTWORTHINESS**

The concepts of validity and reliability are fundamental in quantitative surveys and experiments but challenging for case study research (Basse, 1999; Creswell, 2007). The challenge for this educational research, carried out through the theoretical perspective of interpretivism, is whether the interpretations are credible and truthful and whether one interpretation is superior to another (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The constructionist alternative to validity and reliability are the criteria of trustworthiness and authenticity of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 2007). There are eight strategies often used by researchers to ensure their

findings are trustworthy and authentic (Creswell, 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1986; Merriam, 2009). These strategies include prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field; triangulation; member checking or respondent validation; rich, thick description; audit trail; peer review or examination; clarifying researcher bias or reflexivity; and negative case analysis. The first five forms of verification were employed for the purposes of this study.

*Prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field.* This study was conducted over a three-year period. The researcher was a member of staff for seven years at the case study primary school during the development and early implementation of PALM. As a member of the school leadership team for five of those seven years she was intimately aware of the culture and the people involved in PALM up until a year before the data collection. She visited the site regularly to continue to build trust with participants and learn the changing culture of the school. This enabled the researcher to identify those characteristics that were most relevant to the purpose of the research.

*Triangulation.* In this study triangulation of the multiple *methods* of data collection was used to ensure internal validity. The majority of triangulation of the multiple *sources* of data included cross-checking data from the one-to-one interviews with information from the core group interview and verifying this with the analysis of the various documents listed in section 3.3.1 (Merriam, 2009; Schwandt, 2007).

*Member checking or respondent validation.* This is the process of checking whether hypotheses, preliminary findings and interpretations of the researcher are accurate and consistent with members of the group who originally constructed them. In this study the researcher allowed interviewees to clarify their responses upon reflection by reading the coded transcriptions of interviews. The benefits of respondent validation included allowing participants to correct any errors of fact or interpretation and offer additional information, and it allowed the interviewer to summarise for the participant and begin the first step of analysis.

*Rich, thick description.* The researcher had regular access to the research site and therefore was able to provide rich, thick descriptions of the participants and context of the study. There were multiple sources of data and considerably detailed records. This allows for transferability of the data, ‘so that judgments about the degree of fit or similarity may be made by others who may wish to apply all or part of the findings elsewhere’ (Lincoln & Guba, 2 p. 19).

*Audit trail.* An audit trail consists of chronological narrative entries of research actions (Creswell, 2007). The researcher kept a detailed research journal recording reflections, questions and decisions made in response to problems, issues or ideas faced when collecting data. This running record continued through the analysis and interpretation of data phases of

the research design. The audit trail allows for dependability and confirmability of the research data. It is continually updated and aligned to the research purpose (Lincoln & Guba, 2007). Verification involves ‘checking for the most common or deceptive biases that can creep into the process of drawing conclusions’ (Miles & Huberman, 1994 as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 438). Ultimately the trustworthiness of the research study depends on the credibility of the researcher, therefore safeguarding validity and reliability in research entails conducting the investigation in an ethical way. Regular discussions have taken place between the researcher and her critical friends regarding the method of study, the consistency of the emerging findings with the raw data, and provisional interpretations (Merriam, 2009).

### 3.6 ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethics can be defined as ‘the interaction and relationship between the researcher and the subject as well as the effect inquiry research has on populations’ (Schwandt, 2007, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 109). The ethical ideologies that support this research are respect for truth and respect for the human person (Bassey, 1999, p. 74).

1. The respect for truth in this data collection as well as in the reporting of the findings is revealed through the numerous strategies mentioned above for verifying the research.
2. Respect for persons in this case involved recognising the teachers’ initial ownership of the data and therefore ensuring informed consent was given to participate in the research. As the researcher knew all teachers, their confidentiality and anonymity were protected through participant identifiers – T1 to T14, and the focus or core group participants – CG1 to CG3. In the broader context of Sydney Catholic schools, the anonymity of the case study school was protected by replacing the original name with *St Matthew’s* school in the presentation of data.

This research was conducted in accordance with the policies of the ACU Human Research Ethics Committee (see approval letter in Appendix I). Prior to the data gathering process, permission was sought in writing from the CEO Sydney to carry out the study (see approval letter in Appendix H). As the employer of all teachers in the school this office was fully informed of the research purpose and significance. Since the study was conducted in a primary school, permission was also sought in writing from the principal of the school.

The following ethical issues were adhered to in this study. The 17 potential participants were informed about all aspects of the study (see information letter in Appendix J). A letter of

informed consent was drafted for participants to sign regarding their involvement and consent (see Appendix K). Research participants were notified that they could choose to withdraw from the research at any time (Creswell, 2008). Data were stored safely and securely, in accordance with ACU recommendations. During the research any reflective journals, questionnaires, digitally recorded data, transcripts and other printed materials were stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office. Access to the data was restricted to those authorised by the researcher. Data were coded and stored in line with ACU policies (Bassey, 1999). The research participants were consulted regarding the publication of data and conclusions drawn from the data. Additionally, progressive and final reports were made available to research participants for member checking (Creswell, 2008).

### **3.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

The limitations of case study methodology have been acknowledged previously regarding generalisability and transferability to other individuals, groups or contexts (Stake, 1995). Nevertheless, generalisation to theory can be achieved from this single case study (Yin, 2009). The research instruments, consistent with their epistemological and theoretical foundations, allow for rich, thick description of those perceptions of the phenomena from participants so that readers are able to determine how closely their contexts match the research (Merriam, 1998). Consequently, each reader is able to apply their own limitations through a process of engaging with the discussions presented, applying their own understanding and through 'vicarious experience' (Stake, 1995, p. 87) make naturalistic generalisations through case-to-case transfer. In terms of discussing practice the researcher relied on self-report as there was not sufficient time or resources in this study to extend this to classroom observation of teachers' practice.

The research is also limited by the researcher's own bias and interpretation, for 'the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis' (Merriam, 2009, p. 52). The researcher may be influenced by pre-existing perceptions of the information shared by teachers, and may be influenced by their perceptions that are unique to each participant and subject to continuing influence (Mercer, 2007). The participants are Catholic and Christian staff therefore this could have an impact on the orientation of the responses to the questions particularly in the area of values. The cultural characteristics of the school and the staff may be foundational in the way they see all issues in the study therefore, the findings may only be relevant to Catholic and Christian schools. The researcher's professional relationship with the participants as colleagues is acknowledged. This is impossible to fully control for impact.

### **3.8 SUMMARY**

This thesis explores how explicit attention to moral purpose influenced teachers' perceptions and practice in teaching, leading and learning. Using case study methodology within the paradigm of interpretivism, the research involved collecting and analysing qualitative data from one-to-one interviews, a focus group interview and documentary evidence. The participants were fourteen classroom teachers and three school leaders who led the school improvement process.



## Chapter 4: Presentation of Results, Discussion and Findings – Moral Purpose and Teaching

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The purpose of this chapter is to present data generated from one-to-one interviews, a focus group interview and supporting documents that explored how explicit attention to moral purpose influenced teachers' perceptions and practice, discuss the analysis and synthesis of the data utilising the scholarly literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and generate findings in answering the research question; 'How has explicit attention to moral purpose within a model of leading for learning influenced teachers' perceptions and practice?'

Each of the next three chapters will be devoted to answering one of the three research sub-questions focused on moral purpose and teaching, moral purpose and leading, and moral purpose and learning. This chapter will address the first research sub-question;

*How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions and practice of teaching?*

The data are presented in relation to teaching as reflected in the educational ethics and core values of schooling derived from the LTLL2 framework that guided the PALM process at the case study school. These ethics were authenticity, presence and responsibility in addition the values analysed were Catholicity, Excellence, Justice, Transformation and the Common Good. Each of these five core values are defined in 'Focus 3' of the LTLL instrument (see Appendix A) and cited below. Each of the educational ethics are defined in 'Focus 4' of the LTLL instrument as follows,

The ethic of authenticity challenges us to act in truth and integrity in all our interactions as humans, citizens, teachers and leaders. The ethic of presence challenges us to relate to others and to develop self-awareness, in ways that are truly open and engaging. The ethic of responsibility challenges us to act in ways that acknowledge our personal accountability for our actions, for shaping learning and for providing growth promoting environments for transforming relationships and learning (Bezzina & Burford, 2007, p. 5).

Catholicity is described as follows, 'The defining characteristic of our schools is that they are Catholic- a work of love, for the full human development of our students, grounded in the teachings of Christ and at the service of society. They are a key element of the evangelising mission of the Church as they strive to bring culture and faith into harmony in the school community' (Bezzina & Burford, 2007, p. 3). Excellence is defined as, 'Catholic schools must

be good schools. That is, they must seek the very best outcomes for all their students. This comes down to ensuring the highest quality of teaching and learning both for staff and students' (Bezzina & Burford, 2007, p. 3).

Justice has been defined by *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* as the, 'will to give their due to God and neighbour' (1807). The document, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* makes it clear that Catholic schools should have 'a special attention to those who are weakest' (n15) and are 'at the service of society' (n16). Catholic schools are challenged to be inviting, inclusive and just' (Bezzina & Burford, 2007, p. 4).

Transformation is defined as, 'Catholic schools must go beyond the informational and even the formational to the transformational. As Jerry Starratt says, through transformative learning, the learner becomes a fuller, richer, deeper human being' (Bezzina & Burford, 2007, p. 4). Finally, the Common Good is defined accordingly; 'We see that society is not just a collection of individuals but as a community called to share for the common good. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* says that the common good has three elements; concern for the individual, concern for the group and the maintenance of stability and good order' (Bezzina & Burford, 2007, p. 4).

Evidence provided by one-to-one interviews with 14 participants is presented, followed by the initial focus group made up of the core PALM group members and supporting documentation generated during the PALM process as related to the research question. The interviews were conducted on three separate occasions, the interviewees comprised 14 volunteer classroom teachers who were part of the PALM process, known as T1-T14. The purpose of these interviews as the primary data set was to explore teachers' experiences within the PALM process of explicit attention to values and ethics and how these experiences influenced their perceptions and practice of teaching. Participants were asked questions A–F (see Appendix B).

The focus group interview was conducted on one occasion and consisted of the core group who led the development of PALM. This group is comprised of the school principal (CG1) and two coordinators from the school executive who are also classroom teachers (CG2 and CG3). The three members of this focus group had a comprehensive knowledge of the school improvement process (PALM) and spoke from a leadership perspective. The purpose of this interview was to validate and interrogate the responses of the primary group in comparison to the core groups' experiences within the PALM process. Participants were asked questions A–F (see Appendix C).

The inclusion of documentary data generated during the PALM process was intended to triangulate and give further insight into the data from the primary data set focused on teachers' experiences within the PALM process, and the leadership focus group data. The documentary data included documents related to the PALM process and included the following types of records; Stage Meeting Agendas (SMA), Staff Survey (SS) and LTLL journal (LTLLJ) composed by the core group and providing evidence of the PALM process, Stage Meeting Minutes (SMM) composed by classroom teachers, and Teacher Video Interviews (TVI) conducted by a core group member, Mathematics PAL Session Evaluations (MPSE) and T12's Authentic Learning Ramblings (T12ALR) composed by executive teachers (see Appendix G for a summary of the documents and their source). The reporting of the documentary data followed the thematic approach of the overall analysis and will be reported accordingly. The results of a School Self-Portrait (SSP) and the LTLL School Reflection Guide (LTLL SRG) completed by the core group prior to the PALM process and the LTLL SRG rated by the core group and executive teachers during PALM are reported according to each research sub-question dedicated to teaching, leading or learning and integrated with the overall values and ethics schema where possible.

#### **4.1 ONE-TO-ONE INTERVIEW, FOCUS GROUP AND DOCUMENTARY DATA**

Table 4.1 presents the key themes that emerged from the one-to-one interview data under the framework of the ethics and core values from LTLL2, which was used to guide the analysis. Teachers' comments were coded according to their similarity to the indicators of moral purpose as outlined in the LTLL2 reflection tool.

Table 4.1

*One-to-One Interviews' Frequency of Themes in Teaching*

| RQ 1: How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions and practice of teaching?   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
| ETHICS  |  |   |   |
| Authenticity  | Presence   | Responsibility  | Transformation  |
| <b>Learning – 12</b><br>Professional learning – 3<br>Programming – 9<br>Collaborative – 11<br>Catholic principles – 1<br>Real teacher – sense of self – 20<br>Self-reflection – 19<br>Reflective practice – 21<br>Child-centred – 16<br>Challenging staff to change – 8<br><b>Relationships – 6</b><br>Professional relationships – 11<br>Shared understanding – 5<br><b>School structures that nurture authenticity – 10</b> | <b>Values relationships within community – 3</b><br>With students – 26<br>Colleagues/ professional – 16<br>Teachers support each other – 11<br><b>Commitment to a personal relationship with children – 7</b><br>Sense of self – 5<br><b>Clear communication and empathetic listening – 1</b><br><b>Insightful self-reflection – 4</b><br><b>Being attentive/ sensitive to others – 11</b><br><b>Professional learning – 3</b><br><b>Affirming – 4</b> | <b>Providing a caring environment</b><br>Personal resp. – 4<br>Shared resp. – 11<br><b>Change – 6</b><br>Personal – 4<br><b>Children's learning – 7</b><br>Personal – 7<br>Professional – 7<br><b>Professional learning – 4</b><br>Collaborative practice – 3<br>Shared accountability for school core values – 2 | <b>Transform students for life – 3</b><br><b>Promoting self-knowledge in learners – 1</b><br>Challenging students to take responsibility for their own learning – 4<br>Challenging students to live out their values – 6<br>Providing meaningful and purposeful experiences – 12<br>Ensures learning is relevant to students' lives – 7 |
| <b>Tally: 152</b>   | <b>91</b>  | <b>57</b>   | <b>33</b>   |

| CORE VALUES  |   |  |             |
|--|---|--|-------------|
| Justice  | Excellence  | Catholicity  | Common good |
| <b>1</b><br>High expectations – 13<br>Shares explicit view of good teaching and learning – 17<br>Collaborative culture of practice – 7<br>Embeds best current understandings of teaching and learning in practice – 10<br>Students able to articulate values – 1 | <b>Catholic principles – 2</b><br>Founding order's charism – 5<br>Present to faith and school charism – 1<br>Promotes an active prayer life – 3<br>Makes the teachings of the Church explicit – 1 | <b>Promotes collaborative practice – 2</b><br>Building community around shared purpose/ understanding – 4<br>Valuing relationships<br>Professional relationships – 5<br>Students – 2<br>Individual valued – 1<br>Ensuring stability/safety – 4 |             |

Figure 4.1 provides a visual representation of participant responses. Refer to tables 4.1F, 4.2F and 4.3F in Appendix D to view frequency of themes and their source. The themes will be reported as they relate to the research sub-question in order of the frequency of one-to-one interview participant responses.

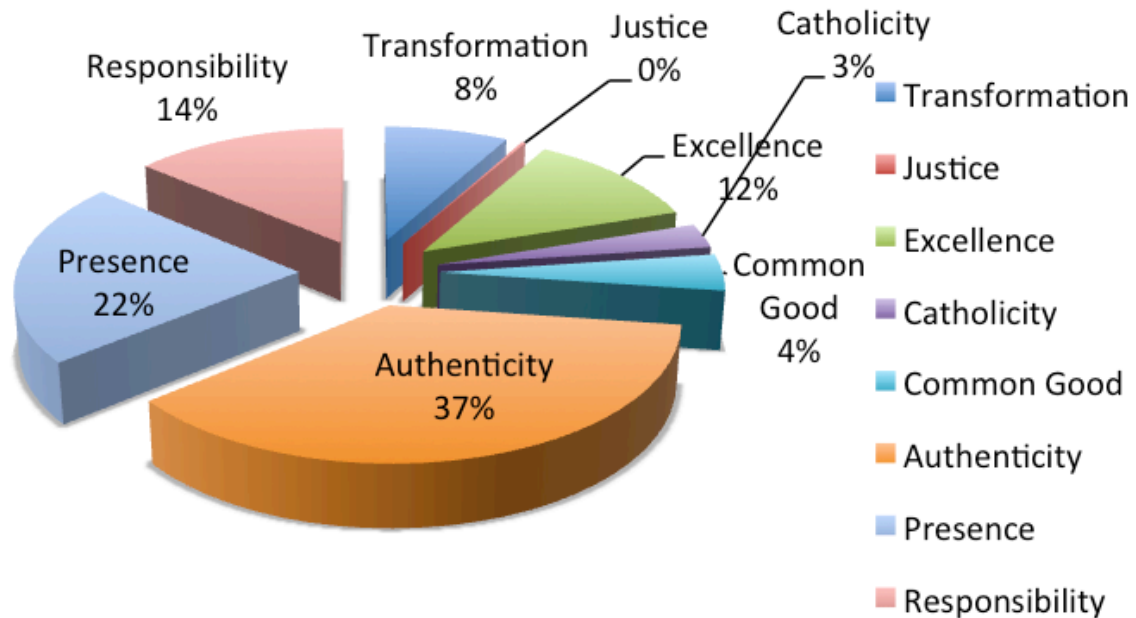


Figure 4.1. Frequency of themes in teaching.

#### 4.1.1 Ethics in teaching

The ethics of teaching was taken from the *LTLL Reflection Guide* that used Starratt's (2004, 2011, 2012) approach to virtue ethics of authenticity, presence and responsibility. The most frequently cited ethic in one-to-one interviews was that of Authenticity which received 152 references from participants followed by Presence (91), and Responsibility (57). Similarly, the focus group mainly cited the ethic of authenticity with 26 references from the core group participants followed by presence (16) and responsibility (9). In the documentary data, the ethic of authenticity in teaching was the only ethic reported by teachers. The ethics of presence and responsibility in teaching were not highlighted in the documents. The interview, core group and documentary data were coded in comparison, but not limited to, the ethics described in the LTLL instrument (Appendix A) and refined by participant language used in the interviews.

The themes used to help identify the ethic of authenticity that were evident in the interview data were; promoting authentic learning, teachers demonstrating reciprocity in interpersonal relationships and developing school and class structures that nurtured authenticity.

The themes that were used to identify the ethic of presence in teaching were; valuing relationships, which increase engagement within the school community, promoting sensitivity to others and affirming and supporting students and staff in their achievement.

The themes used to recognise the ethic of responsibility in the case study school were; teachers creating a healthy organisational environment, taking responsibility for the learning outcomes of all students, building a culture of shared accountability for the core values of the school, and promoting the pursuit of virtue in the community.

### ***Authenticity in teaching***

The ethic of authenticity in this study is derived from the LTLL framework and participants' comments. Fundamentally authenticity requires teachers to be honest in all their relationships as suggested by Starratt (2004), who was foundational in the development of the LTLL framework. All one-to-one interview participants, with a total of 152 instances discussed teaching and the ethic of authenticity. All of the teachers, the core group and documentary data mentioned the ethic of authenticity in promoting authentic learning in terms of teachers' collaborative planning, reflective practice, and a child-centred approach to teaching. Nine of the interview participants described authenticity in teaching as focusing on self or being a 'real teacher'. Five of the 14 teachers described promoting authentic learning as challenging staff and change in teaching practice, while, ten participants referred to the ethic of authenticity as teachers demonstrating reciprocity in interpersonal relationships. Teachers in one-to-one interviews and the documentary data, described developing school and classroom structures that nurture authenticity. Additionally, the ethic of authenticity was described by the core group as promoting authentic learning and teachers becoming risk-takers with an ethical culture developing at the case study school.

One teacher described the ethic of authenticity in teaching as planning real-life experiences for students to learn, 'We planned authentic learning, and from that, we looked at real-life experiences' (T1-17). She recalled how teaching has changed from a focus on textbooks and worksheets in meeting outcomes to real-life learning, as a consequence of PALM,

textbooks in the classroom don't get used. The worksheets don't get used. Everything we do, I think we try to – well, I know I try to make it as real for the children as possible but to maximise their learning as well – as long as those outcomes are being met, and the activities are meeting those outcomes (T1-38).

The data appears to focus on two different perceptions of the nature of this ethic. One is the authenticity of teaching and learning in terms of the teacher and the other, being authenticity in regard to students' authentic learning. One participant clearly acknowledged the moral purpose of PALM as authentic teaching and learning noting, 'the aim is authenticity and improving our teaching all the time and the children's learning' (T5-129). Another teacher described her motivation for providing real-life learning experiences for students, 'authenticity for me is where I want them to learn. I want them to be engaged in learning and I try to make it all very authentic' (T13-29). Two teachers described the ethic of authenticity in teaching as authentic professional learning. One teacher spoke about how PALM in its use of a moral purpose focus, influenced her questioning skills and ability to provide feedback to students as highlighted in the professional reading of John Hattie's research, 'the one on feedback was really important because I know in my classroom I did a lot of verbal feedback.... I did a lot more of the questioning. Well, how do you think and what do you think?' (T9-156). A second teacher described the ethic of authenticity as the purpose of professional learning at breakfast meetings for teachers,

They want to know what's happening out there, and where the future of education is. Where we're heading, so that they're well informed so that they can be authentic in their teaching and help the children in the next century or the next 10 years of their learning (T10-475).

Five teachers described the ethic of authenticity in terms of teaching in relation to programming. One teacher described the two different perceptions of this ethic as both authentic programming by the teacher and students' authentic learning. She explained that in the past teachers may have focused more on how their program was presented than its content, 'There was.... a lot of – making sure that everything looked good, but we had that chance to actually say well if this isn't helping the child, if this isn't helping them learn then let's get rid of it' (T9.2-35). Likewise, another teacher described the ethic of authenticity in regard to decisions about programming, 'I think we're constantly going back over our programs and discussing whether something was really worthwhile having in there or whether it was just an activity for the sake of doing an activity' (T11-28). A third teacher explained the ethic of authenticity as honesty and reiterated that teachers were being more selective about the content of programs due to a focus on moral purpose,

discerning through the program to find out if there were things being repeated or if there was an absolute purpose for a lesson, or if we needed something that was more purposeful to put into the program, but we had to be brutally honest with what we were trying to achieve (T8-142).

Four teachers described attention to the ethic of authenticity in terms of the collaborative nature of learning at PAL sessions. One teacher explained authenticity as the reciprocal sharing of knowledge with less experienced members of staff, 'I started looking at younger people thinking what can they teach me, what can they bring to me, what can I share with them? I started to hear people talking about what they were doing' (T7-60). Another teacher recognised the ethic of authenticity in terms of the benefits of teachers collaborating for students' learning, '- it really broadened I think our teaching and the learning that the children were exposed to.... I thought I've finally found something to really push them along and it was purely from... the sharing that we had' (T9-98). This same teacher described the collaborative process as teachers working more efficiently, '... the way we were working together, the way we were being very – really conscious of what we were teaching, meant that it wasn't more work, it was just becoming much more efficient... it was becoming so child-centred' (T9- 27).

Ten of the 14 interview participants described authenticity in teaching as being a 'real' teacher or having a heightened sense of self. One teacher explained the ethic of authenticity in terms of being true to self, 'I've always called teachers underpaid actors and lawyers overpaid actors, but I don't see that as being as much anymore, because to be an actor, you're being false. You're not portraying the real you' (T2-392). For another teacher, explicit attention to the ethic of authenticity in teaching has changed her understanding of self, 'it has changed the way I teach, and the way I look at teaching, too. I think it has been a gradual change, but now I don't even think about it. Now, it is just the way I am' (T1- 237). Another teacher emphasised the ethic of authenticity in teaching by commenting that she has 'become authentic' and cannot remember what teaching was like before the PALM process since it has 'permeated through us,' 'I'm now starting to think I've always done it (authentic teaching) and I know I didn't' (T6-785). One teacher recalled how the professional reading and ensuing discussion focused on authenticity lead her to self-reflection, and to question whether she was teaching with moral purpose,

I was inspired to actually find out a little bit more and to question. I mean that brought about a bit of change and a bit of an uncomfortable feeling for a while. Because you sort of went from, I am authentic, what are they talking about? To, maybe I'm not authentic and then saying, well why am I doing that? (T3-85).

Another teacher described authenticity in terms of self-reflection, labelling herself as a confident and very experienced teacher yet quite challenged by the PALM process' focus on moral purpose, 'all this discussion, all the readings we were doing started to make me feel less comfortable. I started to start thinking okay am I really as authentic as I think I am?' (T7-56).



Likewise, another teacher explained the ethic of authenticity in terms of the self-reflective process within PALM,

now we're able to sit and reflect and think well, why am I doing that? What do I hope to achieve out of that? What is a child going to learn out of that? Or what is the outcome? That's really important because if there isn't any, then there's no point. So, it's very important. But all these things... I think allow us to become authentic (T10-434).

One teacher described the ethics of authenticity, presence and responsibility as areas within the PALM process that are 'ingrained' noting that teachers are continuously questioning themselves in regard to these ethics, 'it's just a constant evolving circle of questioning yourself about all three of those areas all the time (T11-304). Finally, another participant described authenticity in terms of self-reflection, rather than doing the same thing they have always done, teachers question whether their teaching is 'right', 'I see people start to be more ethically authentic, when they think to themselves is it the right thing for me to do?' (T12-41).

Ten of the 14 teachers interviewed described the ethic of authenticity in teaching in regard to reflective practice. One teacher described how explicit attention is given to the ethic of authenticity in the PALM process when reflecting on all aspects of teaching,

I feel that authenticity underpins everything that we are doing currently or at least striving to achieve. I see that as the overriding, purpose. I feel that myself and others on the staff we're ... questioning ourselves or at least we were reflecting and saying is this authentic or how can we make it more authentic? ....it runs through everything and that would include, the PAL sessions, our programming and then that flows onto classroom practice' (T5-43).

Four teachers described reflective practice as a more authentic approach to teaching when programming. One teacher explained the ethic of authenticity and reflective practice in terms of being more discriminatory when planning teaching, 'we can't just print off what we've used in the past and just do the worksheets that go with it or whatever but take on a more authentic approach ... Looking at what we're doing and why we're doing it' (T4-34). Another teacher recognised the importance of reflection in planning for learning at PAL sessions,

Then you can look at the program then and think well, where are we going with this? How are we evaluating it? How did it go with the children? Is it contemporary? Is it really authentic to what we should be doing? Rather than just we've always done it, for the last 10 years. We'll just keep on doing it (T10-195).

A third teacher described the ethic of authenticity in terms of reflective practice during PAL sessions as a way of discerning purposeful teaching and learning,

Was there really any purpose to doing that? Did the kids get anything out of it? Was there a better way, probably, that we could do it, or really, was it worth doing at all? So, I think that the authenticity comes through all the time (T11-32).

Four teachers described how explicit attention to the ethic of authenticity in terms of reflective practice has led to a change in their teaching. Teacher 2 reflected on authenticity in her teaching in relation to providing feedback to students, 'I keep going back to thinking, am I being authentic to them by not giving them the positive praise that I should be giving them constantly?' (T2-478) and focusing on the bigger picture of learning, 'It really makes us think about why we're here, as teachers and as people, basically, as human beings' (T2-544). Teacher 6 noted that being authentic in teaching gives her purpose in her work and involves reflective practice,

I would like to have thought that I was authentic before. But if I'm really honest, sometimes I did things because I felt I should. Whereas now ... I know that there's a curriculum to be taught...but I think I probably more critically think about why I'm doing something (T6- 238).

Teacher 8 explained how explicit attention to the ethic of authenticity in terms of reflective practice lead to change in teaching practice '... we were sitting and sharing things that worked well, things that didn't work, why we needed to change, what we were noticing because of the change. So, there was constant conversation based around being authentic' (T8-36). Another teacher explained the ethic of authenticity in regard to the professional learning within PALM, leading to reflective practice, 'I think for myself, through the professional learning, through our articles we had, I was able to sort of re-analyse well, is this lesson authentic and is it going to benefit the whole of the cohort?' (T9-163).

Half of the teachers interviewed described their experiences of focusing on the ethic of authenticity as relating to child-centred teaching. One teacher noted that as a result of the PALM process, 'we've actually honed in on making the child the centre' (T2-538). Another teacher admitted that before the PALM process with its emphasis on moral purpose, teachers would do lesson planning on their own with no regard for learners and a consequence of PALM is that, 'we stopped talking about educating children and we started to look at their learning' (T3-24). A third teacher believed that her work has always been child-centred yet has been influenced by PALM in terms of pedagogy, 'I really think that all teaching is child-centred but there's less of me maybe standing up to direct instruction' (T5-150). Teacher 6 equates being authentic with child-centred work when discussing how teachers at Stage meetings remain past the allotted time without realising; 'I suppose I think that's all about being authentic as well because

we're keeping the children at the centre' (T6-356). Another teacher described the ethic of authenticity in terms of teachers' motivation for professional learning being child-centred, 'Keeping in mind though, that there's only one end to all of this. That's the kids. What's the point of becoming a better teacher or a more informed teacher if it's not going to impact on what you do?' (T7-303).

Five of the one-to-one interview participants explained the ethic of authenticity in reference to challenging staff to change teaching practice. One teacher described the ethic of authenticity in terms of a gauge when developing a shared understanding amongst staff, 'I mean that's now part of the language ... is that quality or is that authentic?' (T4- 283) But often people will say is that a quality piece of work or is that true to what we're doing?' (T4-288). This same teacher suggested changing teaching practice weekly by assessing as students are learning rather than at the end of a unit of work as a more authentic approach to his teaching, 'Looking at assessing as you go in different ways and then making changes as you go to keep it real and authentic' (T4-256). Another teacher described the ethic of authenticity in terms of challenging staff to change at her new school, 'It's sort of the way I am now. I've taken that with me to the new school and they're trying to – getting people on board with planning authentic learning as well' (T1-173). A third teacher explained the ethic of authenticity in reference to inspiring staff to change, 'being authentic was thrown in right from the start and how we might change things to make it more real and more purposeful. So, I think right from the get-go, ... with the idea of change, authenticity was present' (T8-28). Finally, Teacher 14 recognised the ethic of authenticity in regard to staff collaborating and challenging each other to change, '.... being open to all different ideas and I think that that's really the most authentic part of it and being able to change because a lot of the time you get set in your ways' (T14-31).

The focus group interview data supported the interview data that described how specific attention to the ethic of authenticity lead to the promotion of authentic learning. One focus group participant described the development of an ethical culture in regard to teachers who are new to the school having a good understanding of the importance of promoting authentic learning,

If a teacher can come within seven, eight months and is able to be immersed in our authenticity in our school, as you say, the real meaning is there. To be able to come to me, who's been there 15 years and say, do you think this is authentic and how can we work together to make this a better program for the children and get them to really deep think, do some deep thinking activities? (CG3-112).

Furthermore, the ethic of authenticity was indicated through the promotion of authentic learning in the documentary data in regard to differentiation of the curriculum and resource allocation. Teachers reflected on their ability to meet the learning needs of their students in Stage meeting minutes, 'we also looked at the specific learning needs of cohorts of students and individual students, and the authentic learning that was in place to meet their needs. Ongoing modification of programs with an emphasis on differentiation was a priority' (SMM Specialist teachers 02/02/09). In a discussion focused on updating resources to promote authentic learning and providing additional time for students to use technology teachers noted, 'TH wants to know if we are teaching 21st Century Learning we need up-to-date hardware. TE spoke about having a computer time for younger children at lunch' (SMM – ES1/S1 27/02/11). The ethic of authenticity in teaching was highlighted in a staff survey conducted during the PALM process where teachers were asked what the benefits were in Planning for Authentic Learning Sessions (PALS) and 30% responded, 'ideas for authentic learning' (SS-1). Conversely, the school executive reported only some evidence of authenticity in the school due to teachers' participation in PAL sessions (LTLL SRG-8).

In contrast to the individual teacher interviews and focus group data, the ethic of authenticity was described in the documentary data in terms of the integrity of teachers in developing individuality in students, 'TM has looked carefully at the authenticity of artworks within the school and realised that if we are to be truly authentic then children's artworks should be different. The discussion then focused on the reality of this and how best to implement this in the classroom' (SMM S2 30/03/09).

The ethic of authenticity was described by 11 of the 14 teachers interviewed as reciprocity in interpersonal relationships with colleagues and students. Seven teachers reported on reciprocity in interpersonal relationships with colleagues and the ethic of authenticity. One teacher explained the ethic of authenticity in terms of stronger more supportive relationships with colleagues in the shared responsibility for teaching students, 'It's authentic because it's a relationship thing' (T3-315). Another teacher explained the ethic of authenticity and relationships in regard to more professional dialogue with colleagues, 'The discussions I had with my colleagues changed... We seemed to have far more professional discussions at the most unusual times.... you're now connected on a different level' (T7-96-107). A third teacher described the ethic of authenticity as it relates to honest and open communication at PAL sessions where teachers were discerning which activities should be included in teaching programs, 'It gave us permission to get rid of them all and so I think the fact that we did that, there was no hiding' (T9- 66). A fourth teacher described the ethic of authenticity in terms of

the changing relationship between colleagues on the school executive and classroom teachers and their motivation for teaching in an authentic way, 'It's not because I'm telling you or because you're going to get checked, or someone's going to come and hold you accountable. You should do it because it's the right thing to do' (T12-66). Finally, one teacher described the ethic of authenticity in relationships with colleagues in regard to being given time for planning in PAL sessions and the self-worth that results, 'We do feel worthy and because we feel that way, we put as much as we can into that session so that we can get as much done as possible' (T13-253).

Four teachers reported on reciprocity in interpersonal relationships with students and the ethic of authenticity. One teacher described the ethic of authenticity in relationships as sharing her own faith experiences with students, 'it just brings more to light that whole idea of you being a model... if they don't see that, you can talk and talk and talk, but it lacks that authenticity because they're not seeing it in action' (T11-71-76).

Three teachers described the ethic of authenticity in relationships in regard to a shared understanding of teaching. One teacher reflected that through the PALM process, including interactions with the core group and guest researchers, her understanding of teaching and the ethic of authenticity became a shared understanding. 'Now I would have liked to have thought that I've always been authentic to people generally. But I think I had my own view of being authentic' (T6-56). Another teacher mentioned the sense of community that developed as a result of staff reflecting on their understanding of shared school values as part of the PALM process,

we have a shared understanding of that (values) and it's helped us to look at that and given us a bit more of a purpose and direction. I guess a sense of community and collegiality whereas – yeah rather than a different pot that's doing different things, we all know where we're coming from and going to (T4-267).

A third teacher explained the ethic of authenticity and shared understanding in regard to being empowered to change teaching practice as a result of professional learning, '... it's good to share ideas. It's good to know that other people are thinking like you, and that you're on the right track with it' (T1-136).

Three interview participants identified school structures that nurture authenticity. These participants named moral purpose as the vehicle for teachers to plan authentic teaching, '... all this authentic teaching – to me can be summed up in our PAL sessions .... the nitty-gritty, where we really did discuss what was really happening in the classroom' (T2-38). This same teacher noted that there was little collegiality without these structures,

we tried to work together, but because we didn't have that time to say, well, this is what I did and this is what worked or this is what didn't work, it just did make more sense and it made it more real (T2- 58).

Another teacher who led PAL sessions noted, 'I always have a bit of input at the start and then there's time now, let's look at what we're doing and go through our units. Go through and see and the focus is authentic' (T4-108). It appears that both teachers recognise the importance of time being given to foster authenticity in teaching. The data seems to focus on collaboration amongst teachers in planning authentic teaching and learning. Three teachers highlight the importance of sharing teaching and learning practice. One teacher discussed this in terms of providing feedback in regard to PAL sessions, 'the key thing was the sharing. Before we might have met to organise things but not so much to share what we're doing in class and responding to things that we had done in the PAL sessions (T4-44). A second teacher described how collaboration at Stage meetings allowed for the sharing of knowledge and ideas that would benefit teachers' classroom practice, 'We learnt – it was very good to hear each other, and how they run their classrooms, and sort of give you ideas on how to put some of that practice into your own classroom' (T1-165). The data indicates that the PALM process has influenced teachers' teaching in regard to valuing school structures that nurture authenticity and consequently the collaborative nature of their work.

The ethic of authenticity is reported by teachers in promoting authentic learning in terms of; planning for learning, focusing on self or being a 'real teacher', reflecting on teaching, a child-centred approach to teaching and changes in teaching practice. Teachers reported authenticity in interpersonal relationships, including shared understanding amongst teachers and authenticity in the development of structures within the PALM process. Authenticity in relationships leads to a discussion about the ethic of presence.

### ***Presence in teaching***

The ethic of presence in this study again took its focus from the LTLL position and participants' comments. Essentially presence is the paying of full attention to the students, full attention to learning and full attention to school staff, as suggested by Starratt (2004), 'It implies being close, being toward, being for' (p.104). The ethic of presence was referenced 91 times in the interview data regarding teachers' perceptions of teaching. Participants discussed building and valuing relationships; within community, with students, amongst teachers and in particular a commitment to a personal relationship with children. In addition to valuing various types of relationships teachers mentioned the ethic of presence in terms of clear communication, professional learning and empathetic listening. Both the focus group and one-to-one interview

participants described presence in teaching in relation to insightful self-reflection, and being attentive, sensitive and affirming to others, while, the core group explained presence in regard to promoting the charism of the religious order that founded the school and the nature of teachers' strong identification of presence.

In discussion focused on teachers' perceptions of the ethic of presence in teaching, 12 of the 14 one-to-one interview participants interviewed focused on presence in regard to valuing relationships. Three participants defined presence in terms of building and valuing relationships with various members of the school community, 'It's about developing personal and professional relationships with our colleagues but also with the children who are always our focus' (T6- 313). Furthermore, nine teachers described the ethic of presence in teaching specifically in terms of relationships with students. Teacher 2 emphasised the importance of personal relationships with students hypothesising that with advances in technology teachers may not be needed as much in the future and this was a concern, 'the fact that we're there as a presence in the classroom with the children – as the person' (T2-118). The ethic of presence was identified by another teacher in regard to the values initiative that grew out of the PALM process. The community discerning and naming school values reinforced being present to students for this teacher, 'The fact that that process, that we went through that process, meant that we were present for the children (T5-178). Another teacher explained the ethic of presence in teaching as being the students' 'Protector at school'. This teacher described a relationship where students could trust her; 'I want them to come in and to feel no sort of fear or concern or anxiety about anything that's happening in their world' (T6-324). Likewise, another teacher described the ethic of presence in regard to a supportive relationship with students, 'I want to be present to the children so they're able to approach me about anything and to be more of a support than a person that's telling them what to do all the time' (T14-95). Teacher 8, in reference to planning teaching and valuing relationships with students explained the ethic of presence in terms of being, 'present to the needs of the children. Therefore, programs were altered, programs were cut down or elaborated on or whatever changes were needed because we were being present to them' (T8-81). Another teacher described the ethic of presence as setting time aside each day to focus on building relationships with students and their carers: 'we have that presence because we do things here like being in our classrooms at quarter to nine and making sure that we're communicating with the children and trying to develop that relationship with the children and their families' (T11-84). Teacher 12 reported the ethic of presence in terms of valuing relationships with students and his commitment to extra-curricular activities: 'we don't really have to be part of helping with the swimming club or helping with book week, all those sorts of things, but we do it because we want to be present to the children'

(T12-84). Finally, one teacher described the ethic of presence as valuing relationships with students on a daily basis, 'It might be just checking in every morning with a child and making sure – talking to them every day, making sure I have a personal conversation with each student in my class to see where they're at' (T14-328).

Half of the 14 teachers interviewed described the ethic of presence in terms of valuing professional relationships with colleagues. One teacher described the ethic of presence being reflected in trusting relationships that developed between colleagues when evaluating teaching strategies at Stage meetings, instead of classrooms being, a 'little closed kingdom.... If things weren't going right, no one would ever say it out loud because it was a losing face. What I noticed was that people were far more willing to say, I'm having a problem with this' (T7-193). This same teacher recognised the ethic of presence in terms of trusting relationships between colleagues as they debrief at the end of a day's teaching, 'Even the type of debriefing has changed. It's not, oh how did you get through that day? But it's how did it work for you?' (T7-223). Another teacher described the ethic of presence as accepting relationships with colleagues at PAL sessions, 'being present to each other as colleagues, so supporting each other and taking on board what other people's ideas are. So, there's the presence there of accepting other staff members and what they bring' (T11-81). A third teacher recognised the ethic of presence in relationships with colleagues in relation to the connection between the educational ethics of authenticity and responsibility, 'I'm so proud to be present. I'm so proud to be a part of this school that I take on these roles of responsibility and authenticity because I feel valued and I feel trusted' (T13-292).

One participant described the ethic of presence in regard to teachers supporting each other in sharing ideas and resources as well as in times of tragedy commenting, 'it's just the way we are and just the way we are with each other' (T5-247). Another teacher reported the ethic of presence in terms of supporting colleagues in order to change teaching practice,

...that being present to each other and seeing that someone had actually struggled with it. Not sitting back thinking, I was okay, it worked for me. They actually got involved with what had gone wrong – for want of a better word – for that teacher in that teacher's classroom (T7-180).

A third participant explained the ethic of presence in terms of supportive relationships, 'looking after – the colleagues looking after each other and being supportive of each other in front of the children, as well as privately' (T10-136). This same teacher recognised the ethic of presence in teaching at PAL sessions and Stage meetings in reference to sharing professional



learning, 'It doesn't make you feel as if you're not doing enough. It empowers you really, to think well we're all in the same boat and we're all helping each other' (T10-578).

Three participants interviewed discussed the ethic of presence in terms of teaching and their commitment to a personal relationship with children. One teacher compared this relationship with students to her relationship with family members saying, 'I feel like these children are like my children' (T2-186). A second teacher described presence as a personal commitment by saying,

It's part of me' and part of teaching, I mean you've just got to be there for them and that can be in various ways. It might mean that you're disciplining that child because that's what they needed. Or you're helping them because they're stuck with something. Or you're having a chat with them because there are issues at home (T5-259).

The third teacher described being present to children as more than formal teaching and learning explaining, 'being there for the child isn't just the teaching and learning strategies and ideas and activities that you've got for them, I think it's bigger, bigger than that' (T6-288). Two teachers acknowledged a strong sense of self when describing the ethic of presence and their personal relationship with students in teaching. One teacher spoke about her relationship with a student during a family crisis, 'That really made an impact on me, because I thought, well, hang on, I am worth something, my presence with him. I like to think I did make a difference' (T2-177). Another teacher explained how her students from previous years sought an ongoing relationship by asking their parents to notify her of any weekend activities the students were involved in just in case she wanted to attend. 'Little things like that tell me that I'm doing something right. I know that's I suppose presence in some ways' (T6-277).

One participant explained the ethic of presence in teaching as clear communication with colleagues and empathetic listening leading to a change in practice,

It's made me more open to change. Because, as I think I said way back at the beginning, you get to a certain age as a teacher when you've had lots and lots of experience. You can start to be a little bit full of yourself and to think I know, I know what's right. I know the best way; don't tell me what to do. I think the fact that you're actually listening to other people and more than just listening, you're hearing it. You're actually changing the way you do things in the classroom (T7-229-235).

Two participants explained the ethic of presence in terms of insightful self-reflection. One participant described presence as tapping into the skills of other teachers, 'That's where the presence comes in, because you have to always be thinking. You always have to be thinking about yourself and your own professionalism and not becoming complacent, and being

appreciative of the staff members around you' (T8-351). Similarly, the core group described presence in teaching being shown in teachers' reflective practice both at PAL sessions and stage meetings,

when they're speaking about their work, how they do it, why they do it and what they've done and how they know – has this transformed the learner? How do you know that it has? For that to have any meaning in these groups, say in the Stage meetings, it means that the other – the colleagues of the person doing the presenting was speaking about their work, have to be present to them (CG2-305).

Six of the interview participants described explicit attention to the ethic of presence in teaching as being sensitive or attentive to others in action and thought. One teacher explained presence as 'a way of being and a state of mind', and at two different stages in the interview this participant noted, 'It's not just a way of being as in how you're present to someone, it becomes a way of being about how you think. I think that it sort of starts to permeate you' (T6-368). Another participant recalled a Stage meeting where a teacher who had previously been teaching infants classes shared a group work strategy and was sensitive to others who had not worked this way by inviting them into her classroom,

So, it was well I had never seen it done that way. She was open to say, well come in and watch. I thought well that was somebody that I had never thought would stand up and say, well come and have a look. So that was being present to us (T3-160).

A third teacher described the ethic of presence in relationships as sensitivity towards students who have been removed from the playground for inappropriate behaviour. Instead of ignoring or continuing to reprimand the student teachers speak to them respectfully, 'She'll make some comment about, you know, whether in a joking way or an, 'I'm sad to see you here' or whatever. Now I think that's presence' (T5-324). Another teacher explained the ethic of presence in teaching as being sensitive to others in terms of getting to know their life story, 'Being sensitive to everyone and their problems and things that they deal with. Then showing that sensitivity to the children as well. Like asking questions about their lives' (T10-138). Likewise, Teacher 11 described the positive impact of explicit attention to the ethic of presence in teaching in reference to sensitivity towards students and staff,

I think that's important as a teacher, too, in that your eyes are opened a little bit more to different circumstances for different children, so you're not putting a blanket across your class as a whole, that you start to see them as individuals with all different problems and family situations, and that has to affect you, as far as your way with dealing with your class as a whole and as individuals, and the same with staff (T11-95-101).

One participant described the ethic of presence in teaching in terms of professional learning and being present to the curriculum including current research, ‘I think with professional learning as well, there was also a presence towards current research and needing to be very much aware of it and conscious of it to be able to put that into your own teaching practice’ (T8-93). Conversely, the core group reported, the ethic of presence in regard to challenging teachers’ narrow understanding,

I think you'd be very challenged to find staff who would talk about being present to the curriculum, or to being present to the needs of the learner, although they would see that as responsibility and not as presence. I believe that they do enact it, but they see it as a responsibility or they see it as being authentic (CG1- 343).

Affirming presence was noted by one participant as teachers supporting students and staff in their achievement. One teacher spoke about being more aware of every child after focusing on the ethic of presence,

I'm conscious of making sure that every child has some of my time, not just the ones who are more special needs, but all of the children. Even if they look like they're working and look like they're coping, it gives me the opportunity to move around and listen to them and encourage them (T1-90).

In discussion focused on the ethic of presence in teaching there was a commonality with the concept of valuing excellence as it was mentioned in terms of catering for individual needs, ‘I try and discover what each child needs, I find myself being more flexible in my delivery because each student has their own requirements, and I find myself analysing that all the time’ (T8-127).

The core group focused on the ethic of presence in regard to promoting the charism of the religious order that founded the school and explained the nature of teachers’ strong identification of presence. The Principal, CG1 described the ethic of presence in regard to the teachers’ understanding of the school charism and teachers’ need to develop a broader shared understanding, ‘it's not agreeing with what we see as – what the global understanding of presence is, that there would be a disconnect there. It's like we know what it really is, because it's a charism of a previous time and place’ (380). Another participant described teachers’ understanding of the ethic of presence being limited to teaching religious education rather than all curriculum areas, ‘one of the difficulties is that the main place I've heard the term presence over the years is to do with RE. Therein also lays a problem, because it's as valid in Mathematics, English and in all aspects of Art’ (CG2-485). Two participants explained the teachers’ understanding of the ethic of presence as limited to physical presence, ‘We've got

such a – sorry, to say this – an old staff and it's embedded in them the physical presence from having a *St Matthews* principal' (CG3-405). Interestingly, the documentary data reveals that prior to the PALM process the core group described the ethic of presence in terms of the school's charism in the School Self-Portrait (SSP) in response to the question, 'What is it that makes you most proud of what your school values and lives out?' The core group recorded, 'The *St Matthew's* ethos in terms of being present to the children'. When asked what makes them most proud of how teachers influence teaching and learning across the school, they responded, 'Their presence and passion' (SSP-1). The focus group interview data reveals how this understanding has changed.

The ethic of presence was reported as influencing teachers' perceptions of teaching in three ways. Firstly, in terms of the nature of relationships within the school community characterised by teachers supporting each other, being sensitive and attentive to others and trusting each other. Secondly, presence was reported as influencing teachers' commitment to a personal relationship with children and strong sense of efficacy. Finally, presence was described in relation to teachers' understanding of the school's charism. The third of the ethics mentioned in the framework is that of responsibility.

### ***Responsibility in teaching***

Responsibility is defined in this research as the 'higher moral standard' that teachers as leaders of learning strive for who are proactive in 'promoting quality learning for all students' (Starratt, 2004; p.62). The criteria used to identify the ethic of responsibility were developed using the LTLL framework and the language of participants. These criteria are; teachers' personal and shared responsibility for providing a caring environment, responsibility to change teaching practice, responsibility for children's learning, responsibility for professional learning, shared accountability for the school core values and promoting the pursuit of virtue in the community. The ethic of responsibility was referenced 57 times in the interview data regarding teachers' perceptions of teaching by all 14 interview participants as shown in *Table 4.1 One-to-one Interviews' Frequency of Themes in Teaching*.

Five participants described the ethic of responsibility in regard to creating and sustaining a caring environment for students in order for them to learn. Three teachers viewed creating and sustaining a caring environment for students as their personal responsibility. One participant noted, 'being the teacher' equates to being responsible to self, 'for cultivating that sort of caring sort of way and that productive sort of environment in which children can learn' (T6-721). Similarly, another participant gave a description of a student in their class whose

primary caregivers had passed away suddenly and was being placed in the care of a detached relative, she believed that as the teacher she was personally responsible for this child's welfare at school, 'I think that's part of our responsibility as teachers, too, to ensure that they have a safe place first, and also it's a caring and happy place' (T2- 257). Another teacher explained the ethic of responsibility in terms of providing a caring environment and listening to students' worries so they are emotionally ready to learn, 'To me, that was my responsibility, to make sure that he got into a good frame of mind and was able to walk out of that classroom and feel comfortable' (T13-141).

Shared responsibility for providing a caring environment was explained by one teacher in terms of teachers' knowing each other's students within and outside the school community and supporting each other in caring for these students, 'I've had other teachers approach me. In regard to students who they have taught or they know or they know through football, or whatever. Have said, how's that student going? ... So, I think it becomes a shared responsibility' (T3-305). Another teacher referenced the ethic of responsibility as shared in providing an environment where children are at ease in approaching teachers, 'the children need to be able to feel comfortable to come to us. That is our responsibility that they feel comfortable to come and talk to us' (T13-163). A third teacher described the ethic of responsibility in teaching and providing a caring environment in regard to sharing parental responsibility. He constantly reflects on what the parents of this child would want another adult to do in daily school situations, 'I look on that as probably the guide toward my own responsibility towards the children. It's like – what do they call it in Latin? In loco parentis, that kind of thing' (T12-147).

In terms of responsibility to change eight of the 14 interview participants recognised their responsibility as educators to be constantly reflecting on and improving their teaching practice. One teacher recalled a discussion with colleagues on bus duty about moral purpose and reflective practice in terms of doing what is 'right' and 'good' as teachers' responsibility to change.

I think that if everybody can feel non-threatened, and it doesn't matter who you are, well then something is going right. The enthusiasm on the bus duty was magnificent. Again, I could see people feeling responsible, that responsibility, to sustain that idea and to – you're not moving forward, if you don't stop, look at what you're doing and move on and take the good with you, (T6- 800).

Another participant discussed the change in focus from students being solely responsible for their learning to teachers bearing that responsibility in regard to changing teaching practice, 'They have to take responsibility for their learning but we're the educators. That's our

responsibility I think. So that's a burden.... It's – a responsibility is the burden to keep it going, to keep improving, to keep moving' (T3- 247). Another participant described the ethic of responsibility and change in teaching practice as part of the culture of the school,

Again, it's the culture of this school. We do have to do certain things with regard to the way we teach and the way we change our teaching and the way we assess and the way we analyse and the way we reflect, because we are responsible; we are responsible to the students in our care (T8-365).

Two teachers described the ethic of responsibility in reference to a personal responsibility to change. One teacher, as a direct result of being given a new role in the school, 'So I took on a role as an early learning coordinator and I took it on as trying to do some different things in the school and try and in all ways to benefit the children' (T9-396). Another teacher perceived her personal responsibility to change as being a consequence of evidence-based student learning, 'I tried to take the responsibility of these students are struggling, so I need to do something different. I need to change what I'm doing' (T14-166).

Half of the one-to-one interview participants and the focus group explained the ethic of responsibility as being reflected in their personal and professional responsibility for children's learning. One teacher described her personal responsibility to ask children about how they like to learn and that it had never occurred to her to do this before the PALM process, 'that's our responsibility... as teachers, to find out what makes them tick. I think if you teach them in a way that they understand and can relate to, then the learning is going to be so much more valuable' (T1- 228). Another teacher reported that the values and ethical focus in the PALM process had made teachers 'feel good about themselves' and highlighted their personal responsibility for children's learning, 'Making us feel like we are contributors to society. I mean, let's face it, we're the ones that produce the citizens' (T7-375). This same teacher described responsibility in terms of valuing the common good for students, teachers and parents, 'There was – I think people always took – always had a responsibility, but they thought they were responsible for just their own class...I think the mindset of responsibility has changed. We're responsible for everybody in this school' (T7-260). The ethic of responsibility was explained by another teacher in terms of her personal responsibility for planning children's learning, 'when I think about responsibility, I think about my responsibility as a teacher for these children. I guess it's that responsibility of always making sure that what I'm teaching in the classroom is meaningful for the children' (T11-122). Likewise, another teacher identified the ethic of responsibility in regard to teachers' personal responsibility for children's learning at Stage meetings, 'So you're taking responsibility for what you've actually been doing in the

classroom and sharing that (T14-148) and, when planning for authentic learning, ‘Being accountable really for transforming the learner’ (T14-151). Four teachers described the ethic of responsibility in terms of teachers’ professionalism. One teacher explained professional responsibility in teaching as accountability for both pedagogy and content, ‘We are responsible for what we say, for what we do, for what we teach and we’re responsible for those children’ (T13-129). The ethic of responsibility was explained by another participant in terms of the relationship between teacher professionalism and children’s learning, ‘My responsibility definitely for teaching is my responsibility to the students. So, I have to be the best person I can be in order to get them to learn as much as they can’ (T14-342).

Three one-to-one interview participants and the focus group described the ethic of responsibility in teaching as a commitment to professional learning. One teacher reported that she has a commitment to students to be constantly learning, ‘The world is changing, constantly changing, so we have an obligation to move with that’ (T4.2-35). Another teacher explained the ethic of responsibility in teaching in terms of being informed, particularly at breakfast meetings in order to develop professional relationships, ‘The responsibility is to create an authentic working relationship with the parents, the colleagues and the children. So, our responsibility is to be informed in professional – yes, the professional learning too – we had the breakfast meetings’ (T10-171). A third teacher described the ethic of responsibility in teaching as a commitment to all professional learning opportunities given during the school improvement process, ‘I think responsibility comes from within, whether it be – as I said – the grade meetings, the Stage meetings, the PAL sessions, we take on the responsibility that yes, we’re going to take that on board’ (T13-172). One participant reported the ethic of responsibility in terms of an appreciative approach to collaborative practice developed at Stage meetings,

I think everyone feels – well, for me, I feel like I have a responsibility to the other people in my stage to let them know what’s going on in my room and how I do things, because by sharing things that are successes, it helps them (T8-148).

Two teachers described the ethic of responsibility in terms of shared accountability for school core values. Shared responsibility for discerning and promoting school values was explained by one teacher, who recalled members of the community writing a story about what the school valued as part of the values initiative and the lengthy discussion that ensued about the beliefs inherent in each story,

I think this school has got a really good sense of responsibility that the responsibility is not just on one person. It's on lots of people...we went and did the stories, and we had

all that discussion about what each story was talking about, and we all had our own different beliefs (T2-290).

The ethic of responsibility was reported by one teacher in reference to promoting the pursuit of virtue amongst staff. This teacher stated that teachers are concerned with doing what is right rather than worrying about the time a meeting might take to get things right, 'we arrive on time and we stay for meetings and we have extra meetings to have things right. You know that's responsible' (T5-355).

The focus group described the ethic of responsibility in terms of promoting a culture of shared accountability. CG2 clarified teachers' proactive responsibility is ultimately to the students, 'what we're talking about is that responsibility *of, for* and *as* learning, you can't get away from it and you almost should ask yourself the question, am I being responsible to the children?' (675). CG1 was in agreement and gave the example of catering for all students' learning needs, 'I also think responsibility to the children is shown on a daily basis and that would be shown again through all of our special needs children from both ends of the spectrum' (696). These same participants explained further that this culture is enabled as a result of teachers' shared understanding of the ethic of responsibility, 'We've done a lot of reading and teachers.... they can recognise responsibility. It links directly to who and how we function' (CG2-429). CG1 added, in conversation focused on the lack of understanding about the ethic of presence, 'People get responsibility' (477). There is agreement amongst the core group that teachers have a common understanding of responsibility in teaching.

In this section the data records teachers' responses indicating the importance of the ethic of responsibility; in influencing the way in which teachers work in relation to their personal and shared responsibility to provide a caring environment for students and staff, the responsibility to change through reflective practice, the personal and professional responsibility to teach in a way that children can learn, the responsibility for professional learning, their shared accountability for naming school values, the promotion of pursuing virtue in the community and the promotion of a culture of shared accountability.

Explicit attention to the ethics of authenticity, presence and responsibility within the PALM process, particularly the PAL sessions, appears to have influenced teachers' teaching in terms of their sense of self and valuing professional relationships with students and colleagues.

#### **4.1.2 Core values in teaching**

The core values of Catholicity, Excellence, Justice, Transformation and the Common Good were the values from the LTLL instrument and used within the school improvement



process. These values were all evident in the teacher interview data regarding perceptions of teaching and the documentary data with the exception of the value of justice which was not referenced in the documentary data. Also, the three focus group interview participants did not discuss valuing justice or the common good. The indicators of values suggested in the LTLL framework were used to guide but not limit the coding of the interview data informed and refined by participant's comments. The most frequently referenced value in classroom teacher interviews was that of Excellence with 48 references followed by Transformation with 33 references, the Common Good with 18 references, then Catholicity with 12 references and finally Justice, which was mentioned once by interview participants.

The themes used to help identify the value of excellence that were evident in the one-to-one interview data were; teachers having high expectations of teachers, participants sharing an explicit view of what amounts to good teaching and learning, building a collaborative culture of practice, embedding best current understandings of teaching and learning in practice including catering for individual needs and student's ability to articulate school values.

The themes used to identify the value of transformation in teaching were; teachers promoting self-knowledge in learners, challenging students to take responsibility for their own learning, challenging students to live out their values, providing experiences that are meaningful and purposeful and ensuring learning is relevant to students' lives.

The themes used to recognise valuing the common good in the case study school were; promoting collaborative practice in teaching and learning, building community around shared norms, placing great value on relationships and ensuring stability and safety for all.

The themes used to describe valuing Catholicity in teaching included; being authentic and present to faith and the school charism, promoting an active prayer life and making the teachings of the Church explicit.

The indicator used to help identify the value of Justice that was evident in the interview data was teachers' seeking to serve the marginalised.

### ***Valuing excellence in teaching***

Eight of the fourteen one-to-one interview participants explained that they value excellence by describing high expectations for teachers regarding their teaching. One teacher spoke about a shift in thinking from one who blames students for not learning to one who takes responsibility for educating students.

I think it's good that the responsibility of educating or teaching is now back with the teachers. We don't just label kids and dismiss them and say well they never do anything. Why not – we now have to ask the question, why not? What can we do to make that child's learning and engagement better? So, all the time looking for that (T3-350).

Another participant commented that they were pleased with their teaching before PALM however, she realised through the PALM process that teaching can always be improved, 'I think all of this made me stop and think, yes, you're doing a good job but I think you can do a better job' (T6-166). This same teacher recognised the reciprocal relationship between high expectations for teachers and students,

If the child is going to be the centre of everything that we do – and I firmly believe that – then we have a responsibility to be the best who we can be so that they can be the best who they can be (T6-765).

Similarly, Teacher 8 described excellence in terms of high expectations and personal responsibility, 'to strive to achieve great things all the time for ourselves and for the students we teach' (T8-372). In each of these interviews participants recognised that high expectations of teachers, as an indicator of valuing excellence in teaching, is inextricably linked to their sense of responsibility.

Excellence was valued in regard to sharing a clear understanding of good or 'right' teaching and learning by half of the 14 participants interviewed. All teachers recognised this sharing happening in the PAL sessions through reflective practice,

those meetings, those PALS sessions we had, helped my professional development because it either – validated what I was doing; the right way or the right path I was taking, ... or made me rethink, made me look at what I was doing, and maybe it wasn't the right way (T2-22).

A second teacher described excellence in terms of how PALM has influenced his teaching by affirming good practice, 'This gives you a direction and it supports you and gives you that sense of confidence in what you're doing is good stuff and that it's making a difference' (T4-238). A third teacher recognised the 'combined sort of focus' of teachers reflecting on good teaching and learning rather than getting sidetracked into discussing the day-to-day running of the school, 'We were actually looking at what we're teaching and how we're interacting with the children and critically analysing what it was that we'd been doing' (T6- 101). A fourth teacher described excellence in terms of learning a 'better way' from others, 'That's going to help my children better than what I thought was the right way or the best way' (T7-67). A fifth teacher described valuing excellence at grade meetings in terms of innovative teaching, 'If there

is something new.... what's it going to replace or how can we make this better? Instead of oh, that's good, let's just put it in.... there is a lot more thought into what we are doing' (T9-173). Another teacher described the responsibility to share and reflect on her teaching,

It's a heavy burden that you carry. Because now that you're questioning things you can't be flippant about what you do or how you do it. In fact, you actually spend a lot of time thinking about it and questioning about whether this is the right way to go (T3-259).

Excellence was valued by two participants in terms of building a collaborative culture of practice when deciding what constitutes good teaching. One teacher commented on the importance of PAL sessions as more than a confirmation of good teaching and learning rather, they were also an avenue for teachers to support each other. 'To validate what you're doing is right, or like I said, to get help, that's where those PAL sessions were invaluable' (T2- 48). This same teacher was concerned that these sessions would be axed due to funding cuts saying, 'it's just such an important part of our – especially of our culture now' (T2-508). PAL sessions were the vehicle for another teacher in valuing excellence to open up to the possibilities of 'best' teaching and learning through a shared approach,

I just think because we're now no longer static in teachers teach this. We're actually looking and being critical of the whole situation and taking it all in. Asking questions, discussing it and then deciding on what's best for everyone (T3-328).

Both participants above recognised the need for a collaborative culture of practice in striving for excellence.

Excellence was valued by six teachers in terms of explaining how they were embedding best current understandings of teaching and learning in practice which included catering for individual needs. Two teachers described valuing excellence through professional development from the perspective of the recipient and from the perspective of the leader. One teacher recognised the importance of embedding learning from PAL sessions into classroom practice in teaching reading, 'You tend just to kind of implement them pretty much kind of after or try them after you've had the session. So, in guided reading we're kind of focusing on different strategies and reading's been a fair push' (T5-115). Another teacher spoke about his newfound ability to lead teachers in professional learning, describing his commitment to excellence as teaching practice that is relevant to children,

The world is changing, constantly changing, so we have an obligation to move with that. Because the children we were teaching, even last year, are different to the kids we're teaching this year for lots of reasons. So, remaining current means affording them the best opportunities and the best education possible (T4.1-35).

Four teachers and the focus group described catering for the individual needs of students as indicative of excellence in teaching. One teacher recalled planning lessons and, ‘differentiating so that we are catering for children with higher learning needs’ (T1-40). She reflected that, ‘- it’s not just a matter of one size fits all anymore’ (T1-42). Teachers’ perceptions of excellence were confirmed by the focus group in their description of teachers sharing how they cater for the individual needs of students at PAL and Stage meetings, ‘also the push on the middle group, who people forget about, or who are not the ones who are stealing all of our attention, that teachers are very cognizant of that...’ (CG1-699).

Finally, one participant described excellence in terms of students being able to articulate values of the school charism or spirituality and live them out. In discussion focused on the ethic of presence Teacher 13 spoke about the patron Saint of the school and described enacting his values on the playground and in the classroom, ‘I’ve heard a couple of them say, oh *St Matthew* wouldn’t have done that and to me, they’re taking note. They’re taking note because we’re talking about it in the classroom’ (T13-97).

Teachers’ perceptions of teaching in regard to excellence included; having high expectations of themselves as teachers, sharing an explicit view of what amounts to good teaching and learning, promoting a collaborative culture of practice, embedding best current understandings of teaching and learning in practice including catering for individual needs, and expecting that students can articulate values.

### ***Valuing transformation in teaching***

The value of transformation in regards to teaching included the following criteria; transforming students for life, promoting self-knowledge in learners, challenging students to take responsibility for their own learning, challenging students to live out their values, providing experiences that are meaningful and purposeful, ensuring learning is relevant to students’ lives and reflective practice.

The characteristics of a transformed learner were clearly identified by one interview participant who hoped that their commitment to authentic learning would enable students to be self-aware and excited by learning. This teacher described valuing transformation in teaching in terms of ‘transforming students for life’. Upon self-reflection, this teacher appears to be more conscious of the purpose of her teaching as a result of the PALM process. ‘I’m very aware of the impact that I can have to transform those children. Not just now, while they’re in primary school, their whole lives. From now until forever’ (T6-240). She also commented that giving

explicit attention to the ethic of presence in teaching led to an awareness of the ability to transform students beyond the time that they are physically present,

we're hoping that what we do transforms them. I'm very aware of the fact that I could be the person who just inspires them to have a love of learning. Or inspires them to be a particular person for their whole life, not for their one year in my grade, for their whole life (T6-281).

This same teacher reported her commitment to promote self-knowledge in learners in valuing transformation, 'I don't see my work as a teacher as just helping them to learn academic things, I see my work as a teacher – ... permeating again – helping them to become the person they are' (T6 – 619).

Two teachers explained how they value transformative learning by encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning. One teacher spoke about feeling empowered when planning particular lessons, 'You have to be able to let go control a little bit to get the results when you're planning these kinds of lessons – these discovery lessons – and asking the question rather than giving them the answers' (T1.1-81). Similarly, another teacher spoke about allowing students to ask the questions they want answered about particular curriculum areas, 'So it's them taking their ownership for their own learning and I think that that's the most important message I got from the PALM model' (T14-53).

Three participants described valuing transformation in terms of challenging students not only to articulate school values but to live out their values. One teacher acknowledged that he asked students to share with the rest of the community what the school values, derived from the Values Initiative as part of the PALM process, meant to them.

That was a big thing too, when I – with the mini Vinnie's kids we did a YouTube type clip around the values and what they meant to them. I could see through them they had a really solid understanding (T4-440).

Another teacher explained that her purpose in teaching is transformative in terms of teaching content knowledge along with life skills so students can become, 'modern day citizens in today's world...caring for their world and each other. Being able to make decisions for themselves – informed decisions that show presence for them and responsibility and for them to be authentic, too' (T10-453).

Half the interview participants described valuing transformation in regard to providing meaningful and purposeful experiences for students. One teacher recognised that part of his work now is to provide meaningful and purposeful experiences such as visits to the parish nursing home, 'I've seen them transformed through our visits to the nursing home and things

like that which we weren't doing before but we've taken it to that next level' (T4-379). A second teacher reported the meaningful and purposeful experiences provided by a teacher who led an intervention program, 'special activities were developed to assist very specific – they were really to help specific children. Some of them were something that all the children would do but others were – you'd look at that child's specific needs' (T5-593-596). Three teachers described valuing transformation in reference to planning lessons that are meaningful for students, 'you sit and think about planning lessons that are meaningful to the children, not only creating opportunities to learn in an environment they are familiar with, but also using the technology that they're familiar with' (T1.1 36-38). Similarly, Teacher 10 explained how Stage meetings and PAL sessions ensured she was not 'in a rut' in teaching, 'We can implement all the new technology and make it more meaningful for the children, rather than the same old thing every time' (T10-306). A third teacher explained valuing transformation in terms of providing meaningful and purposeful experiences in Mathematics. She recalled buying tool belts with various measuring devices from a hardware store in order to teach about measurement, 'To me, that's what teaching's all about, making it authentic for them at the time' (T13-45).

Six participants described valuing transformation in reference to ensuring learning is relevant to students. One teacher explained valuing transformation in terms of the school's responsibility to 'educate children for society,' ensuring learning is applicable to life,

That's part of our responsibility to produce good citizens. Yes, our job is to produce people that can read and write and do all those things. But it seems to be they need to be creative, they need to be great thinkers. They need to be kind, they need to be compassionate, they need to have social justice. It's the school's – I mean I know families do too – but as schools that's our responsibility too (T7-376-381).

Two teachers described valuing transformation in reflecting about what they are doing to ensure learning is relevant to students. One teacher spoke about ensuring teaching is contemporary, 'In today's world, because today's world is changing at a rapid rate, am I keeping up with those changes to make it authentic for the children and not being in the dark ages still?' (T10-43). Another teacher described the focus on student-centred learning in programming, 'It wasn't just ...what else are we doing, but how can we do this to change the children and make this more ...that the lessons (are) more relevant to exactly where they're at' (T9.2-49). Likewise, the focus group described valuing transformation in teaching in regard to teachers taking risks by setting up class websites where teachers and students can record and comment on learning (wikis) and developing deep thinking tasks for students as a result of the PALM process, '- they're deep thinking activities where they wouldn't have thought of that before. They're taking

risks to set up wikis to do so much more that the children will be benefit and to be creative' (CG3-190, 192).

In the documentary data, the core group explained valuing transformation in teaching and the importance of providing teachers with time for reflective practice in two documents. Firstly, in planning and journaling about the PALM process they stated,

If we want to transform learners and learning then we have to timetable a place for reflective practice into our school. It is only through opportunities to reflect that we can transform teaching. It is essential to look at one's own practice in order to gain personal meaning, which is essential before transformation can occur (LTLLJ- 803).

And secondly, in encouraging teachers to value transformation in an email (30/03/09) outlining the agenda for Stage meetings they focused the staff with the following direction,

During this meeting, we will be hearing from two of our colleagues who will speak about an authentic teaching/learning activity that has transformed the learning in their classroom. The key questions to ask would be, 'how has this activity transformed the students' learning? and what is the proof of the transformation?' (SMA- 84).

The various data sets seem to focus on three different perceptions of the nature of this value; (a) the transformation of students in terms of the teacher changing the teaching and learning process, (b) transformation in students' learning as a result of the process, and (c) the transformation of the whole child.

### ***Valuing the common good in teaching***

Half of the 14 interview participants described values indicative of the common good in their perceptions of teaching including the following criteria; the promotion of collaborative practice, building community around shared purpose, valuing professional relationships with students and colleagues, valuing the individual and ensuring stability and safety for all.

Two of the participants spoke about valuing the common good in terms of the promotion of collaborative practice in teaching, particularly during the PAL sessions, 'It was all about us, our kids – and not just my class – it was how are we going to educate all of these learners that we have responsibility for?' (T3-63). Another teacher described valuing the common good in regard to the responsibility to share good teaching practice using technology, 'If you see something that's working that's good, then I think you have responsibility to share that with your work colleagues as well for the good of the school, really' (T1-163).

Five participants described values that reflect the common good in their appreciation of professional relationships in teaching, both amongst teachers and with students. In describing

teachers' shared responsibility for all students T3 noted, 'I think that the relationships is what's improved within the community because of the PALM model' (316). Another teacher explained valuing the common good in regard to valuing relationships on four occasions. She described becoming more responsible for colleagues rather than competing with them as a result of the PALM process.

We were pretty good at looking after the children but we weren't so great about looking at the parents or at our colleagues. It was almost competitive. We wanted to be seen to be better than the person in the classroom next to us. Whereas we are now being responsible for each other (T7-296).

This same teacher explained valuing the common good in regard to her responsibility to the wider teaching profession noting, 'I have a responsibility to younger teachers' (T7-587), and 'I have discussions about what's happening here with colleagues from other schools, from other systems (T7-590)'. In discussion focused on the ethic of presence another teacher recognised that teachers know students throughout the school including knowing their social and psychological abilities and are able to use preventative measures on the playground, 'So I guess that's presence because you have an understanding of the children and it's not just in your own class' (T5-338). A third teacher expressed valuing the common good in terms of concern for the individual within community when planning for all students, 'I really like the way that everybody's valued, that their ideas are valued' (T6-787).

Another indicator of valuing the common good is maintaining stability and safety for all and two teachers spoke about their role in providing stability and safety for students at school. In the first case T2 was referring to a student who had a very unstable and insecure home environment, 'I just think it's our responsibility, because sometimes some of these kids don't have a voice, and we might be the safe place, that they don't have any other safe place' (246). The second teacher was reporting on the teachers' role in providing optimum conditions for transforming the learner, 'I think if children are in a non-threatened situation – and again that doesn't mean that you don't have to operate for the good of the whole – that you'll get the best out of them' (T6-631). The good of the individual and the group were perceived to be important to this teacher.

In the documentary data, the school executive reported valuing the common good as clearly evident in the school in regard to decision-making involving those most likely to be affected by the outcomes (Bezzina, 2012) and named the student council as an example in the LTLL school reflection guide (LTLL SRG-7).



Teachers' perceptions of teaching with regard to the common good included; promoting collaborative practice amongst teachers, developing community around teachers' shared understandings and shared purpose, valuing professional relationships amongst teachers and with students including valuing the individual and ensuring safety and stability for students.

### ***Valuing Catholicity in teaching***

Catholicity received 12 references from three teachers in the interview data regarding perceptions of teaching. Participants described valuing Catholicity in terms of being authentic and present to faith and the school charism, promoting an active prayer life and making the teachings of the Church explicit.

Initially teacher 2 described valuing Catholicity in terms of authenticity and being 'real' to self and teaching, 'If we're not going to be real to ourselves and real to our teaching, what's the point? If we're not going to be true to what we believe in as teachers, there's no point in teaching' (T2-108). She then commented on the foundation for these beliefs, 'you would like to think they are all based on.... Catholic principles' (T2-114). Upholding the charism of the religious order that founded the school, is considered part of teaching for this participant, '- most of the teachers here still truly believe in that *charism*'s (name of charism replaced to de-identify the school) philosophy as the foundation of this school' (T2-212). This teacher perceives being authentic as upholding Catholic values especially those values reflected in the religious order that founded the school. She described the teachers' relationship with the patron saint of the school and how this influences their teaching, 'us teachers feel like we know him intimately, because we know – we think we know him so well, and his beliefs that reflect through us the way we treat the children' (T2-216). Likewise, another teacher explained valuing Catholicity in terms of the ethic of presence and students' relationship with the patron saint of the school's founding religious order being reflected in students' playground and classroom behaviour, 'by us talking about him and reminding the children then of the *St Matthew*'s way, I feel that we're bringing that presence within – into the classroom and into the children's lives as well' (T13-94). This perception was confirmed by the focus group in discussion focused on the nature of teachers' understanding of the ethic of presence and valuing Catholicity, 'the people certainly value the *Charism of St Matthew*'s community' (CG2-339).

Another teacher explained valuing Catholicity in regard to the ethic of authenticity and promoting an active prayer life including attending Mass, 'when I go to church...I talk to the kids about prayer and what I believe in ... I think the kids need to actually see that you do do that' (T11-48). This same teacher described valuing Catholicity in terms of bringing the Sunday

Mass message to students in her class, ‘I think the children just seeing that you’re actually trying to keep your own faith alive...I think that’s being authentic to the children, as well. I think they’ve got to see that you actually believe in it yourself’ (T11-56). Valuing Catholicity in regard to making the teachings of the Church explicit is explained by this teacher, ‘we’re talking about St Vincent de Paul at the moment, I try to bring in my own personal experiences....so that they can see that it’s part of my experience, as well, and that it means something to me’ (T11-60). The documentary data reinforced this teachers’ perception of valuing Catholicity in terms of the core group and school executive’s belief that teachers teach explicit knowledge in Religious Education as evidenced in the LTLL school reflection guide (LTLL SRG).

Teacher 2 was the only participant interviewed who described valuing Catholicity and the core value of justice as influencing her teaching.

### ***Valuing justice in teaching***

One participant described valuing justice in perceptions of how moral purpose has influenced her teaching. This participant described valuing justice in terms of seeking to serve the marginalised. In discussion about the ethic of responsibility this participant recalled wanting to maintain a relationship with a particular student who had a troubled home-life, ‘I feel it’s my responsibility to make sure he’s okay, because I know there has been a lot of issues’ (T-242). This participant’s commitment to the transformed learner was expressed in the ethic of responsibility for providing a caring environment for students as well as the value of justice for those who struggle to play a part in the school community.

The interview data focused on explicit attention to the core values of excellence, transformation, the common good, Catholicity and justice within the PALM process. The data indicates that the PALM process has influenced teachers’ teaching in regard to valuing relationships and the collaborative nature of their work in discerning good teaching and learning.

### **4.1.3 Triangulation of data in teaching**

The first data set as presented in *Table 4.4 Triangulation of Data in Teaching* (see Appendix D) identified many areas that ethics and core values influenced teachers’ teaching in particular the areas of; reflective practice, collaborative culture, professional learning, professional relationships and relationships with students. The focus group supported some of these, especially the areas of promoting authentic collaborative learning, reflective practice, authentic professional relationships and relationships with students, presence in terms of

professional learning and teachers' responsibility for professional learning. The documentary evidence reinforced the ethic of authenticity in relation to promoting authentic collaborative learning, reflective practice, fostering authentic professional relationships and nurturing authentic relationships with students. In addition to the recurring themes, the focus group data verified the teachers' perceptions and practice in valuing transformation by ensuring learning is relevant to student's lives and valuing excellence in catering to individual needs. The documentary evidence supported teachers' valuing excellence in embedding best current understandings of teaching and learning in practice and Catholicity in terms of making the teachings of the Church explicit.

Many of the five core values were seen in the one-to-one interviews as being important to the nature of teaching, however two seem to have greater importance, these were excellence and transformation. With regard to ethics, one predominately stood out as being clearly the most important in terms of its impact on teaching that being the ethic of authenticity. While presence did have some impact and the ethic of responsibility was critical neither of them seemed to have the importance that authenticity did. In the values, there was not a consistent understanding across the five areas of how they impacted on the nature of teaching however, under the ethic of authenticity there were three recurring themes and these were; collaborative learning, reflective practice and relationships with students across all three data sets. These themes will be discussed further in the next section.

## **4.2 DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

Explicit attention to moral purpose in terms of ethics and core values influenced teachers' teaching in a number of ways. First in the promotion of authentic reflective practice leading to teachers developing and sustaining an authentic sense of self; second in an increase in valuing relationships with students and valuing professional relationships in terms of commitment to honesty, care and trust; and third in sharing an explicit view of good teaching and learning in regard to excellence and the transformation of learners.

### **4.2.1 Authentic reflective practice**

Teachers' explicit, sustained, consciousness of the ethic of authenticity seemed to be achieved in the PALM process through constant cycles of professional learning, structured reflection and dialogue focused on the values and motives for teaching including focusing on the ideal of a transformed learner. Responses across all three data sets supported the importance of explicit attention to the ethic of authenticity in relation to reflective practice. The literature

describes reflective practice processes as; a form of capacity building for teachers who are able to articulate and are committed to leading with moral purpose (Conway & Andrews, 2016), and a guide for leaders to attain self-knowledge about one's own personal values (Begley, 2006; Branson, 2007; Branson, 2014). The particular practices used in this study were developed to create shared purpose amongst teachers and advance the teacher as both a learner and leader of learning. Authenticity was defined within the PALM process by the core group as a direct result of their participation in the Australian Catholic University's LTLL project. Teachers' understanding of authenticity was derived from the LTLL documentation as part of the school improvement process (PALM), 'The ethic of authenticity challenges us to act in truth and integrity in all our interactions as humans, citizens, teachers and leaders' (Burford & Bezzina, 2007). Teachers explained authenticity in regard to self-reflection or reflective practice as embedded in their teaching throughout the one-to-one interviews. Authenticity was described by teachers as their 'overriding purpose' which led to constantly questioning themselves and their practice. Teachers depicted a more reflective approach to their teaching as a direct result of explicit attention to authenticity during PAL sessions where they worked collaboratively with colleagues to develop and improve teaching programs. Teachers recalled constantly questioning whether their work was authentic, how they could make it more authentic and discerning the 'right' content, pedagogy and purpose leading to changed practice. The focus group participants reinforced these perceptions,

a teacher that I've just worked with this year who's new to the school and to the grade and recently came to me after we'd run off the program and I said, let's take this program home and really have a look at it and see what we can change. She's come to me and she said, look, after everything that we talk about, this school and authentic teaching and learning, I'm questioning a lot of these activities (CG3- 103).

The commonality between Conway and Andrews's (2016) research centred on the IDEAS process and the current study are that teacher leaders 'recognized qualities of critical self-reflection' from a standpoint of moral purpose. However, teachers' commitment to goals and/or outcomes in the IDEAS process was considered 'emotional, political or intellectual' (Crowther, 2011) while teachers' commitment to authentically transforming learners in this research was existential, as highlighted by this teacher: 'It really makes us think about why we're here, as teachers and as people, basically, as human beings' (T2-544). Branson, (2007, 2014) found in his research that deeply structured self-reflection processes concentrating on emotions, beliefs, values and motives were the means for leaders to gain knowledge of the inner Self or the personal values that affect behaviour and that this self-knowledge could be used to change behaviour. Likewise, teachers as leaders of learning in this study rather than formal

school leaders, reported changes to their teaching practice and a deeper understanding of self as a direct result of valuing authenticity, 'it has changed the way I teach, and the way I look at teaching, too. I think it has been a gradual change, but now I don't even think about it. Now, it is just the way I am' (T1- 237). Begley's (2006), research recognises that 'School leaders need to be reflective practitioners' (p. 584) however there is no golden set of values that apply to every school context. This is highlighted in the present study as teacher leaders were provided with a generic set of values and ethics in the form of the LTLL School Reflection Guide and chose to aspire to authentic teaching in preference to other values such as, justice, Catholicity or the common good. This sensitivity to the ethical dimension of teaching is considered in the literature as the first step in teachers' becoming morally literate (Bebeau, Rest & Narvaez, 1999, Begley, 2006; Tuana, 2007; Stefkovich, 2007) and highlighted in this comment where a teacher questioned whether his teaching was 'right', 'I see people start to be more ethically authentic, when they think to themselves is it the right thing for me to do?' (T12-41). Nurturing ethics sensitivity in teachers through structured reflective processes lead to authentic reflective practices in teaching.

Teachers' overt consideration of the ethic of authenticity during the PALM process lead them to reflect on core aspects of their teaching such as understanding what to teach and how to teach it, understanding students and understanding themselves as teachers. This authentic reflective practice is highlighted in one teacher's response to the question about how the LTLL project has transformed her teaching, 'Authentic learning... there's a lot of value. I think we do all need to sit back and look at ourselves and evaluate how we teach and I think it's made me a better teacher' (TVI-T1). This finding is supported by Sellars' (2012) study that describes regular authentic reflection as the means for teachers to engage in the 'holy trinity' of teaching, moving from knowing content and pedagogy to knowing students and finally knowing yourself as a teacher which may lead to changed practice. Self-reflection within the PALM process took the form of a teacher with many years' experience not only questioning whether her teaching was authentic, but also her character, 'all this discussion, all the readings we were doing started to make me feel less comfortable. I started to start thinking okay am I really as authentic as I think I am?' (T7-56). Begley's (2006) findings which focused on authentic leadership for administrators are confirmed by teachers in this study as he found personal reflective practice to be a strategy for gaining self-knowledge, capacity and sensitivity. Additionally, continuous collaborative discourse focused on the moral dimensions of teaching lead to self-knowledge for teachers as illustrated in a description of PAL sessions, 'we were sitting and sharing things that worked well, things that didn't work, why we needed to change, what we were noticing because of the change. So, there was constant conversation based around being authentic' (T8-36). The

findings are substantiated by Begley's (2006) finding that, 'sustained dialogue on moral issues' (p.570) is another strategy in advancing self-knowledge for teachers. Teachers' shared understanding of the moral aspects of their work contributes to authentic reflective practice.

Being a real teacher or having a 'sense of self' seemed to be an important issue in relation to the ethic of authenticity in one-to-one interviews but not discussed by the focus group or mentioned in the documentation. The notion of real teacher/sense of self is relating to the nature of moral purpose and core to the nature of the present study and the inner self as described by Starratt (2004), who draws on Taylor's (1991) work focused on the moral ideal of authenticity, 'There is a tacit moral imperative to be true to oneself. To not be true to oneself would be to miss the point of one's life' (p. 66). Teachers in this study were deeply motivated by explicit attention to the ethic of authenticity to honestly understand the inner self explaining that they wanted to portray their 'real' self to students rather than 'being false' and that explicit attention to authenticity has 'permeated through' them or changed who they are as teachers. Branson (2014), in his research regarding the power of personal values supports this notion that self-knowledge is not something gained naturally, rather, leaders in his research and teachers, in the present study need strong motivation to understand the inner self requiring, 'deep personal honesty' (p. 199). The compelling motivation within the PALM process was the transformed learner.

In summary, the study found that explicit attention to the ethic of authenticity in teaching characterised by truth and integrity, led to teachers' critical self-reflection and existential commitment to transform learners. The self-knowledge achieved by teachers was due to structured reflective processes, collaborative planning for authentic teaching and learning and regular prolonged dialogue about the moral dimensions of their work.

#### **4.2.2 Valuing relationships**

This study contributes to the understanding of presence in teaching as a commitment to building and maintaining honest, trusting, caring relationships with students and colleagues for the purpose of transforming learners. Teachers primarily described presence in teaching in terms of valuing personal relationships with students and valuing professional relationships with colleagues within the school community. There was incongruence in the data regarding teachers' understanding of the ethic of presence in teaching, as the core group described teachers' understanding of presence as limited to physical presence or the understanding promoted within the charism of the religious congregation who founded the school. Teachers did explain the ethic of presence in terms of physical presence, however, this was always with

the purpose of developing trusting, caring and in some cases, protective personal relationships with students. It appears that teachers are describing the ethic of care as understood by Noddings (2010) in relation to presence rather than that described by Starratt (2012) and also in keeping with the core group's understanding of the virtue of presence as 'the dialogical relationship between the learner and the material under study' (p. 121). Additionally, the current study found teachers' specific attention to the ethic of responsibility lead to discussion focused on creating and sustaining a caring environment where students could learn. Teachers described building a school environment where students 'felt safe' and could be 'productive'. One teacher's perception of the extent or gauge of his personal responsibility to care for students was explained in legal terms as 'Loco parentis' or 'in the place of a parent'. Frick's (2013) research involving secondary principals' perspectives regarding 'the best interests of the student' and ethical educational leadership, found several participants depicting 'themselves as a parent responsible for making decisions and creating opportunities for experiences that are in line with students' needs' (p. 133). The present study relates particularly to the research of Tiri and Husu (2002) focused on ethical dilemmas in teaching and the perspectives of care and responsibility in the professional morality of teachers rather than leaders. That is, in both cases teachers participated in a values clarification exercise and identified the importance of human relationships in teaching, particularly the need for students to feel safe and cared for. In Tiri and Husu's (2002) research teachers' motive was providing for 'the best interests of the child' whereas in the present study the teachers' aim was transforming the learner.

The principal in the present study reported that teachers would be unable to discuss presence in terms of, 'being present to the curriculum, or being present to the needs of the learner' (CG1- 343) however, teachers did name the ethic of presence as the motive for catering to the individual learning needs of students in the context of planning teaching programs. The practice of presence was described in terms of the teachers' role, 'I think teachers certainly had a role of being present to the curriculum during the planning' (T8-80). Consequently, the current study found a nuance in teachers' understanding of their role as a facilitator of learning rather than a dictator of learning, 'I want to be present to the children so they're able to approach me about anything and to be more of a support than a person that's telling them what to do all the time' (T14-95). Explicit attention to presence highlighted teachers' commitment to the 'demands of human relationships' including open and trusting communication as part of the ethic of care (Starratt, 2012).

Particular attention to the ethic of presence prompted teachers to reflect on their commitment to a personal relationship with students resulting in self-efficacy. Teachers'



individual reflections included, being ‘worth something’, ‘making a difference’ and ‘doing something right’. Bandura’s (2006) agentic theory of human development, adaptation and change, describes this personal efficacy as a means of human agency and Frost (2006) draws on Bandura’s theory in discussion focused on the findings of the *Carpe Vitam* Leadership for Learning Project, where understanding human agency was considered to be the link between leadership and learning. Contrary to the current study the focus on efficacy in Frost’s (2006) research was more towards students’ self-belief in their learning rather than teacher efficacy. Teacher self-efficacy will be discussed further in relation to explicit attention to the ethic of responsibility and leadership through collegiality.

The findings focused on teachers’ attention to the ethic of presence in teaching suggest that professional relationships characterised by trust, honesty and openness developed within the school improvement process, were valued by teachers and impacted positively on their teaching. Teachers reported that prior to the PALM process classroom teaching was contained within the classroom, like a ‘little closed kingdom’(T7-190) and teachers’ debriefing was focused primarily on themselves rather than any difficulties they were experiencing in their work. Teachers recounted that stage meetings were the vehicle to practice presence in terms of honest dialogue about teaching,

that being present to each other and seeing that someone had actually struggled with it. Not sitting back thinking, I was okay, it worked for me. They actually got involved with what had gone wrong – for want of a better word – for that teacher in that teacher's classroom (T7-180).

Starratt (2004) confirms these findings in his descriptions of presence in terms of educational leadership as ‘being wide awake to what’s in front of you’ and ‘coming down from the balcony where you were indifferently watching your performance, engaging the other with your full attention’ (p. 87). Teachers described professional relationships that were accepting and supportive recognising that, ‘every person has something to offer’ in terms of their teaching practice. Teachers reported feeling valued, trusted and empowered in terms of their professional learning related to teaching rather than discouraged, ‘knowing everyone was in the same boat’. This is consistent with research reported in the literature review concentrated on the role of trust in school improvement processes. Bryk and Schneider (2003) found relational trust between teachers was part of the ‘connective tissue’ in successful school reform, Hutchings et al. (2010), found that trust was possibly ‘the most effective aspect’ of the London City Challenge and Liu, et al. (2016) found building teacher trust lead to productive learning environments in China.



The role of trust in building a professional learning community will be discussed further in chapter 6 in relation to teachers' responsibility to participate in professional learning.

The conclusion reached was that professional learning focused on the ethic of presence in terms of the demands of human relationships lead teachers to value relationships with students and professional relationships with colleagues. Teachers' commitment to relationships with students lead to teacher efficacy whilst teachers' relationships with colleagues changed in terms of their commitment to honesty, care and trust. The professional learning and professional development (PALM) process provided opportunities for teachers to grow in their commitment to these relationships when planning teaching and learning and sharing their teaching practice.

#### **4.2.3 Good teaching and learning**

Explicit attention to the core values of excellence and transformation in the professional learning and professional development (PALM) process resulted in teachers' shared understanding of and commitment to, good teaching and learning. Excellence, in terms of having high expectations of themselves as teachers and sharing an explicit view of good teaching, and transformation in teaching in regard to providing meaningful and purposeful experiences ensuring learning is relevant to students' lives.

Reflective practice, a recurring theme in the practice of teaching, was the means for teachers to discern good teaching and learning and strive for excellence. Teachers described their teaching being 'validated', 'better job', on the 'right path' or 'doing good stuff'. Teachers' understanding of excellence in the present study is reflective of Starratt's (2014) description of excellence in relation to self-transcendence as a pre-disposition to being an ethical person 'going beyond the ordinary, beyond what is considered average' (p. 51). In contrast, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) teaching standards which were developed with the purpose of raising excellence in teaching are imposed on teachers, encouraging improvement from an external rather than intrinsic perspective. Literature focused on performativity in education (Ball, 2003) describes teaching standards in terms of 'fabrications' that are produced for the purpose of accountability rather than commitment and truth in teaching. Tuinamuana (2011) suggests that teacher professional standards are portrayed as 'commonsense' and comparable to demands for 'excellence' in education that is indicative of 'managerial-style' global education reform. Fullan (2011b) and Fullan et al. (2015) disagree and describe teachers' intrinsic motivation as a measure of the right drivers for school improvement and in terms of developing professional capital as internal accountability.

On a number of occasions teachers in the present study described the responsibility to share their understanding of good teaching and learning using emotive language such as, ‘obligation’ or ‘heavy burden’, pointing to their duty or commitment to excellence,

Because now that you're questioning things you can't be flippant about what you do or how you do it. In fact, you actually spend a lot of time thinking about it and questioning about whether this is the right way to go (T3-259).

These responses support the research of Campbell (2004) who focused on the professional role of teachers as moral agents and found that teachers ‘show a self-conscious awareness of what they try to do in their capacity as moral agents...they express a reflective acknowledgement of the virtues and principles they are imparting and modelling. They are thoughtful about the good’ (p. 425). In both the present study and Campbell’s (2004) research, teachers are able to explain their work within a moral framework.

Valuing transformation in teaching, was perceived by the interviewed teachers as providing meaningful and purposeful experiences for students such as the life experience of visiting a nursing home, engaging in cutting-edge technology to support learning or simply making mathematics measurement lessons purposeful by providing real-life tools. These teachers and the core group explained valuing transformation in reference to ensuring learning is relevant to students’ lives with the commonality of developing creativity in students. Valuing transformation was described in terms of the school’s responsibility to ‘educate children for society’,

That's part of our responsibility is to produce good citizens. Yes, our job is to produce people that can read and write and do all those things. But it seems to be they need to be creative, they need to be great thinkers. They need to be kind, they need to be compassionate, they need to have social justice. It's the school's – I mean I know families do too – but as schools that's our responsibility too (T7-376-381).

Transformation in teaching was also described by the core group in regard to teachers taking risks by setting up class websites (wikis) and developing deep thinking tasks for students as a result of PAL sessions, ‘- they're deep thinking activities where they wouldn't have thought of that before. They're taking risks to set up wikis to do so much more that the children will benefit and be creative’ (CG3-190, 192).

Fullan’s (2011b) research focused primarily on whole system educational reform and the right drivers for improvement found teachers’ intrinsic motivation to ‘raise the bar’ for all students and ‘lower the gap’ for underperforming students, in relation to developing students’ higher order skills and the capabilities to become ‘successful world citizens’. Whilst the moral

imperative for teachers' in the present study to transform learners and learning appears to align with Fullan (2011a), there is a fine distinction between producing 'good' citizens and 'successful' citizens. Teachers in the present study describe goodness or developing the characteristics necessary to be a good human person rather than the skills and competencies to be successful. Although from an administrative perspective, Sergiovanni (2007) reinforces this distinction in literature focused on the moral imperative of schooling. Akin to the teachers in the present study, he reasons that the mission of the school is to transform students not only in terms of imparting 'knowledge and skills but by building *character* and instilling *virtue*' (p. 22).

To summarise, a school-based process designed to improve professional learning and planning for learning (PAL) focused on the core values of excellence and transformation, lead teachers to reflect on and gain a shared understanding of good teaching and learning. Teachers in the present study showed increased responsibility to provide excellent and transformative teaching and learning and an awareness of their role as moral agents to facilitate the transformation of good students into better human beings.

#### **4.3 FINDINGS FROM RESEARCH SUB-QUESTION 1**

There are six main findings regarding teachers' perception and practice of their teaching as influenced by explicit attention to moral purpose within a school improvement model and these are listed below.

1. Self-knowledge can be developed in teachers when they are required to reflect on the ethical aspects of their own teaching experience and compelled to regularly communicate the values and motives inherent in their work.
2. Ethics sensitivity may be nurtured in teachers who experience regular, structured reflective processes focused on the values and ethics fundamental to the practice of teaching.
3. Purposeful collaborative planning for teaching and learning and regular prolonged dialogue between colleagues about the moral dimensions of their work can lead to teachers' development of an existential commitment to teaching.
4. Teachers' commitment to being present to the learning needs of students may improve when they participate in professional learning focused on the demands of human relationships.

5. Regular sharing of teaching practice and its moral purpose can strengthen teachers' commitment to building and maintaining honest and trusting professional relationships with colleagues.
6. Teachers' experience of professional learning with colleagues that is based on a shared understanding of good teaching and learning may lead to an awareness of their role as moral agents.

## Chapter 5: Presentation of Results, Discussion and Findings – Moral Purpose and Leading

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The purpose of this chapter is to present data generated from one-to-one interviews, a focus group interview and supporting documents and discuss the findings from the synthesis and analysis of that data in relation to the scholarly literature reviewed in chapter 2 that addressed the second research sub-question;

*How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions and practice of leading?*

The data is presented in relation to leading, as reflected in the educational ethics and core values of schooling derived from the LTLL2 framework that guided the PALM process at the case study school. These ethics are authenticity, presence and responsibility, in addition the values are Catholicity, Excellence, Justice, Transformation and the Common Good. The indicators of values and ethics suggested in the LTLL framework were used to guide but not limit the coding of the interview data informed and refined by participant's comments.

### 5.1 ONE-TO-ONE INTERVIEW, FOCUS GROUP AND DOCUMENTARY DATA

Table 5.1 presents the key themes that emerged from the data under the framework of the ethics and core values from LTLL2, which was used to guide but not limit the analysis.

Table 5.1

*One-to-One Interviews Frequency of Themes in Leading*

| <b>RQ 2: How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions and practice of leading?</b>   |  |   |   |          |   |  |
|---|--|---|---|----------|---|--|
| ETHICS  |  |   | CORE VALUES   |          |   |  |
| Authenticity  | Presence   | Responsibility  | Transformation  | Justice  | Excellence  | Catholicity      Common good   |
| <b>Leadership for professional learning – 3</b><br><b>Leadership through collegiality – 7</b><br>Promoting a sense of staff efficacy – 1<br>Valuing relationships – 3<br>Being given time – 2<br>School structures – 2<br><b>Integrity – 3</b><br>Challenges staff to act with authenticity – 5<br>Promotes authentic learning – 12 | <b>Values relationships – 4</b><br>within community – 1<br>Teachers support each other – 6<br>School charism – 1<br>Teacher voice – 1<br>Professional – 4<br><b>Collegial leadership – 5</b><br>Teacher initiative – 2<br><b>Affirming – 4</b><br>Leadership for professional learning – 4<br>Sensitivity to other – 1 | <b>Building capability – 4</b><br><b>Leadership through collegiality – 1</b><br>Self-efficacy – 18<br>Staff efficacy – 4<br>Professionalism – 1<br><b>Leadership for change – 1</b><br><b>Professional learning</b><br>Personal – 6<br>Shared – 5<br>Healthy organisational environment – 2<br>Culture of shared accountability – 2 | <b>Providing meaningful and purposeful experiences – 1</b><br>Inspire students – 1<br><b>Leadership for professional learning – 2</b><br>Ensuring learning is relevant to students' lives – 4 |          | <b>Collaborative culture of practice – 5</b><br>Embeds best current understandings of teaching and learning in practice – 3<br>Celebrating a range of achievement within the community – 2<br><b>Leadership building capability – 1</b> | <b>Leadership through collegiality – 2</b><br>Promotes collaborative practice in teaching – 3<br><b>Leadership for professional learning – 1</b> |
| <b>Tally: 36</b>  | <b>29</b>  | <b>44</b>   | <b>8</b>  | <b>0</b> | <b>11</b>   | <b>0      6</b>  |

Figure 5.1 provides a visual representation of the 14 one-to-one interview participant responses. Refer to Tables 5.1F, 5.2F and 5.3F in Appendix E to view frequency of themes and their source. The themes will be reported in order of the frequency of participant responses.



*Figure 5.1.* Frequency of themes in leading.

### 5.1.1 Ethics in leading

The most frequently mentioned ethic in relation to leading was that of responsibility which received 44 references from one-to-one interview participants. This was followed by authenticity (36) and presence (29). Alternatively, the focus group participants mostly reported the ethic of authenticity which received 36 references followed by responsibility (13) and presence (6). Likewise, in the documentary data the most frequently mentioned ethic was that of authenticity which was referred to on 22 occasions followed by responsibility (7) and presence (3).

The themes used to describe the ethic of responsibility in leading were; building leadership capability, leadership through collegiality, leadership for change, professional learning, building a healthy organisational environment and a culture of shared accountability. Additionally, the focus group described responsibility in terms of embedding the understanding of an ethical culture, and shared accountability for the core values of the school.

The themes used to identify the ethic of presence were; valuing relationships, leadership through collegiality, affirming and supporting staff in their achievement, leadership for professional learning, and promoting sensitivity to others. Furthermore, the focus group and documentary data indicated the ethic of presence in regard to reflective practice.

The themes used to identify the ethic of authenticity in terms of leadership were; leadership for professional learning, collegial leadership and school structures that nurture authenticity. In addition, the focus group participants reported the ethic of authenticity in leading in relation to teachers as leaders and the reciprocity of interpersonal relationships. The reciprocity of interpersonal relationships was reinforced by the documentary data.

### ***Responsibility in leading***

The interview data revealed that nine of the fourteen one-to-one interview participants' perceptions of teachers as leaders were influenced by explicit attention to the ethic of responsibility.

Three participants described building leadership capability in discussion focused on the ethic of responsibility. One teacher explained that shared responsibility led to recognising the leadership capability of all teachers rather than simply those in formal leadership roles, 'you think of ways that you can develop skills and strategies within a school.... you can come up with an idea and you don't have to leave it to a group of people who have been in a particular role' (T3-289). Another teacher described a colleague who moved beyond simply acknowledging student standards were low and took action as a leader of learning, 'a lot of other teachers might have been saying their standards are quite low we really need to do something about this. But we may not have taken that extra step and gone so that's informal, that's leadership' (T5-605). The data reveals that this teacher was perceived as not only having the capacity to act responsibly, she did so.

Half the interview participants described the ethic of responsibility in terms of collegial leadership. One participant described collegial leadership as the inclusiveness of professional learning, which was not just for the school executive, 'So it took a little while I think to take that well okay this is kind of open to everybody' (T5-379). Another teacher described responsibility as collegial leadership in two contexts. Firstly, in relation to his accountability as a leader of PAL sessions, 'This is a way of making sure that you get a good view of the cross-section of the school and what's going on and that's very important as a coordinator' (T4-125). And secondly, responsibility as a leader in wanting to help and support teachers in their classrooms rather than 'check-up' on them, 'Not being somebody who goes in and checks on what they're doing but rather offers myself as someone who can come in and work with them or model (T4-223), ... to be a support to the teachers and the teachers' wellbeing' (T4-226). Another participant described the ethic of responsibility as collegial leadership in relation to



teachers being given permission to make decisions about learning as a result of a focus on values and ethics in light of their shared accountability to government agencies,

I felt a little bit empowered that I felt that I had the right to say, I really don't like that (know why we're doing it) and I know that we have a curriculum and that we have to teach to the curriculum and that we're responsible to various government bodies (T6-177).

The ethic of responsibility and collegial leadership was described by one participant as self-efficacy in professional learning. In discussion focused on assessment data this teacher felt qualified to make suggestions, 'It's not that the kids aren't learning; it may be that we have to refine our teaching practice. I felt confident enough to suggest that through the professional learning that I have done' (T6-162). This same teacher explained the ethic of responsibility in terms of collegial leadership and her responsibility for professionalism, reporting that she had only been in a formal leadership position for two years, so had to reflect often on how she was contributing to the school, 'I know that I am responsible, not only for different components of the school running day to day, but I have a responsibility to the staff to be as professional as I possibly can' (T8-251). Another teacher described the ethic of responsibility as collegial leadership in reflecting on her formal leadership position as a consequence of a focus on values and ethics,

I was doing a leadership role, but didn't see myself as a leader. I think that was the difference. After that, I think the – it was almost that you had this like a moral responsibility to be part of the staff in more than just being here at school and coming here (T9-234).

Two teachers described the ethic of responsibility as collegial leadership and staff efficacy. One teacher reported that staff now like going to IT courses and taking on a greater role in that area of learning, 'because they want to, because they feel that responsibility of helping out and being part of the school, than just being here, just for their jobs' (T9-370). Another teacher described staff efficacy at stage and grade meetings when decisions were being made that affected all students, 'So I think we have a responsibility to talk up, and to say if we don't feel that something is worthwhile or authentic, that we're going to try across our stages or our grades' (T11-149).

The ethic of responsibility was explained by one teacher, the core group and verified through the documentary data in terms of leadership for effective change. T7 described a member of staff who developed an intervention program for students and took on leadership responsibility as a result of a focus on moral purpose within the PALM process,

She was looking at them thinking this particular grade has major problems. What's happening with them? Instead of just going to the boss and saying, there's problems with this grade, what's going on with them? She went with a plan. Well I want to find – first of all she wanted to find out what was going on with them. She put something together to do that. This is not a person that's ever put her hand up for any sort of formal leadership or what have you. But she saw a need and she thought, I need to help these kids in whatever way (136-143).

Five interview participants referred to the ethic of responsibility in relation to responsibility for personal and shared professional learning. One teacher described her leadership as taking on more personal responsibility for staff professional learning in the area of technology, 'responsibility to the other members of staff to try and get them on board as well.... not just to get them on board, but to give them the confidence that they were capable of doing it as well' (T1-143). Another teacher explained the ethic of responsibility as one staff member's personal responsibility for finding and sharing relevant educational 'YouTube' clips at dreaming the future meetings, 'a member of staff who's not on the executive, has never shown any sort of interest in any sort of leadership or what have you, found that and suggested it. We watched it and we had this great discussion afterwards' (T7-288). Two participants described the ethic of responsibility as shared professional learning. One participant explained that the focus on values and ethics within the PALM process, particularly at dreaming the future meetings, evolved so there is shared responsibility for professional learning, 'we've got the Dreaming the Future meetings, when that started it was an input from the four people that were our core people. It shifted to other members of the executive and now it's the staff' (T7-276). The documentary data reinforced this description of shared responsibility in regard to the core group accountability for leading professional learning for the purpose of developing a shared understanding amongst the school executive (Leadership Team) of ethical teaching.

The Leadership Team Meeting this morning engendered a lot of discussion about ethical and authentic teaching. Generally, the group is supportive of the direction we are moving in. I feel that we are in a challenging and important place – the Leadership team are keen however they are in a bit of a no-man's land in that they have read some of the readings we have but not quite enough for them to have our understanding – which is understandable!!(LTLLJ-583).

Another one-to-one interview participant described shared responsibility for professional learning as teachers returning from professional learning days and communicating that learning with the staff, 'I think we've built up a lot more leadership teams that didn't have to be someone

who was on the executive or on the leadership team. So, I think the responsibility became shared a lot more amongst staff members' (T9-364).

The ethic of responsibility was explained by two teachers as developing a healthy organisational environment. One teacher described a middle-aged member of staff that was now willing to teach other teachers about technology, when asked why this teacher took on that responsibility she answered, 'Well she has the opportunity now. I think this whole PALM process gave the opportunity to her' (T7-367). A second teacher explained that if the ethics and structures of PALM are in place in the school then it becomes embedded despite the driver, 'if that's in place then people will teach that little bit differently and be a different person, regardless of who their boss is, who their mentor is, who is the leader of the school' (T9-567).

Finally, the ethic of responsibility was described by two interview participants and supported by the documentary data, as building a culture of shared accountability. One teacher described responsibility in leading as a change in 'mindset' from one who is just responsible for your own class to a shared accountability for all stakeholders in the education of students,

We're responsible for everybody in this school. We're responsible for every child in your class. We're responsible for every child that comes into this school. We're responsible for our colleagues. We're responsible for the parents. We've got to act ethically to make sure that we are responsible to those people (T7-263).

Another teacher described the ethic of responsibility as building a culture of shared accountability by noting the honest dialogue at Stage meetings, focused on being responsible for sharing evidence of students' learning, 'But by being responsible about admitting to things that don't work, also assists in other people becoming teacher as leader and giving me feedback as to why things may or may not work' (T8-152).

Additionally, themes used by the focus group to describe the ethic of responsibility were; embedding the understanding of an ethical culture and shared accountability for the core values of the school. CG1 described the ethic of responsibility as the leadership team being responsible for creating an ethical culture in the school, especially regarding teachers' understanding of presence, 'That's probably a leadership responsibility in all honesty... there's a responsibility for us to be continuously using the word present in sentences in all honesty, as a revision of where we've been multiple times on this' (468).

CG2 described the ethic of responsibility in leading as teachers' shared accountability for the core values of the school. He recalled using the word, 'authentic', and how this word has meaning for teachers and can be recognised in their practice as a result of a focus on values and ethics in the PALM process, 'When we use the term authentic we know what it means and the

thing that's developed for me over the time we've been doing this, we also recognise what it looks like in our practice' (73). He went on to explain that all teachers have the continued responsibility to discuss core values in their work, 'responsibility that falls into the responsibility that we all have, to speak to each other about those things' (78). Another participant gave an example of a new teacher to the school questioning her teaching using the school values as a gauge and CG2 replied, 'It's like an expectation' (111).

The interview data emphasised the ethic of responsibility in leading in terms of collegial leadership; including a healthy organisational environment and culture of shared accountability and building the capacity of staff so that all teachers can be leaders.

### ***Authenticity in leading***

The interview data revealed that 11 of the 14 interview participants' perceptions of teachers as leaders were influenced by explicit attention to the ethic of authenticity. Authenticity was described as leadership for professional learning, collegial leadership, school structures that nurture authenticity, leading with integrity, challenging staff to act with authenticity and promoting authentic learning.

Two teachers described the ethic of authenticity as leadership for professional learning. One teacher recounted reading research by John Hattie and others and recognising her own leadership for professional learning, 'you felt comfortable in going and looking at what they were saying and knew that you were on the right track. Because it was all about leaders and leadership and all of a sudden you were that person' (T3-102). Another teacher recalled how his classroom practice had changed due to explicit attention to the ethic of authenticity and consequently his own leadership for learning, 'Looking at assessing as you go in different ways ... to keep it real and authentic. ... definitely impacted on how – when I was in the classroom but also too as in this leadership role now' (T4-256). One participant explained how explicit attention to the ethic of authenticity lead to an appreciative inquiry approach to leading professional learning, 'that appreciative inquiry has given people permission to show off or to rise to the occasion or to share' (T3-346).

Three interview participants described the ethic of authenticity as leadership through collegiality. One teacher described the ethic of authenticity and self-efficacy in leading learning focused on Information Technology,

So, within myself I became more confident because of how we were planning our sessions and I felt strongly about say IT and I wanted to help other people do that and I felt comfortable being able to do that and then when I was given the opportunity to

become part of the leadership team, I didn't feel like people – even though they'd been more experienced than me, that they were looking at me as in what would she know? I felt that they were actually intrigued in what I could bring to the workplace ... and that obviously comes from this authentic and you know being true to everything and this whole model is about (T14-203-212).

Another participant described authentic leadership through collegiality as promoting a sense of efficacy amongst staff. She recalled encouraging staff who have the ability to lead, recognising that, 'We are all leaders.... Whatever capacity I'm in I'm showing leadership and I have the ability to make a difference to whoever, whether it's the kids or parents or whoever' (T4- 340). This same teacher explained the ethic of authenticity as collegial leadership in reflecting on the principal as a leader who values collegial relationships, 'she's given people the ropes, the free rein I guess, she's been a great guide and support but allowed people to take risks and to show leadership' (T4- 344). The focus group data supported teachers' perceptions of the ethic of authenticity and leadership as the development of self-efficacy amongst staff. The principal, (CG1) recalled advertising a one-point coordinator position where seven teachers applied, which had never happened before a focus on moral purpose and she described their attitude, 'I am a leader and I can do this. They almost saw it as their responsibility and if they're going to be authentic to themselves that's the road they saw they should be on' (887). She also explained that teachers now had enough confidence in their leadership ability to apply for positions in other schools, 'The fact that at the moment we have several people also who are applying for leadership positions outside of the school, because they genuinely see themselves as leaders' (892). CG3 described the ethic of authenticity in leading and teacher self-efficacy in relation to executive team meetings being opened so all teachers can attend and teachers have taken up the invitation, 'They've seen something happen and they're thinking, well, I can make a difference' (965).

Two teachers described the ethic of authenticity in leading as related to school structures that nurture authenticity. One teacher described authenticity and leadership in terms of the opportunity for sharing good practice at Stage and PAL meetings, 'you would lead them and show them what it was that you were doing. Where, as if you hadn't had that opportunity to share that, you wouldn't be leading at all. You'd just be doing your own little thing' (T10-218).

Two participants described the ethic of authenticity as leading with integrity or being true to self. One teacher described how the culture of reflective practice has been the vehicle for her to consider working with integrity as a teacher in a formal leadership role, 'I have had to reflect on and think about this sort of stuff quite a lot, and how I am contributing to the school. I try and act with as much integrity as I can' (T8-249). Likewise, another teacher described the ethic

of authenticity as being true to herself, 'I think as I've gained a leadership role in the school.... I've tried to work on myself, my own values as well and find out what exactly is important to me. Just try to be true to that' (T14-65).

Three teachers described the ethic of authenticity in leadership as challenging staff to act with authenticity. One teacher whose role is to lead the teaching of Information and Technology recalled asking staff whether it is fair to students to refuse to teach them using technology,

I challenge people to say well I know you don't like technology, or I know you don't like e-learning as much as probably the next person, but do you think it's fair on the children to deny them an opportunity that might be beneficial to their individual learning because you don't feel comfortable with it? (T12-45).

Four participants described authenticity in leadership as promoting authentic learning in relation to; professional learning, leading change, inspiring others and collaborative practice. One teacher described the ethic of authenticity in leading sessions where teachers were planning learning, ensuring she had taught using the strategies advocated so as to speak from experience, 'I also started to feel that when I was presenting or when I was facilitating PAL sessions, to be authentic I had to go and try these things' (T7-69). Three teachers described promoting authentic learning during PAL sessions as leading change,

instead of people being a little bit negative about change, they really wanted to change. Then I think that really followed on with the PAL sessions that we had. It – as much as you had a mentor, they would become very dynamic that computers were open, programs were being changed then and there (T9-57).

A second teacher described the ethic of authenticity in leading as akin to 'ammunition' in the fight for good teaching and learning, 'it gives you the ... ammunition to go out and promote good pedagogy and to promote positive student/teacher interaction and to give students a voice in their own learning to explain to parents the way that education is moving' (T12-176). In discussion focused on leading and promoting authentic learning one teacher described being inspired by the same colleague mentioned previously who implemented a numeracy program,

She was being so true to what she believed was the right thing to do for those children and she's an inspiration to me. I have to be honest she probably wasn't somebody that I looked to for inspiration before, but I do now (T7- 149).

The focus group participants described the ethic of authenticity as teacher leadership with the example of the same experienced teacher who developed an intervention program for her own class that spread throughout the school, 'one of the teachers has developed .... a program within her own class, because she saw a need and that's now spread to the stage basically' (CG2-

210). This same participant clarified the change due to a focus on moral purpose, from leadership being teachers in formal leadership roles to committed teacher leadership, 'You're seeing two things, aren't you? You're seeing the teacher as a leader and for a teacher to want to be a leader. I'm not necessarily speaking about a formal leadership role but teacher as leader' (CG2-244). CG1 described the ethic of authenticity and having to invite teachers to apply for leadership positions in the past, 'they just didn't see themselves in that role. But now they see themselves as, certainly as teacher leader, but they also see themselves as a school leader as well' (881). Two participants were in agreement describing the ethic of authenticity and teacher leadership. Before the school focus on values and ethics teachers left all school decisions to the executive team however, now they feel a part of decision-making processes, 'I don't feel that way anymore, because of this process that we've been through, this change model. What I feel now is, yes, that's important and certainly essential to the school but I can be a leader' (CG2-906).

Two focus group participants and the documentary data described the ethic of authenticity as reciprocity of interpersonal relationships. CG2 described the support given to teachers who show leadership of learning and present new ideas, 'This is a person that started this and has been able to develop it with knowledge and with support' (216). He then described an environment where teacher leaders' ideas will be heard, 'there's an environment where they can put them on the table and have them considered' (CG2-255). CG1 described the ethic of authenticity in leading and the reciprocity of interpersonal relationships by recalling her attitude to attendance at 'Dreaming the future meetings' and the overwhelming number of teacher leaders who attended during their school holidays, 'But I never take attendance, I could never tell you who was there. I always have an idea of the number, because I scan the room to do a head count of numbers, not of faces, I don't care' (729).

The ethic of authenticity was evident in the documentary data in terms of teachers leading reflective practice. One teacher, in a soul-searching blog post shared with core group members, recounted questions he would ask himself as a leader promoting authentic learning, 'If I sit down with one teacher per grade to really look at culling programming back to the essential, is that going to promote authentic learning?' (T12ALR-24). He then reflected on promoting authentic professional learning and motivating teachers to change their practice,

Would what I am offering to develop these teachers in be motivating and exciting and authentic enough to capture the 'clock watcher'? To entice the 'part timer' up to school, unpaid, because it was so good they feared missing out? Do I want people to change their programs because I am there to ensure it happens, or because I want them to see there is a better option and *want* to change them? As a leader, I want to instil in them

the feeling that if they don't change what they are doing their children will be missing out on something so valuable that as a teacher I could not let this happen if I was to live with myself (T12ALR-109).

The interview data points toward teachers' perceptions of leadership being influenced by the ethic of authenticity with regard to; leadership for professional learning including an appreciative inquiry approach, collegial leadership including a sense of staff efficacy and valuing relationships, staff being given time to reflect through school structures, leading with integrity, challenging staff to act with authenticity and promoting authentic learning.

### ***Presence in leading***

Ten of the 14 interview participants recognised the ethic of presence in leading at the case study school. The themes used to identify the ethic of presence were; valuing relationships, leadership through collegiality, affirming and supporting staff in their achievement, leadership for professional learning, and promoting sensitivity to others.

Half of the 14 interview participants described the ethic of presence in leading as valuing relationships. One participant recognised presence as valuing relationships that encourage engagement within community and that all teachers as leaders could learn from each other, '...presence is about relationship building really within a community' (T3- 175). In discussion focused on the ethic of presence and Stage meetings another teacher stated, 'We're probably more there for each other and supportive of one another.... It allows others to lead too' (T4-149). A third teacher described the ethic of presence in leading as supporting staff. She described not seeing herself as a leader before the focus on values and ethics within the PALM process despite holding a formal leadership position in the school and enjoying leading new initiatives, however, not really being present for and with staff, 'through this model, ... I analysed about being there for the staff, more so than just coming to school. It was about putting in a lot more and putting in, being an integral part of the staff' (T9-221).

One teacher described the ethic of presence and valuing relationships as teachers' modelling the school charism,

I can remember going home and saying to my husband, it must be the *St Matthew's* way. It must be something that the *St Matthew's people* – the presence that they have within the school, that gives it that feeling because I had never experienced it at any other school. Even today I tell everybody that there's a beautiful presence within the whole school (T13-81-86).



Another teacher explained the ethic of presence in terms of valuing relationships and teachers being given a voice to make decisions during planning sessions, ‘it doesn't necessarily have to come from the leadership team. That it's important that people feel more comfortable being present in the – staff having a voice as well. I think that that's definitely come out of this model’ (T14-116). Three teachers described valuing professional relationships in reference to the ethic of presence. One teacher reported that as a result of the PALM process teachers with expertise in a particular area such as web 0.2 technology were willing to teach others, ‘They were offering their expertise after school. They were happy to sit with a group of us and gently guide us through what we were doing. That's being present isn't it? Giving up their own time’ (T7-343). Another teacher described the ethic of presence as being available for students before school and impressing upon beginning teachers the importance of interaction with students and staff, ‘that's what you need to develop within beginning teachers, that sense that in order to belong to a professional learning community, you need to make yourself available and put yourself out there to students and to the other staff’ (T12-119). The core group data supported this perception of presence as valuing relationships with students with challenging behaviour. The focus group participants were in agreement that staff would recognise the leadership of the Religious Education Coordinator (REC), Assistant Principal (AP) and Principal in being present to these students and their particular needs,

...special behavioural children have such specific needs and it needs the [AP], the [REC] or the principal to be present to them 100 per cent and there's no question about that. I believe that staff across the board would identify that (CG1-531).

Four of the interview participants discussed how attention to the ethic of presence influenced their collegial leadership as teachers. One teacher described the ethic of presence as, ‘teachers being present for teachers’ in terms of leadership and shared professional learning, ‘I think this PALM model allows for everyone to be a leader... it allows for teachers to influence the teaching of other teachers, and they don't have to be in a leadership position in the school to do that’ (T1-76). Another teacher reinforced explicit attention to the ethic of presence as teachers sharing skills at PAL sessions, ‘I've actually learned that everybody's a leader within their own – they have their own skills and we can learn from each other’ (T3-173). Similarly, teacher 4 reported the ethic of presence and how PAL sessions developed a sense of self-efficacy and competency in leading professional learning, ‘while I showed leadership in one area, it allows others to lead too. Like we're all leading in what we're doing’ (T4-152). Another teacher described the ethic of presence and collegial leadership as teachers taking initiative at PAL sessions, where teachers were sharing practice and one teacher influenced others by her willingness to adapt strategies across stages of learning, ‘One of them who also was never a

person who had very much to say at staff meetings or business meetings or anything like that. She said, you know what, you can take this and you can adapt it' (T7-161). Consequently, this interview participant notes, 'The others looked at her and said, okay if you want to try, we'll try' (T7-169).

Three of the teachers interviewed described the ethic of presence as affirming actions and processes by teachers. One teacher described a mature member of staff who, 'had a lot of ability but it wasn't being used' before the focus on values and ethics. As described previously this teacher became motivated to set up an intervention program to help a particular group of students who were having difficulty learning numeracy, 'this has been an opportunity to hand leadership to someone else and say you can do this and they've run with it' (T4-336). A second participant explained the ethic of presence within leadership as affirming presence by describing the same staff member,

if you see the children struggling and you see that they're having problems. The fact that she went out .... and tried to find out what their problem was. What can I do to help? What can I put into place? You can't be any more present than that really (T7-210).

The ethic of presence was described by two teachers as leadership for professional learning and staff efficacy. One teacher described the change in staff meetings from being led by one person to a more collaborative approach, 'staff meetings were very much – were very different because you sat and you listened. But now we all get involved. That you wouldn't think to run something without having everyone's input. Having people have a say' (T9-575). The second teacher described presence in leading at Stage meetings and PAL sessions where teachers have been provided with the opportunity to share good practice, 'But you just think oh well, I thought it was a great idea. So, you're leading the others and others might want to follow. So that was good' (T10-226).

The ethic of presence as sensitivity to other was highlighted in the example of the teacher who orchestrated the numeracy intervention program in regard to recognising her low self-confidence and building that confidence in leading,

underneath it all we knew she had a lot of ability but it wasn't being used. I think that's the case with lots of teachers is that sometimes they, especially if they've been in the system a while, they become a bit set in their ways and not, again, not believing of themselves (T4-331).

Two focus group interview participants described the ethic of presence and leadership in relation to reflective practice and this was supported by the documentary data. In discussion focused on the nature of teachers' understanding about the ethic of presence one participant

suggested facilitating professional learning (similar to that presented by the LTLL team and in particular Prof. Charles Burford), so teachers reflect deeply on this, ‘I think we need to be more explicit and maybe go down that road of Charles where we had to really delve deep into our understanding’ (CG3-384). CG2 suggested leading reflective questioning during Stage meetings, ‘You can introduce a conversation in things like – in Stage meetings... You can introduce that how present are we being to each other or whatever? ... how present are we being to the curriculum?’ (461). Likewise, in the documentary data it was recorded at a meeting with a Southern Region CEO consultant and a critical friend to the core group, that time should be given in the PALM process (project) to lead teachers in reflecting on the ethic of presence,

what does being present look like and mean? What does affirming, critical and enabling presence look like in the classroom and in the school? Look at our Vision as well as the Learning Framework in relation to our project. If we want to transform learners and learning then we have to timetable a place for reflective practice into our school. It is only through opportunities to reflect that we can transform teaching (LTLLJ- 800).

The ethic of presence was described by one-to-one interview participants as valuing relationships; within the community including teachers supporting each other, as part of the school charism, teachers being given a voice and professional relationships. The ethic of presence was also explained in terms of leadership through collegiality including teacher initiative, affirming and supporting staff in their achievement, leadership for professional learning, and promoting sensitivity to others. Additionally, the ethic of presence was described in relation to reflective practice in the focus group and documentary data.

### **5.1.2 Core values in leading**

Three core LTLL values were evident in the teacher interview data regarding perceptions of leading. The most frequently referenced value was that of excellence. Participants made reference to values that best reflect excellence on 11 occasions followed by transformation and the common good with 8 and 6 references respectively. Catholicity and Justice were two values not mentioned by one-to-one interview participants in regard to leading. The focus group participants explained valuing excellence in leading whilst the documentary data described teachers valuing transformation in leading. The focus group and documentary data both concentrate primarily on the ethics of leading rather than on core values.

The themes used to help identify the value of excellence evidenced in the one-to-one interview data focused on leading include; teachers having a collaborative culture of practice, embedding best current understandings of teaching and learning in practice, celebrating a range of achievement within the community and leadership building capability. The themes used to

help identify the value of transformation in leadership were; providing meaningful and purposeful experiences, inspiring students, leadership for professional learning and ensuring learning is relevant to student's lives. The themes used to help identify the value of the common good in leading were; leadership through collegiality, promoting collaborative practice in teaching and leadership for professional learning.

### ***Valuing excellence in leading***

Five of the 14 interview participants described valuing excellence in leading within a collaborative culture of practice. One teacher spoke about teacher leadership as sharing ideas about good teaching and learning,

if you're not an executive member and you see something that needs to be, or you think could be improved upon or needs to be changed.... then you will often informally speak to either the person that could be responsible for that. Or run it past a few people (T5-569).

A second participant described a colleague who was hesitant to share ideas in the past yet showed leadership by contributing during a 'Dreaming the future' (professional learning) session, '...everybody feels this sort of non-threatened sort of way about us here, that it's all different people who are putting forward ideas (T6-404) ... she thought that this was really valuable for all of us' (T6-412). The notion of trusting relationships will be discussed further in reporting data focused on explicit attention to the ethic of authenticity in learning.

Valuing excellence was described by three participants as embedding best current understandings of teaching and learning in practice. One participant described teachers taking the initiative to lead programs because they have been concerned about student achievement, as a result of a focus on values and ethics, 'there's been lots of initiatives that have happened where people might have gone to the principal and said look I'm really worried about this. Then they've thought about something and they've developed a program' (T5-578). Another teacher explained valuing excellence in terms of a particular staff member leading the change in how Information Technology and Communication (ITC) is taught. In the course of professional learning, staff recognised that word processing skills were no longer relevant and a flexible, interactive learning hub was created in the library, '.... without his leadership in that respect that wouldn't have happened. He has been authentic present and responsible to the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner by doing that' (T8-280). A third teacher described valuing excellence in leading as embedding best current understandings of teaching and learning in practice by simply reminding teachers that to be authentic they should be constantly using technology, 'I think it's

just a good reminder to say you know you should be having the computers turned on. You know you should be doing this' (T12-63). Similarly, a focus group participant described excellence as embedding best current understandings of teaching and learning in practice. He reflected on teachers' leadership in sharing professional learning about quality contemporary teaching and learning with colleagues outside the school, 'Quite a few of the things that we've spoken about at the breakfast meetings, clips and readings we've had, they've been taken by other teachers to other professionals, to other teachers outside of our school' (CG2-1010).

Valuing excellence in leading is reported in the interview data as celebrating achievement within the community. One participant described promoting the leadership of an infants teacher who developed a specific program in the pursuit of transformed learning, 'I know that it's come through the leadership and the encouragement of it and what you do is fantastic and all that sort of language, has spurred her on to produce this program' (T4-323). A second teacher explained how teachers were given the 'appropriate kudos' for their leadership, 'I think it's really good to acknowledge that people have had these other ideas. I've watched and so many different people have come forward with different things' (T6-415). Valuing excellence seems to be expressed as recognition of staff achievement for this participant.

Valuing excellence in leading was described by one participant as building leadership capability. She discussed the possibility of a change in the formal school leadership team and how that would influence teachers' leadership within the school improvement process focused on values and ethics (PALM), 'it's the ones that know that there's something more, or that we're on the fringe of something, that I think the PALS and the PALM model can reach out to those people and empower them to be better educators' (T12-436).

The interview data appears to suggest that excellence in leading is valued by teachers in terms of developing a culture of sharing good teaching and learning, embedding best current practice, celebrating the contributions of various staff members in their commitment to the transformed learner and building leadership capability.

### ***Valuing transformation in leading***

Five of the fourteen one-to-one interview participants described teacher leadership in relation to transforming students and their learning. Valuing transformation concentrated on providing meaningful and purposeful experiences, inspiring students, leadership for professional learning and ensuring learning is relevant to student's lives.

In regard to valuing transformation and providing meaningful and purposeful experiences for students one teacher described a teacher's leadership, 'who put together some amazing

intervention program and it's just had a huge impact on the kids' (T4-319) and noted that she would not have done this prior to the focus on values and ethics within the school. A second participant described valuing transformation as inspiring students and teachers to be leaders rather than formal leadership team members, 'it wasn't just the leaders being leaders, it was really all of us, as teachers, are leaders in how we sort of deal with the children and inspire the children...how we transform the learner' (T6-75). In the documentary data, the core group described the value of transformation as leading teachers through a process that encouraged them to explain how students were transformed by learning. At an LTLL meeting the core group decided to invite two teachers from each grade to present, 'a 3-4 minute talk on a lesson that they feel they do or have done well within their class, (Appreciative Inquiry), which is authentic and then speak about how it has transformed the students in regard to their learning' (LTLLJ-241).

Valuing transformation was explained by two teachers as leadership for professional learning. One teacher described how she had become a leader of learning for teachers in the area of ITC and was transferring these skills between schools as a result of a focus on values and ethics within PALM, 'I feel I've carried it through to my new school as well. I'm trying to lead and transform teachers there as well with the same principles I've learnt through the PALM model' (T1-171). Another participant described the leadership of this same teacher in the way she taught colleagues about Web 0.2 technology and how the school improvement process focused on values and ethics provided an occasion for her to develop leadership,

I think she took something from that leadership herself. Now she's in a leadership role in another school. If you'd spoken to her 12 months before that, I don't know that she would have thought herself as a leader. But that gave her the opportunity to show that she could be a leader (T7-355).

One participant reported valuing transformation in leading on four occasions as ensuring learning is relevant to students' lives. She described the 'realisation' by teacher leaders that students should be given their 'moment to shine' as a result of a focus on values and ethics, 'I've seen leaders take on initiatives such as gardening projects to help children who may struggle socially in the playground or may need a bit of TLC' (T8-262). This teacher spoke from personal experience about her leadership and transformation, 'I actually started a leadership program with the sports captains to have playground activities as well set up for children who may need a bit of extra TLC in the playground, and also assistance with their social skills' (T8-265). Finally, this same teacher described creating homework clubs for students who are unable

to complete homework at home, 'we've certainly tried to be aware of every child's needs and accommodate as well as can be' (T8-272).

The data appears to concentrate on two different perceptions of the nature of this value. One is the transformation of teacher leadership in terms of students' learning and the other, being transformation in regard to the teachers' learning.

### ***Valuing the common good in leading***

Three interview participants expressed valuing the common good in discussion focused on leadership through collegiality, promoting collaborative practice in teaching and leadership for professional learning.

Leadership through collegiality is a key feature of educative leadership as defined in the *LTLL Reflection Guide*. It requires 'the development of a culture and enabling structures which provide legitimate power to those staff best-placed to make decisions about quality teaching and learning, recognising that all have a contribution to make' (Burford & Bezzina, 2007). Two participants described valuing the common good as leadership through collegiality. One participant recognised that her understanding of leadership changed to 'leadership for all' in terms of the nature of the common good:

for me now leadership doesn't mean an executive team ... I see leadership as everybody's a leader. The people on the leadership team or the executive team I used to think well, let them do it, that's their choice. I think that leadership now is it's a shared responsibility (T3-283).

Another participant described valuing the common good as collegial leadership, in discussion focused on an experienced teacher who became a leader in technology. This participant reported that teachers had been de-valued as members of the community, however, as a result of the PALM process focused on moral purpose they now feel good about the teaching profession, 'Making us feel like we are contributors to society' (T7-372).

Another participant described valuing the common good in leading as promoting collaborative practice in teaching. She noted that teachers' shared planning for learning allows for the promotion of collaborative practice in order to improve teaching for all, '.... it allows for teachers to share their skills and their knowledge, for the betterment of other teachers and to enhance all our teaching experiences' (T1-80).

One participant expressed valuing the common good in leadership for professional learning as part of the wider education community, 'the impact of those ethics on me haven't just been within my classroom or within this school. I feel it's branching out into wider

education. In my discussions with young teachers, in my discussions with beginning teachers' (T7-94).

The interview data concentrated on explicit attention to three core values within the PALM process these were, excellence, transformation and the common good.

### **5.1.3 Triangulation of data in leading**

The first data set as presented in table 5.2 *Triangulation of Data in Leading* (see Appendix E) identified many areas that ethics and core values influenced teachers' leadership in particular the areas of; leadership for professional learning, leadership through collegiality, collaborative practice and valuing relationships. The focus group and documentary evidence supported some of these, especially the areas of promoting authentic professional learning and authentic collegial leadership. In addition, the focus group data verified teachers' perceptions of valuing excellence when leading by embedding best current understandings of teaching and learning in practice. The documentary evidence supported teachers' attention to responsibility when leading in terms of developing a culture of shared accountability.

Three of the five core values were seen in the one-to-one interviews as being important to the nature of leading, however, excellence seemed to have greater importance. With regard to ethics, two predominately stood out as being the most important in terms of their impact on leading those being the ethics of authenticity and responsibility, while presence did have some impact it was not as critical as responsibility and authenticity. In the values, there was not a consistent understanding across the five areas of how they impacted on the nature of leading, however, under the ethics of authenticity and responsibility there were two recurring themes and three themes recognised across all three data sets and these were; leadership for professional learning, leadership through collegiality, school structures that nurture authenticity, integrity and leadership for change. Further discussion of these themes in relation to explicit attention to ethics will be discussed in the following section.

## **5.2 DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

Explicit attention to moral purpose in terms of ethics and core values influenced teachers' leadership in two ways, first in the advancement of teachers' sense of self-efficacy in relation to responsible and collegial leadership and second, in teachers' leading with integrity in the promotion of authentic learning or the transformation of the learner.

There were five areas related to authentic and responsible leadership that the teacher interview, focus group and documentary data all supported and these were; authentic leadership



for professional learning, leadership through collegiality, school structures that nurture authenticity, integrity and leadership for change.

### **5.2.1 Responsible leaders of learning**

The ethic of responsibility directly influenced teachers in regard to leadership through collegiality promoting a sense of self-efficacy. Teachers described all staff having a contribution towards professional learning as part of the focus on ethics and values within the PALM process using language such as, 'inclusiveness', 'working with', 'modelling' and 'supporting' other teachers. Collegial leadership is defined by Bezzina (2012) as shared leadership characterised by mutual respect and indicative of educative leadership or the capacity to influence others in order to improve student learning. The collegial community depicted by teachers in the present study was created when teachers were guided by the core group to be 'agents of institutional change' (Palmer, 2008), rather than merely being better at their jobs. Whilst Parker Palmer's (2008) work is within the context of teacher training rather than school improvement processes, his research is cognizant of the personal moral agency described by Bandura (2006) and by teachers in the present study. The LTLL school reflection guide was used to press teachers to individually reflect on their personal values, provide evidence of these within the school context, then communicate their insights in order to develop shared understanding. Teachers' change in perceptions of their role as leader and their focus on being a moral agent is evident in the following teacher's comments in terms of responsibility,

I was doing a leadership role but didn't see myself as a leader. I think that was the difference. After that, I think the – it was almost that you had this like a moral responsibility to be part of the staff in more than just being here at school and coming here (T9-234).

The findings focused on teachers' attention to the ethic of responsibility in teaching suggest that teachers' perceptions of themselves as effective leaders changed as a result of the LTLL reflective tool and the reflective processes within PALM. Teachers described self-efficacy in terms of feeling 'confident', 'empowered', 'professional' and 'making a difference' in leading learning due to shared goals and values amongst teachers which resulted in shared leadership and collective responsibility for student learning experienced at professional learning and planning (PAL) sessions. The principal reinforced these perceptions explaining that she had never had seven teachers apply for one coordinator's position before 'They almost saw it as their responsibility and if they're going to be authentic to themselves that's the road they saw they should be on' (CG1-887). Teachers' confidence in their leadership ability extended to positions in other schools, 'The fact that at the moment we have several people also

who are applying for leadership positions outside of the school, because they genuinely see themselves as leaders' (CG1-892). The concept of 'teacher as leader' characterised by shared ownership of goals and processes is supported by the literature and research in the field (Burford and Bezzina, 2014; Crowther et al., 2009; Harris, 2006) and found in the present study. Crowther et al. (2009) recognised that, 'Teacher leadership facilitates principled action to achieve whole school success' (p. 10) and stresses the importance of teacher values in terms of shared purpose. Harris (2006) agrees that shared responsibility for learning leads to effective teacher leadership, however, both these researchers focus primarily on the instructional leadership of the principal who is responsible for achieving parallel or distributed leadership in the school community. Alternatively, Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) proposed transformational approaches to leadership, where 'power is attributed by organizational members to whomever is able to inspire their commitments to collective aspirations, and the desire for personal and collective mastery over the capacities needed to accomplish such aspirations' (p. 204). The research of Burford and Bezzina (2014) builds on this approach and suggests that teachers and leaders together rely on the capacity of moral purpose to bring about school improvement as recognised in the present study by this teacher in regard to professional learning focused on web 0.2 technology, 'responsibility to the other members of staff to try and get them on board as well.... not just to get them on board, but to give them the confidence that they were capable of doing it as well' (T1-143). Fullan and Quinn (2016) are in agreement and propose that good school leaders must first understand their own moral purpose and then connect others to their motives for becoming educators building 'capacity and commitment through purposeful doing' (p. 19). Although this research is focused primarily on school system reform, there is a connection to the present study in teachers' understanding of shared responsibility for professional learning from the core group leading the PALM process to the school executive members and classroom teachers, 'we've got the Dreaming the Future meetings, when that started it was an input from the four people that were our core people. It shifted to other members of the executive and now it's the staff' (T7-276).

The research of Hannah and Avolio (2010) concentrated on moral potency and organisational leadership in the military is reflected in the present study. Particular attention to the ethic of responsibility as part of the LTLL reflective tool, professional readings and regular professional dialogue, prompted teachers across all three data sets to highlight leadership for change. Moral potency, or the 'conation' to act on moral judgements is evident in the actions of an individual teacher who was described by many participants as changing her practice and taking personal responsibility for a particular group of children.

She was looking at them thinking this particular grade has major problems. What's happening with them? Instead of just going to the boss and saying, there's problems with this grade, what's going on with them? She went with a plan. Well I want to find – first of all she wanted to find out what was going on with them. She put something together to do that. This is not a person that's ever put her hand up for any sort of formal leadership or what have you. But she saw a need and she thought, I need to help these kids in whatever way (T7 136-143).

Moral ownership and moral courage are described as components of moral potency (Hannah and Avolio, 2010; Klaassen, 2010; Shields, 2014). While Klassen's (2010) research is concerned primarily with moral courage and the responsibility teachers have for the moral formation of students there is a commonality with the present research in regard to teachers' professionalism, that is, teachers' 'courage to keep to certain professional and moral standards' (p. 26). Teachers in the present study were required to regularly reflect on the professional and moral standards as presented in the LTLL instrument. Shields (2014) is also concerned with the principles of ethical transformative leadership, however, in school administration rather than with classroom teachers, and she advocates that moral courage is needed for 'deep and equitable change'. That profound change or transformative leadership is recognised by teachers in the present study in their colleague, 'a lot of other teachers might have been saying their standards are quite low we really need to do something about this. But we may not have taken that extra step and gone so that's informal, that's leadership' (T5-605). This teachers' leadership in regard to changing practice is reflected in the work of Burns (1978) who describes transforming leadership as social change, '*real change* – that is a transformation to a marked degree in the attitudes, norms, institutions, and behaviours that structure our daily lives' (p. 414). Shields' (2018) distinction between transformational and transformative leadership and particularly the characteristic of a transformative leader as 'engaging with the wider society in order to educate all children' (p. 20) is evident in the following teachers' commentary, 'the impact of those ethics on me haven't just been within my classroom or within this school. I feel it's branching out into wider education. In my discussions with young teachers, in my discussions with beginning teachers' (T7-94).

In summary, professional learning and planning for learning characterised by shared leadership and concentrated on teachers' responsibility to transform learners led to teachers' increased awareness of their self-worth as leaders of learning, ownership of moral issues and the courage to act ethically.

### 5.2.2 Leaders' integrity and learning

Teachers' specific consideration of the ethic of authenticity gave insight into their leadership for learning in terms of leaders' integrity or being true to self. Teacher leader's shared moral purpose and participation in an appreciative inquiry approach to professional learning and planning for learning within an ethical culture contributed to their leadership of learning with integrity.

Teachers' experiences of leading were described in terms of the ethic of authenticity as 'keeping it real', being 'empowering' and 'impacting' on teachers' practice. In discussion focused on the challenges of modernity, Charles Taylor (1991) provides a philosophical analysis of authenticity and suggests the moral ideal of the ethics of authenticity involves an individual way of being human that is not in imitation of anyone else or put simply, being 'true to myself' (p. 29). This theory resonates with the present study and is exemplified in a blog post by a teacher resolute on promoting effective professional learning. This participant's ideal motive for teachers to change their practice can be described as existential, in terms of what it means to be truly human and how he aspires for other teachers to be leaders of learning in the same way,

As a leader, I want to instill in them the feeling that if they don't change what they are doing their children will be missing out on something so valuable that as a teacher I could not let this happen if I was to live with myself (T12ALR-109).

Teachers' perception of leading in the present study is echoed in the research of Fullan and Quinn's (2016) coherence framework for whole system improvement where leaders improve learning by first understanding their own moral purpose, then connecting others to their motives for becoming educators, building 'capacity and commitment through purposeful doing' (p. 19). Similarly, Langlois and Lapointe (2010) report on a training program for educational leaders based on ethics and 'a process of knowledge, volition, and action (Langlois, 2005) grounded in a reflective, action-training approach to professional development' (p. 150) leading to improved ethical awareness. The knowledge of ethical learning and desire to choose ethical leadership as a result of the school improvement process in the present study was explained by teachers as 'empowering'. The ethic of authenticity, 'gives you the ... ammunition to go out and promote good pedagogy and to promote positive student/teacher interaction and to give students a voice in their own learning to explain to parents the way that education is moving' (T12-176). Tuana (2007) describes ethical reasoning as a component of the moral literacy teachers need to develop in order to produce morally literate students. Teachers in the present study showed processes similar to Tuana's ethical framework of duty-based thinking in

leading professional learning for their peers by concentrating on the intentions behind their actions and ensuring they are ethically relevant, ‘I also started to feel that when I was presenting or when I was facilitating PAL sessions, to be authentic I had to go and try these things’ (T7-69).

Teachers had a collective understanding of the moral dimension of leadership for learning in the present study in regard to teachers’ motivation to lead. Conway and Andrews (2016) in their research which concentrated on the IDEAS process, argue that whilst teachers are the key to sustainable school improvement built on shared moral purpose, this is reliant on the metastrategic thinking of the principal, and the principal–teacher leadership relationship (p. 197). This may be the case in the present study, however, the unique role of the principal’s leadership has not been examined. Burford and Bezzina (2014) contend that unless there is shared moral purpose in terms of the ownership of goals and processes in the learning community, true learning cannot occur. It is evident in the present study that a focus on the ethic of authenticity supported teacher leaders to share and own what was ‘right’ and ‘true’ in terms of students’ learning as illustrated in the following participant comment in relation to one teacher’s leadership of a numeracy program,

She was being so true to what she believed was the right thing to do for those children and she's an inspiration to me. I have to be honest she probably wasn't somebody that I looked to for inspiration before, but I do now (T7- 149).

Although aimed at system leadership Woods and Brighthouse (2015) would argue that a key component of the success of the London Challenge was ‘moral purpose’ with ‘strong, shared values, principles and beliefs’ (p. 17) particularly valuing the common good (Woodhouse, 2013), similarly teachers’ leadership of learning in the present study was for the benefit of all students. Teachers’ consideration of the ethic of authenticity at structured, regular meetings with colleagues who are teaching similar grade levels (stage meetings) led to a common understanding of the motives for teacher leaders to share their practice. In the present study teachers’ shared motive was to transform students and their learning rather than focus on individual expert teaching practice as attested by this participant, ‘she wasn’t just showing us so, that's what I do in my classroom. She was showing us as a way of really helping and everyone was like well, we could do this in our classroom’ (T9-41).

Literature concentrated on moral educational leadership (Starratt, 2011) defines authenticity as a virtue ethic in regard to pursuing a moral good rather than shunning a moral evil. Teachers’ perceptions of leadership in the present study were influenced by the moral good in terms of participating in an appreciative inquiry approach (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005)

to professional learning and professional practice focused on positive psychology methods from the business world. Cooperrider and Whitney's (2005) finding that, 'deficit-based change approaches have an unfortunate propensity to reinforce hierarchy' (p. 19) is relevant to the present study since a key component of the school improvement process (PALM) was an asset-based approach to change, that involved teachers reflecting on their own and others good or authentic practice. Teachers' identification of good practice gave them the confidence and motivation to lead professional learning, as recognised by this participant, '... that appreciative inquiry has given people permission to show off or to rise to the occasion or to share' (T3-346). MacBeath's (2006) educational administrative research across eight countries resonates with the present study as he found that leadership for learning implies the development of internal accountability and that self-evaluation and appreciative inquiry are the vehicle for the development of that accountability within school reforms. Attention to the ethic of authenticity has resulted in teachers' self-evaluation or reflection on leadership practice characterised by truth, honesty or integrity as shown in the following comment from a teacher in a formal leadership position, 'I have had to reflect on and think about this sort of stuff quite a lot, and how I am contributing to the school. I try and act with as much integrity as I can' (T8-249).

Furthermore, Muijs and Harris' (2007) research on the development of teacher leadership in the UK found that school culture and practices changed when teachers shared beliefs and a collaborative culture was built on trust when structures that support collaboration were provided. The core group, in consultation with a Southern Region CEO consultant and a critical friend recorded that structures should be provided in the PALM process (project) to lead teachers in reflecting on the ethic of presence,

what does being present look like and mean? What does affirming, critical and enabling presence look like in the classroom and in the school? Look at our Vision as well as the Learning Framework in relation to our project. If we want to transform learners and learning then we have to timetable a place for reflective practice into our school. It is only through opportunities to reflect that we can transform teaching (LTLLJ- 800).

Consequently, teachers in the present study attributed the structures of regular professional learning and teacher meetings characterised by open dialogue to the development of a collaborative culture where the notion of teachers as leaders of learning was valued as illustrated in the comments of a young teacher,

when I was given the opportunity to become part of the leadership team, I didn't feel like people – even though they'd been more experienced than me, that they were looking at me as in what would she know? I felt that they were actually intrigued in what I could

bring to the workplace... that obviously comes from this authentic and you know being true to everything (T14-203-209).

Structures that support an ethical culture and climate will be discussed further in relation to moral purpose and learning.

To summarise, teachers' explicit attention to the ethic of authenticity within a school improvement process has led to shared understanding and ownership of the moral dimensions of leadership for learning. Professional learning and planning for teaching and learning with a specific focus on truth and honesty in the quest to transform learners has resulted in teachers leading with integrity within an ethical culture and climate.

### **5.3 FINDINGS FROM RESEARCH SUB-QUESTION 2**

There are six findings regarding teachers' perception and practice of leading as influenced by explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process and these are listed below.

1. Teachers' capacity to be leaders of learning is developed when they understand and gain ownership of the moral dimensions of their work through regular participation in professional learning.
2. Teachers' leadership for change and the courage to act ethically can be due to imposed reflective processes.
3. Shared leadership can be developed when teachers take collective ownership of school values and ethics within a collaborative culture.
4. Teachers' self-worth as leaders of learning is increased through the use of an appreciative inquiry approach to teaching and learning.
5. The provision of collaborative structures can give teachers a voice in recognising and sharing good practice during professional learning and planning for learning.
6. Teachers' leadership of learning with integrity can be developed through persistent cycles of professional learning and planning for learning characterised by open and honest dialogue with colleagues.





## Chapter 6: Presentation of Results, Discussion and Findings – Moral Purpose and Learning

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The purpose of this chapter is to present data generated from one-to-one interviews, a focus group interview and supporting documents that explored how explicit attention to moral purpose influenced teachers' perceptions and practice in learning. The data is presented in relation to learning, as reflected in the educational ethics and core values of schooling derived from the LTLL2 framework that guided the PALM process at the case study school. These ethics are authenticity, presence and responsibility, in addition the values are Catholicity, Excellence, Justice, Transformation and the Common Good.

The third sub-question of the research question is:

*How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions and practice of learning?*

### 6.1 ONE-TO-ONE INTERVIEW, FOCUS GROUP AND DOCUMENTARY DATA

Table 6.1 presents the key themes that emerged from the one-to-one interview data under the framework of the ethics and core values from LTLL2, which was used to guide but not limit the analysis. The coding of teachers' comments was conducted against the elements of all these values and ethics used in the LTLL reflective tool. Refer to appendices 6.1F, 6.2F and 6.3F to view frequency of themes and their source for one-to-one interviews, focus group interview and documentary data respectively.

Table 6.1

*One-to-One Interviews' Frequency of Themes in Learning*

| How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions and practice of learning?   |   |  |  |   |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| ETHICS  |   |  |  | CORE VALUES   |
| Authenticity  | Presence  | Responsibility   | Transformation   | Justice   |
| <b>Promoting authentic learning experiences – 13</b><br>Owled sense of educational purpose – 4<br>Facilitator of learning – 11<br><b>Professional learning – 20</b><br>Collaborative – 15<br><b>Appreciative inquiry – 4</b><br><b>Interpersonal relationships</b><br>Student voice – 4<br>Trust/honest relationships – 4<br>Professional relationships – 4<br><b>Being given time – School structures – 13</b><br><b>Reflective practice – 6</b> | <b>Self-reflection – 1</b><br><b>Professional learning – 9</b><br><b>Teaching – 6</b><br>Teacher voice – 9<br><b>Affirming – 2</b><br><b>Values relationships</b><br>Respect – 14<br>Professional – 2<br>Within community – 5<br><b>Sensitivity to other – 3</b><br><b>Empathetic listening – 4</b> | <b>Shared accountability for school core values – 5</b><br><b>Children's learning</b><br>Personal – 9<br>Shared – 6<br><b>Professional learning</b><br>Personal – 33<br>Shared – 18<br><b>Responsibility to cultivate caring, productive environment – 1</b> | <b>Relevant to students' lives – 9</b><br>Student voice – 3<br><b>Providing meaningful and purposeful experiences – 11</b><br><b>Challenging students to take responsibility for own learning – 9</b><br>Inspire learning – 4<br><b>Promoting self-knowledge – 8</b><br><b>Challenging students to live out their values – 1</b> | <b>Justice</b><br><b>Excellence</b><br><b>Catholicity</b><br><b>Common good</b>   |
|   |   |  |  | <b>Expectations and supports</b><br>continuous staff professional development and learning – 11<br>Teachers as learners – 6<br>Obligation to learn – 3<br>Culture of learning – 10<br><b>Collaborative culture of practice – 9</b><br><b>Shares explicit view of good teaching and learning – 1</b><br><b>High expectations – 6</b><br>Students – 3<br><b>Embeds best current understandings of teaching and learning in practice – 5</b> |
| 98  | 55  | 72   | 45   | 0   |
|   |   |  |  | 54  |
|   |   |  |  | 2   |
|   |   |  |  | 6   |

Figure 6.1 provides a visual representation of participant responses to one-to-one interviews. The themes will be reported in order of the frequency of participant responses.

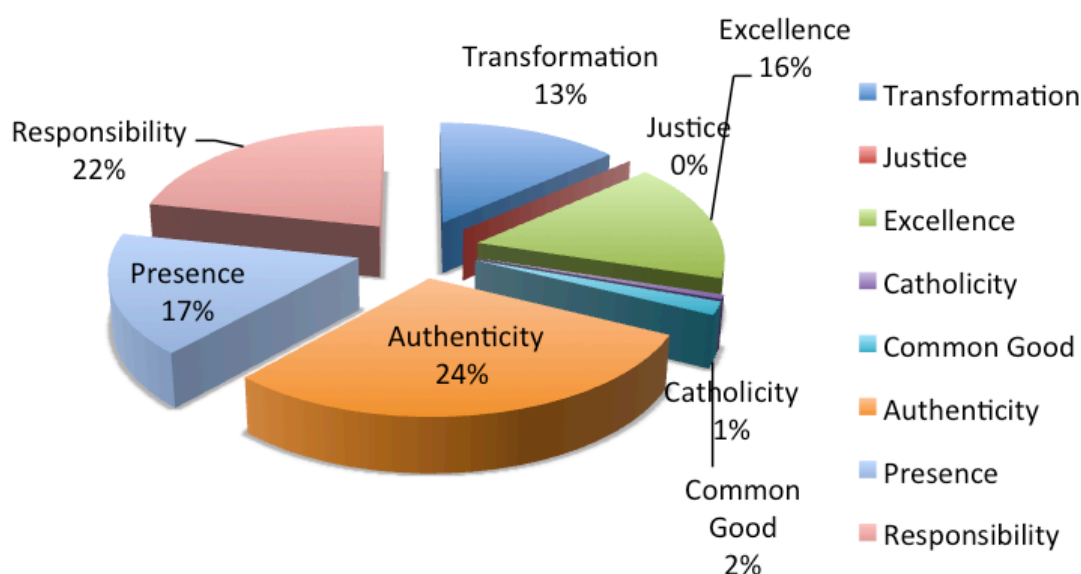


Figure 6.1. Frequency of themes in learning.

### 6.1.1 Ethics in learning

The most frequently mentioned ethic was that of authenticity which received 98 references from one-to-one interview participants. This was followed by responsibility (72) and presence (55). Similarly, in the focus group data concerning perceptions and practice in learning, the most frequently mentioned ethic was that of responsibility which obtained 19 references, followed by authenticity (15) and presence (13). In contrast, the most frequently mentioned ethic in the documentary data was that of authenticity which was referred to on six occasions, followed by presence (2) and responsibility (1). The themes used to describe the ethic of authenticity in learning were; promoting authentic learning experiences including, professional learning and appreciative inquiry, reciprocity in interpersonal relationships and developing school structures that nurture authenticity. The themes used to identify the ethic of responsibility were; promoting habits of self-responsibility among students, shared accountability for school core values, responsibility for children's learning, personal and shared responsibility for professional learning and responsibility to cultivate a caring, productive environment. The themes used to identify the ethic of presence in terms of learning were; encouraging self-reflection, collaborative professional learning, presence in teaching, affirming presence, valuing relationships, sensitivity to other and empathetic listening.

### *Authenticity in learning*

The interview data revealed that 11 of the 14 interview participants' perceptions of learning were influenced by explicit attention to the ethic of authenticity. Half of the interview participants described the ethic of authenticity as promoting authentic learning experiences which included an owned sense of educational purpose and teachers being facilitators of learning. One teacher explained the ethic of authenticity as having newfound courage to challenge the traditional school program of learning for students,

You felt empowered a little bit to challenge yourself and to say, well I'm not going to do that. Even though it's written there, I'm going to try something else. You thought, well authenticity, if I am being ethical and if I am being authentic, I can do that, I can challenge that (T3- 105).

This same teacher recognised her own skill in creating authentic learning experiences, 'I can challenge that because I have the skills to challenge that. I have experience, I know what I'm doing so is it right for the learners?' (T3-113). In previous discussion around valuing transformation and challenging students to take responsibility for their own learning one teacher recognised a change in the way students participate in social outreach, particularly those who are part of a child-centred social outreach program called 'mini Vinnies'. He described this as authentic learning, 'our 'mini Vinnies' and that kind of stuff has become really more authentic. We used to talk a lot about helping others and that's all good but now we actually really do it' (T4-367). One teacher explained the ethic of authenticity in regard to promoting professional learning particularly at breakfast meetings and her willingness to learn, 'You can't be stagnant, and everyone wants to learn. Everyone wants to be authentic and do the best you possibly can with the children' (T10-279).

One participant described the ethic of authenticity in terms of teachers' owned sense of educational purpose in promoting authentic learning experiences. As mentioned previously in discussion focused on valuing Catholicity, staff were led through a process of identifying and understanding the school values and recognised their sense of purpose, 'The interesting thing that came from the professional development day was how passionate people became about defending their belief of what the value was, what it meant to them' (T4- 418).

Five teachers explained the ethic of authenticity as promoting authentic learning experiences by being a facilitator of learning. One teacher focused on her role reversal from traditional style teaching to collaborative learning, 'I teach, but I don't stand at the front and fill them with information. The children – I'm just a facilitator of learning. I create and plan the activities that give them the opportunity to learn from each other' (T1-64). Likewise, another

teacher noted, ‘the teacher.... has become more of a facilitator in learning rather than a dictator. You see children engaged in all sorts of different learning happenings throughout the school. You rarely see children all sitting at their desks now’ (T8-307). A third participant recognised the ethic of authenticity in promoting authentic learning experiences by being a facilitator of learning, ‘we pose questions to the children, rather than just say here are the facts and now you know it. So, we learn together.’ (T10-99). Finally, one teacher explained the ethic of authenticity and promoting authentic learning experiences by commenting that she likes the way students take ownership of their learning at the school since the PALM process with a focus on moral purpose, allowing the teacher to be a facilitator of their learning, ‘everything that we do at this school is the fact that the students should really lead their learning and we facilitate. We don't have to be the person out the front in the classroom and things like that’ (T14-55).

Half of the interview participants described the ethic of authenticity and promoting authentic learning experiences as professional learning for staff. One teacher recognised authenticity in the learning of international research that occurred at ‘Dreaming the future’ breakfast meetings as ‘ongoing learning for us, for our authenticity in our teaching, and to see what goes on in other parts of the world as well’ (T1-156). Another teacher came to the realisation that promoting authentic learning experiences applies to the staff as well as the students,

I'm a learner too now. I always – I didn't put teachers in that category of learners until this whole project of authenticity and am I being ethical? Am I doing the right thing, is this the right thing for this person? Or am I just being a sheep and following? (T3-139-141).

A third teacher explained the ethic of authenticity as promoting authentic learning experiences at Stage meetings where she recalled how a teacher shared authentic learning and staff members were inspired to put it into practice immediately,

She was showing us as a way of really helping and everyone was like well, we could do this in our classroom and this is what they really need. So instead of it being a bit of a show and tell, it became very much a working meeting (T9-43) ...I think the fact that we were re-planning and planning things exactly for our kids and it being put into the classroom the next day, really showed how, I think, people's attitude had changed about their teaching and they were really being discriminatory about what they did and didn't teach (T9-48).

Eight of the fourteen one-to-one interview participants and the focus group, explained the ethic of authenticity as collaborative professional learning. Five teachers described how the

collaboration at PAL sessions lead to authentic teaching and learning. One teacher explained the outcome of collaborative professional learning as ‘teaching the kids in a real sense’. She described the benefits of learning with colleagues, ‘having just our grade partners with someone there to help us.... – it was a really good learning experience. That impacted on my teaching, because having those sessions with someone like *Laura*, who is just a mountain of knowledge’ (T2-31). Another teacher explained that the collaboration experienced at PAL sessions was a turning point for authentic teaching, ‘I think that collaborative sort of feeling that comes in that planning for authentic learning session model, is the time when we started being authentic’ (T6-104). Finally, one teacher described the ethic of authenticity as collaborative professional learning in terms of the great ideas generated from having ‘four people’s opinions’ and a mentor when changing programs, ‘they were implemented straight away and I think that was really where the authenticity really came into it, in the school. There was a lot more idea sharing and more different tasks, additions of tasks’ (T9-72). One teacher described the ethic of authenticity as the opportunity for collaborative professional learning, particularly at Stage meetings where teachers were sharing their expertise, ‘Then they can share that and just help each other. So, it’s all collaborative learning together as a staff, so therefore you can impact on the children’s learning’ (T10-80). These teachers’ perceptions were reinforced by the focus group participants who described the promotion of authentic learning as teachers having a shared understanding of the ethic of authenticity and developing into a professional learning community at the case study school, ‘You want to speak about professional learning communities ...Where you actually do get that commitment from individuals and you get that collegiality, the depth of collegiality, really does become a learning community that’s centred on the child’ (CG2-137).

Three interview participants referred to the ethic of authenticity in regard to the appreciative inquiry approach to professional learning. One teacher commented on the appreciative inquiry process being ‘the best thing’ about the school improvement process as it affirmed teachers’ work rather than ‘throwing the baby out with the bath water’ when planning learning programs ‘it makes you look at what you’re doing, first. Find out what’s good about it.... in education, you don’t often get the pat on the back or the time to share with other people what’s worked’ (T3-330). Another teacher recognised the ethic of authenticity in appreciative inquiry as being given the impetus to change teaching practice without being told, ‘I really like that appreciative enquiry way of let’s look at what we’re doing well. Let’s not think... that didn’t go well, let’s look at what we’re doing well and then build on that. To me, that’s being authentic’ (T6-170).

Six of the fourteen one-to-one interview participants and the focus group described the ethic of authenticity as reciprocity in interpersonal relationships. Two teachers described authenticity and interpersonal relationships between teachers and students as giving students a voice in their learning. As mentioned previously in discussion focused on valuing excellence in learning one teacher recounted giving her students a survey about how they like to learn maths, ‘getting the responses from the children then is going to help me with my planning in maths, and they've clearly told me how they want to learn their maths’ (T1-204). Another teacher admitted that before the PALM process focused on values and ethics, she would not have consulted with students about their learning, ‘Sometimes to even go and ask the students. Years ago, I would never have asked the students what would you – how will we do this?’ (T3-203). The ethic of authenticity and reciprocity of interpersonal relationships was described by two teachers as trusting and honest relationships. One teacher highlighted the honest and trusting relationships that existed between colleagues when planning for authentic learning,

we were honest. We trusted the people who were with us. I've said this before today as well. In all of this, the thing that I've really liked is that I've never felt fearful about commenting. That comes from – there's a trust. I must trust the people who I'm working with or the people who I'm engaging with at that particular moment, that no matter what I say, I'm going to be valued (T6-111).

The ethic of authenticity and reciprocity of interpersonal relationships was explained by three participants in regard to professional relationships. One participant noted that in the past teachers had treated their classroom like their ‘closed kingdom’ however the focus on values and ethics within PALM enabled teachers to open up their classrooms and to admit if they were having difficulty teaching a particular concept, ‘If things weren't going right, no one would ever say it out loud because it was a losing face. What I noticed was that people were far more willing to say, I'm having a problem with this’ (T7-193). Another teacher described the ethic of authenticity in terms of the professional relationships formed at breakfast meetings and professional learning opportunities. She clearly described the purpose of these meetings as ‘the professional side of why we do what we do’ and explained further, ‘bringing in the authentic nature of being an experienced valued professional and an educated professional to be able to produce excellent lessons for your students so that they become transformed’ (T8-42).

Three teachers and the documentary data described the development of school structures that nurture authenticity. One teacher reported on four different occasions the importance of grade partners being given time for authentic learning, ‘every time we talk about the PALS sessions, it's always in a positive way about either ... what worked in the program, what didn't work in the program, which is really important, because you just don't get that time’ (T2-488-

494). A second teacher described school structures that nurture authenticity and in particular the learning that occurs at PAL sessions, ‘it just really gives you time to stop and think and plan with colleagues’ (T4-100). This same teacher elaborated further and described these sessions as ‘feeding learning’. He emphasised the importance of specifically reserving time for planning,

It's not after school or it's not slotted in at the end of another meeting but it's a dedicated time and I don't think we should really underestimate the value of that because I think that's what's making a big change in people's programming. (T4-102).

Finally, a third teacher described school structures that nurture authenticity in regard to the time being given for teachers to learn on six occasions. Firstly, at breakfast meetings for professional learning and reflective practice, ‘It's time – the time is the essence for everything. That's what these do. Give you time to be able to reflect and develop as a teacher and as a learner, because we're all continually learning’ (T10-235). Consequently, this teacher recalled that as an experienced teacher she had never been given time in other schools to learn, such as the time being given at Stage meetings, ‘So as I say, I've never been in a school where they've taken the time or the energy to try and transform the teacher to be authentic’ (T10-255). Finally, this teacher discussed the benefits of meeting with teachers across a stage of learning at Stage meetings which never occurred before the focus on moral purpose within PALM, ‘So this gives you the time, I think, to stop – just to stop and think about what we're doing, rather than just being on the rollercoaster the whole time’ (T10-499). The appreciation of time for professional learning was mentioned 13 times by participants in the one-to-one interviews.

Three teachers and the focus group participants described the ethic of authenticity as reflective practice. One teacher noted that she is constantly questioning whether the classroom learning is authentic as a result of the focus on moral purpose within PALM,

in my day-to-day practice as a teacher, I found myself reflecting all the more often – I've never found myself thinking about what I'm doing more often than I do now. I have moments in the shower when I'm thinking about, did that lesson work, what did so and so gain out of it? I'm looking for individuals and what they could achieve. So, on an individual level in my classroom all the time I have reflective practice because I want to be authentic (T8-52).

The ethic of authenticity in learning was described as promoting authentic learning experiences such as; teachers being facilitators of learning, the collaborative nature of professional learning, an appreciative inquiry approach which values interpersonal relationships (between teachers and students and between professionals) and school structures that nurture authenticity allowing time for reflective practice.



In contrast to both the interview and focus group data sets, the ethic of authenticity was described in the documentation as teachers' shared understanding of authentic learning. Firstly, in evaluating Mathematics PAL sessions where the leader noted, 'The conversation was open and they obviously had a shared understanding of what maths should 'look like' in the class. My general impression was one of collegiality and authenticity in the teaching of maths in Kindergarten' (MPSE-30). Secondly, in a staff survey during the PALM process focused on values and ethics, 20% of teachers named 'collegial shared understanding' as the benefit of planning for authentic learning sessions (SS-1).

Teachers' understanding of the ethic of responsibility in learning will be discussed in the next section.

### ***Responsibility in learning***

The ethic of responsibility in learning was explained by 12 of the fourteen one-to-one interview participants and indicated by; a shared accountability for school core values, personal and shared answerability for children's learning, personal and shared accountability for professional learning and accountability for cultivating a caring and productive environment. The focus group identified the ethic of responsibility in learning as accountability for personal and shared professional learning and accountability for student learning whilst, the documentary data reported on students' responsibility for their own learning.

Three teachers described the ethic of responsibility in learning as shared accountability for school core values. One teacher recalled members of the community writing a story about the school as part of the values initiative and the lengthy discussion that ensued about the beliefs inherent in each story,

I think this school has got a really good sense of responsibility that the responsibility is not just on one person. It's on lots of people...we went and did the stories, and we had all that discussion about what each story was talking about, and we all had our own different beliefs (T2-286).

Another teacher explained that he was given responsibility for developing a shared understanding amongst the school community of the school core values, and how this was vital learning, 'the process then of taking it to the next level and I guess embedding that into the community. So that was important too because we were initially looking at some of the superficial stuff, how it looks like physically' (T4-399). Likewise, a third teacher described the ethic of responsibility in learning as shared accountability for school core values and the values initiative that was established as part of the focus on moral purpose within PALM, 'I think we

felt a great responsibility when we were looking for our values' (T6-741). She then went on to explain the process of parents, children and teachers all having the opportunity to tell their story therefore all being responsible for the resultant three school values, 'We're all telling our story, so I suppose we all had the responsibility' (T6-746).

Five of the 14 interview participants described the ethic of responsibility as personal and shared answerability for children's learning. Three participants explained the ethic of responsibility as personal answerability for children's learning. After attending a professional learning session with educational researcher John Hattie, one teacher explained that teachers often blame other factors for students not learning instead of taking personal responsibility for students' learning,

I was challenged by Hattie when I went and saw him talk, because he asked us a question about why is this group of children not learning? We thought up all of these reasons, oh they've probably had a bad day, they were sick, their parents are separated. Anyway, why does nobody ever say, I didn't engage or I didn't meet the needs of those students? (T3-35).

This same teacher described the ethic of responsibility in regard to children's learning as 'a heavy burden' and something that can't be handed back, 'it weighs so heavily. There's a burden now that you need to be responsible for their learning' (T3-243). Another teacher described the ethic of responsibility as being personally more accountable for students' learning using technology, 'I think I took on a lot more responsibility with the PALM model as it took hold on the school, especially when – we were talking about technology in the classroom and ... I was one of the front runners' (T1-139). Four teachers described the ethic of responsibility as shared accountability for children's learning. One teacher explained the structure of PAL sessions as conducive to shared responsibility for children's learning, 'putting us in a small group at a PAL session, made us actually look at what we were doing and the learners and made us take responsibility as a small group' (T3-41). Likewise, another teacher recognised shared accountability for children's learning, 'when we plan our programs, we take on the responsibility of making sure that it's something that everyone can work with and the children can learn from' (T13-170).

Ten of the 14 teachers interviewed described the ethic of responsibility in learning as personal and shared accountability for professional learning. Nine participants explained the ethic of responsibility as personal professional learning. One teacher conceded that prior to the focus on moral purpose within PALM teachers were complacent about their professional learning considering this to be the responsibility of those in formal leadership roles,

once upon a time, we would have sat back and left that to everyone else. But now, I think we all see the need for our own professional development and our own professional learning, which then enhances our teaching practices (T1– 113).

This same teacher explained that professional learning communities have developed as part of the focus on values and ethics within PALM and teachers are accountable for their learning, ‘professional learning communities have sprung up because of this PALM model, where we take the responsibility... for our own professional development, where we choose to further develop our ideas, to do the professional readings,’ (T1-104), and her role in growing a professional learning community at a new school, ‘we take the responsibility to move that forward. I’m actually encouraging that at my new school, too’ (T1-128). Another teacher described the personal accountability for professional learning at PAL Sessions,

You had to participate. You had a responsibility not only to the members or the people present but also to yourself to really be – to spend that time wisely. To use it to improve your learning or your teaching strategies and skills and your resources and your programming and your ideas (T3-231-233).

Two teachers described the ethic of responsibility as a change in practice at the case study school with individual teachers recognising the necessity for personal professional learning, ‘... it doesn’t just have to be university study, people show interest in conferences and those other things, can I go to that and attend different things? So, yeah, people realise there’s a need’ (T4-313). Likewise, a second teacher described accountability for personal professional learning outside the school, ‘Well there’s people who are also taking responsibility for professional development. We’re talking in-house but we’re also talking about – I mean I said, I go off and do more than I’ve ever done before’ (T7-273). Another teacher described the ethic of responsibility as teachers choosing to participate in professional learning focused on technology, ‘That’s responsibility and making sure that you do have the skills necessary. For me that’s been a bit of a learning curve ... it can be a bit of a challenge but then I think I’ve mastered that’ (T5-454). A sixth teacher explained the ethic of responsibility and teachers’ personal accountability for professional learning in terms of ‘dreaming the future’ meetings where teachers were given the option to gather before school and discuss current educational research, ‘There’s a passion. You wouldn’t have people coming to school early to have a dreaming the future time if there wasn’t a passion. But part of that passion is that responsibility’ (T6-815). The ethic of responsibility was described by a seventh teacher as teachers’ newfound accountability for personal professional development, ‘So there’s a whole new responsibility for your own learning and developing yourself’ (T7- 292). Another teacher explained the ethic of responsibility as personal professional learning and regaining the confidence to return to

university study as a direct result of participating in professional learning focused on moral purpose within the PALM process, ‘But in that was this responsibility – like it was an internal responsibility to be in touch with all the latest research. To be at the top of your game in how things are evolving in the world’ (T9-322).

Half the interview participants described the ethic of responsibility as shared professional learning. One teacher with over 30 years, experience described the ethic of responsibility as a change in culture from teachers being identified as people who, as individuals, should ‘know everything’ to those responsible for their own professional learning within a team, ‘you’re now a learner, and you’re now part of a group, part of a team. You have a responsibility for being – for making that PAL session work’ (T3-74). Likewise, when describing the ‘Dreaming the Future Meetings’ a teacher noted that given a professional reading before the meeting, there is an accountability to have read that, ‘we all share our ideas and thoughts on that reading.... We take the responsibility to move that (our teaching and learning) forward’ (T1- 122, 127). Another teacher described the ethic of responsibility as teachers being given the choice about whether they attend shared professional learning, ‘well it’s not part of our role but it’s part of what makes us teachers and the staff we are. I think those dreaming the future meetings. I mean people come I think because they want to largely’ (T5-371). A fourth teacher described the ethic of responsibility as teachers having shared accountability to be up-to-date in their learning for students, ‘There’s so many things impacting on their lives, more so than us, and we have an obligation to really keep up with that’ (T4-353). Teacher six described the ethic of responsibility as shared accountability for professional learning. She differentiated between professional learning and professional development and described a reciprocal relationship between the two,

we feel that responsibility for our professional learning and our professional development. There’s not as many opportunities for professional development these days... But there are many opportunities for professional learning. It comes back to that culture of learning that I see at this school... people go out for professional development ... when they come back they enhance my professional learning. So, they have that responsibility to me, as well as me having that responsibility to learn (T6-753).

Another teacher described the ethic of responsibility and the change in the way teachers participated in PAL sessions. At first, they had their arms folded and would barely listen to the person leading the professional learning, ‘Then it moved from listening, not saying much, to being cooperative. You’d make suggestions and they’d say, oh we’ll do that. But now it’s collaboration. They’re actually taking responsibility. They’re listening, they’re taking the professional development’ (T7-393). Similarly, a focus group participant described the ethic of

responsibility and teachers' participation in shared professional learning as a result of the focus on moral purpose within PALM giving teachers more confidence, 'I think it's made people more – that's not the right word. Made them more powerful – no, they have more control over what actually' (CG2-206).

One teacher described the ethic of responsibility as cultivating a caring and productive school environment. She recognised responsibility as the child being 'at the centre of everything we do' as teachers,

So, all of those things that happen here, the PALM model, the professional learning situations that we have and the Stage meetings, all of that links in, as far as I'm concerned, with our responsibility. That responsibility to cultivate that caring and productive environment (T6-771).

The ethic of responsibility in learning was described on 72 occasions by participants in terms of; teachers' shared understanding and accountability for school core values, personal and shared answerability for children's learning, personal and shared accountability for professional learning and accountability for cultivating a caring and productive environment. Of those 72 responses accountability for personal and shared professional learning was mentioned 51 times.

In terms of the documentary data, the ethic of responsibility was explained in Stage meeting minutes in relation to students' taking responsibility for their own learning. Teachers described students being more accountable for learning in Year 6 Mathematics Problem Solving sessions, 'Groups are mixed ability groups. Some children are not able to stay focused and take responsibility for what they are doing. Responsibility is developing' (SMM- 30/03/09 S3). Teachers' perceptions and practice of the ethic of presence in learning will be discussed in the following section.

### ***Presence in learning***

The ethic of presence in learning was described by 12 of the fourteen one-to-one interview participants as; encouraging self-reflection, collaborative professional learning, attendance to teaching, affirming others, valuing relationships, sensitivity to other and empathetic listening. In the same way, the focus group and documentary data described presence in terms of engaging in professional learning and encouraging reflective practice. The one-to-one interview participants and focus group, both reported valuing relationships in the community.

One participant described the ethic of presence in learning as self-reflection and consequently an owned sense of educational purpose in his explanation of the process for identifying school values,

we had to say well if we're being present what does that mean? Our understanding of those things through a process, through various professional development sessions changed. We weren't just looking at something like presence as just being there for someone but it was present on so many other levels (T4-408).

The ethic of presence was described by four teachers as collaborative professional learning. One teacher described presence as support and teacher professionalism, 'that's what the presence is, we're supporting each other's learning and we're all professionals. Again, we're here for the children not ourselves and.... this really promotes that kind of ethic' (T4-155). This same teacher described the ethic of presence in recounting the collaborative professional learning that occurred at breakfast meetings. He recognised that it was a good forum for teachers to be present for each other and share post-graduate studies, 'Those who aren't in a position to be involved in further education it's a great way of accessing them or giving them access to what's going on as well' (T4- 186). Another teacher described the ethic of presence as collaborative professional learning where teachers with varying years of experience can share their expertise, 'they're present to me and my learning and hopefully I'm present to them.... I've learned a lot from younger members of staff, as well as people of my own vintage' (T6-685).

Eight of the 14 interview participants described the ethic of presence in learning in relation to their work as teachers. One teacher described presence in learning as teachers encouraging teachers and students to learn and be part of a learning environment, 'being a presence to them for their learning, and to each other, to encourage each other to learn and to grow in our teaching, to create an environment (T1-174). This same teacher recognised the ethic of presence in being available to assist students, 'presence with the children – I think, while they're collaborating and learning and working, you are a presence to them, to help if they need your help' (T1-83). A second teacher described the ethic of presence in learning as physical presence. If this teacher is away from school and unable to be physically present then the learning should continue as if she were at school, 'like if I have a day off. I leave my day plans so well structured, because I think, well, it's got to be like I'm there, even though I'm not there' (T2-128). Another teacher described the ethic of presence in regard to learning at Stage meetings and teachers being so focused on learning from each other that they forget about the time, 'it's the way people interact with each other as well, I think. Often someone will go, oh, it's quarter to five and it's just kept rolling on' (T6-353). Five teachers described the ethic of

presence in learning as teacher voice. One participant described the dynamics of PAL sessions, 'even those quieter members of staff who never say anything, I think after one or two PALs you could see that they felt that they had a voice and that they were going to be listened to' (T3-58). A second participant described the ethic of presence and teachers being given a voice despite having different styles of teaching, 'I can see them being present. I listen to the enthusiasm of people and I listen to the way that people are prepared to – sometimes even debate' (T6-660). Another teacher described the ethic of presence as teachers being given a voice during collaborative learning,

I think there was a lot of – I think the collaboration of – that happened through PAL was really important. I could tell you at some meetings that there were people who never spoke, who never actually thought that their opinion counted or that it really was part of their – that they really should actually be involved. Yet, through PAL, they all had an opinion and they all were there (T9-261).

This same teacher recognised that previous to PALM there was a hierarchy and young teachers may have felt they couldn't speak up about their teaching during professional learning, 'in PAL, it was so different. We really had everyone's opinion on board, because it was that smaller group.... there was that push for implementation and change, which a lot of the young people are very good at (T9-275). Likewise, a fourth participant described the ethic of presence as teacher voice in relation to the difficulty of questioning the teaching practice of colleagues who have had 30 years' experience, 'But I think that we've promoted through PALM an environment where even a first-year graduate student can have a voice' (T12-165). Finally, a fifth participant described the ethic of presence and teachers being given a voice at PAL sessions rather than an expert instructing, 'it's not just one person saying this is what I've done and this is how it works, it's everyone having an input into it' (T14-108).

Two of the 14 teachers interviewed described the ethic of presence as affirming their colleagues. One teacher reported learning to hold other teachers in high regard during planning for learning sessions, 'the whole idea of presence is that I think I've learned that now even the quietest person in the group can be the person with the most knowledge' (T3-153). Another teacher described the ethic of presence in learning as teachers affirming colleagues when they were sharing expertise at stage meetings,

Then they were getting ideas and they went oh, okay. Well if you can do that, can you show me how that's done? That was – that's absolutely fantastic. Some people have brilliant ideas in all different areas. Some have gifts in one way and some have gifts in another (T10-76).

The ethic of presence in learning was explained by eight of the 14 interview participants as valuing relationships. One participant described presence as the respectful relationships that developed during collaborative planning, ‘It was number one the relationships, because you couldn't be somebody in that group unless you were listening and actually giving some feedback’ (T3-55). This teacher reiterated that the ethic of presence for her was about valuing relationships, ‘when I think of presence I think of the relationships and the people’ (T3-149). Reflecting upon the ethic of presence this same teacher with over 30 years’ experience described learning to value other teachers, ‘So I think I've learned to respect my colleagues a lot more, than just think, well I know all the answers’ (T3-156). Another participant described the ethic of presence in collaborative learning as respectful relationships within the change process,

So, it's that whole idea of respecting other people's opinions and their knowledge of things. So, someone who's more knowledgeable than you are in certain areas, and taking that into account, and listening and being able to take that on board, their ideas, and maybe trying to then incorporate it in some way into your own teaching, so changing and adapting to what those ideas are that you're hearing all the time, I think is important (T11-111).

A third participant described the ethic of presence as the trusting relationships that developed throughout the PALM process focused on moral purpose. In particular, when teachers admit to each other that they need help in a particular area of teaching and learning, ‘I don't feel threatened and that I trust those people that they're not going to go and run to whoever it be – the powers that be...and go, oh, guess what, she doesn't – you know’ (T6-680). Two teachers described the ethic of presence as valuing relationships within a professional learning community. One teacher recounted clarifying with new staff members why it is important to be available to other staff, ‘you need to, as part of your professional learning community, you need to be present to the other people in that community, whether it's the teachers or the children’ (T12-112). A second teacher described presence as being part of a learning community that is transparent and open to all, being situated in the staffroom, ‘the presence that – like of the – in the staff room and anyone if they find some readings or literature that is really important or they felt it was important to share, they're able to do that’ (T14-110). The ethic of presence was described as valuing relationships within the wider school community. One teacher described the importance of inviting parents and the parish community to participate in school learning using the example of Christian Meditation, ‘Also the meditation sessions that we've done and inviting the parents to come and I think that that's being present for the students, for their own learning’ (T14-80). In discussion focused on presence and learning, teachers in the present



study described valuing respectful relationships during professional learning 14 times and although not named as such, teachers communicated Starratt's (2012) understanding of affirming, enabling and critical presence as described in the review of the literature.

Three of the 14 interview participants described the ethic of presence in learning as sensitivity to others. One teacher described presence as sensitivity to others in order to develop as a teacher, 'I think being sensitive to what's going on around is important too. I just think that as growing as a teacher' (T10-108). Another teacher explained the ethic of presence and the sensitivity needed for her participation in Stage meetings, 'being able to assist staff members if they find they're having trouble with a certain element of teaching or just having a negotiation or conversation saying, this worked for me or this didn't, or anything like that' (T8-87). A third teacher described the ethic of presence and the quality of sensitivity as essential for being a leader of learning, 'I have to be more sensitive to people's needs and things like that. Taking into consideration that everyone comes from a different background and there might be other things going on' (T14-62).

The ethic of presence in learning was described by four of the 14 interview participants as empathetic listening. One teacher explained the ethic of presence and empathetic listening at PAL sessions. When planning for Religious Education she had a particular point of view about a scripture passage that needed to be taught to the students and was grateful for the opportunity to learn another perspective of this story, 'It was just interesting that we had that PALS session to discuss the other point of view' (T2-531). Another teacher also recognised the ethic of presence as empathetic listening when planning learning, 'during PAL sessions, being present to somebody is listening to them' (T3-150). A third teacher described the ethic of presence and empathetic listening at Stage meetings as changing teaching practice, 'But most people here are fairly open to listening and changing things, which is good' (T11-152).

There are two different understandings of the nature of presence as presented in the teachers' one-to-one interviews and the focus group data. Teachers' perceptions and practice are focused on presence in terms of teachers' learning and the focus group is concerned with presence in regard to students' learning as described by two focus group participants in regard to differentiated learning and teachers being attentive to the individual learning needs of students in order to show gains in learning,

Being present to the individual needs? (CG3-515)

They are in differentiation (CG1-516).

Yes, differentiation in particular in Year 1, you've got to be present to the individual needs...you have to be present to those individual needs of all those children in order for them to be able to move (CG3-523).

The ethic of presence in learning was described 55 times by 12 of the fourteen one-to-one interview participants as; encouraging self-reflection, collaborative professional learning, attendance to teaching, affirming others, valuing relationships, sensitivity to other and empathetic listening. Participants in one-to-one interviews mentioned valuing relationships 21 times as an indicator of the ethic of presence.

### **6.1.2 Core values in learning**

Four core values were evident in the teacher interview data regarding perceptions of learning. The most frequently referenced value in one-to-one interviews was excellence. Participants made reference to values that best reflect excellence on 54 occasions followed by transformation (45), the common good (6) and Catholicity (2). Interestingly, the focus group members and documentary data made most reference to the value of transformation, then excellence followed by the common good. In regard to learning, the three data sets did not report on the core value of justice. The value of excellence in learning evidenced in the interview data was identified using the following themes; teachers expecting and supporting continuous staff professional development and learning, building a collaborative culture of practice, teachers sharing an explicit view of good teaching and learning, having high expectations of both teachers and students and embedding best current understandings of teaching and learning in practice. The themes used to help identify transformation in learning include; ensuring that learning is relevant to students' lives, providing experiences that are meaningful and purposeful, challenging students to take responsibility for their own learning, promoting self-knowledge and challenging students to live out their own values. The indicator used to recognise valuing the common good in learning is the promotion of collaborative practice. The value of Catholicity in learning was indicated by teachers and students being present to their faith and the school charism.

#### ***Valuing excellence in learning***

Half of the one-to-one interview participants and the focus group members, described valuing excellence in learning as expecting and supporting continuous staff professional development and professional learning. One teacher noted that in order to provide quality learning for her students she has, 'gone looking for different ways of doing things' and constantly refers to educational research, 'John Hattie's book has been really good in that it

offers all of the research on different ways of teaching and engaging students and things like that' (T3-191). Another teacher recognised the value of excellence as teachers supporting each other in continuous professional learning, 'there's quite a few of us at uni and studying now, we're coming across this material and quite excited about it and keen to share it so it's a good forum to do that' (T4 -184). This same teacher spoke about the value of excellence in terms of his ability to 'inspire' other teachers to continue learning at a tertiary level, 'I've had three that I can think of off the top of my head who have come to me about doing – going to uni and showing that interest and asking me about it and they're now attending uni' (T4-306). He comments on, 'the influence of others who are studying' (T4-310) and the realisation amongst teachers that in valuing excellence in learning, 'there's a need' to participate in conferences and professional development.

Half of the interview participants explained valuing excellence as expecting and supporting staff professional learning in terms of teachers being learners. This is distinct from the professional development described above where staff are referring to research or participating in a course or program of study. One teacher clearly distinguishes the difference between traditional professional development, where teachers are not necessarily stakeholders in the learning and planning for learning sessions focused on values and ethics, where teachers are genuine learners, 'we brought to it the needs of the students and our own personal needs.... no longer were we just educators, we were actually learners as well' (T3-51). Recounting a breakfast meeting, one teacher described excellence in terms of teachers as learners, 'the staff were just totally engaged themselves in this video, and quite amazed at how a classroom that is authentic can truly work, with a little bit of effort' (T1-151). As a result of the focus on moral purpose within the PALM process, another teacher expressed valuing excellence in learning in his realisation that, 'there was a need to be learning all the time' (T4-71). This same teacher wanted to pursue further formal study to provide excellence in teaching, 'I realised I needed to go off and engage in more professional development and university study' (T4-76). Two participants described the value of excellence as an obligation to learn. One teacher described valuing excellence as her commitment to professional learning at breakfast meetings.

I think now there's a genuine interest in the content. I mean I certainly get a lot out of them and it's new and it's innovative. So, I guess that's a responsibility too. I mean in a way I must be abreast of what's happening in the future. Where we're going, where we're heading, changes? Some of it's just amazing and you think wow (T5-381).

Three participants described valuing excellence as being part of a culture of learning. One teacher mentioned a culture of learning three times throughout the interview. She described the

learning that was taking place at breakfast meetings and how they made a conscious decision to build on this learning in their own personal time, 'I'm just going to be part of that culture of learning. I'm just going to extend my general knowledge and I'm just going to extend my knowledge, generally speaking' (T6-431). Another teacher described valuing excellence as developing a culture of staff learning where two groups of teachers devoted time to learning and mentoring focused on web 0.2 technology, 'lots of people were giving up their own time. The people that were wanting that knowledge, they weren't saying.... if someone wants to release me from class I'll do it. They were actually giving up their own time' (T7-347). A third teacher described valuing excellence as staff professional learning and the culture of learning stating, '... as a teacher, we never stop learning, not ever. You can't just say well I know it all, that's it. No one can tell me anything, because that's absolute rubbish because you continue to learn every single day' (T10-84).

While participants have spoken about individual learning, there is also a sense of valuing excellence in education as a shared enterprise in developing a collaborative, professional learning culture. Five of the 14 interview participants described valuing excellence in terms of the collaborative culture of learning that developed in the school. Two teachers explained valuing excellence in education as both planned and spontaneous professional learning and development. One teacher described the value of sharing professional learning and current research,

teachers are involved in the discussion. Teachers who have been on in-services introduce material. People have read – there's been a lot of input as well in terms of readings and up-to-date readings. We've had people out from the Uni. (T5- 475).

Both teachers discussed how they work with a grade partner or teacher from another grade in the classroom next door and the conversation has changed from a focus on the day-to-day running of the school to innovations and research in education. 'I don't know that you'd go everywhere and you'd find that happening, two people who've just opened the door to ask each other a question or how's your day been and you've gone off on this great learning curve' (T6-219). Both teachers recognised the collaborative nature of their professional learning and described valuing excellence in wanting to research best current understandings of teaching and learning. In discussion focused on the development of a professional learning community another teacher described the value of excellence as the commitment to collaborative professional learning, 'we choose to further develop our ideas, to do the professional readings, and to share that knowledge, especially on staff, which then goes back to encouraging each other to learn' (T1-109). Finally, one participant described valuing excellence in noting that the

PALM process with a focus on moral purpose, provided teachers with the opportunity to share their understanding of students and their learning,

But I think when we get to our Stage meetings, we get another dimension, just because we're seeing what – for example, for starters, we've built on the base of people who are contributing to our ideas. But also, we can see where our children are moving to and they can see where their children have come from (T6-364).

One participant expressed valuing excellence as teachers constantly searching for and sharing an explicit view of good teaching and learning,

you actually spend a lot of time thinking about it and questioning about whether this is the right way to go. Will this meet their needs? Will this engage the learner? Will it actually be a good – will it be quality education? (T3-261).

Five of the 14 participants described valuing excellence in learning as having high expectations of themselves and/or their students as part of their work. One teacher described the value of excellence in giving her class a survey about learning in Mathematics for the sole purpose of becoming a better teacher of Mathematics.

it was about what they liked about maths, what they struggled with in maths, what would help them with their maths, how they like to learn maths, and what would they like me to do in future with their maths learning. I asked them all this – I gave them this survey, because I want to improve (T1-194).

A second teacher spoke about how previous to the experience of focusing on moral purpose within PALM, she had 'got into that senior teacher mode' thinking, 'I know how to do everything'. As part of the focus on values within the PALM process this teacher described valuing excellence in 'questioning everything' and striving for continual improvement, 'I just know that next year I'll do the same questioning all over again because it'll be different students, different ways of learning' (T3-215). Two teachers described valuing excellence in learning and high expectations as the reciprocal relationship between teacher and student learning. One teacher recognised that the focus is always on student learning however, she expressed that high expectations for teachers' learning often leads to high expectations for students,

If we are better learners, well, they definitely are too.... We are seeing it and our expectations are a little bit different for them too, ... I think, in whole, how we all, as teachers, see ourselves and how we have educated ourselves.... by going through this process (T9-309).

Likewise, another participant described valuing excellence in learning as a reciprocal relationship between teachers and students having high expectations and changing practice,

‘Because as you're doing things better for them, you're actually doing things better for yourself. You're changing yourself, not just as a teacher but you're changing yourself as a learner’ (T7-240).

The focus group and four one-to-one interview participants explained valuing excellence as embedding best current understandings of teaching and learning in practice. One teacher described in great detail how she was valuing excellence by embedding best current understandings of teaching and learning gained through professional development. She reported having students work more collaboratively as a result of PAL sessions, ‘In my own classroom I'm doing more group work or partner work... organizationally it works well but also they work well in terms of the learning that's happening in the classroom (T5-88). Another teacher recognised valuing excellence as embedding up-to-date professional learning leading to effective teaching, ‘... we are responsible to maintaining our professional learning, to be as informed as possible about all current trends, to be able to put them in place in our classrooms’ (T8-169).

The interview data points towards teachers’ perceptions of learning being influenced by the core value of excellence in terms of their commitment to professional development and professional learning including developing a culture of learning, the collaborative nature of their work, sharing and embedding an explicit understanding of good teaching and learning and having high expectations of teachers and students. Unlike the one-to-one interview or core group data, valuing excellence was reported in the documentary data by the school executive as being clearly evident in regard to students being able to articulate school values and live them out (LTLL SRG-4). The next section is focused on discussion regarding transformational learning.

### ***Valuing transformation in learning***

The one-to-one interview data revealed that ten of the 14 interview participants’ perceptions of learning were influenced by explicit attention to the core value of transformation. The themes used to identify transformation in learning include; ensuring that learning is relevant to students’ lives, providing experiences that are meaningful and purposeful, challenging students to take responsibility for their own learning, promoting self-knowledge and challenging students to live out their values. In addition, the documentary data highlighted students’ active engagement in learning and the change in learning due to teachers’ participation in PALM processes that focus on moral purpose. The focus group data reinforced classroom

teachers' perceptions, who reported challenging students to take responsibility for their own learning.

Five teachers described valuing transformation in terms of ensuring learning is relevant to students' lives. One teacher explained valuing transformation in recounting planning 'real-life' activities for students including students being responsible for planning a trip to the rainforest, 'after we did the activity with the children, it sort of proved – the enjoyment the children got out of it, and the calibre of the learning that happened, and the enthusiasm for the learning' (T1-29). Characteristics of the core value of transformation were identified by this teacher, 'when you see children engaged fully in their learning, and wanting more, and coming up with different ideas, they are transformed as a learner' (T1-32). This same teacher described valuing transformation in stating her core purpose is to teach students, 'in a way they can understand and relate to' (T1- 228) therefore making the learning relevant to students' lives. This will be discussed further in the section regarding the ethic of responsibility and teachers being responsible for students' learning.

Another teacher described valuing transformation in their own classroom as making the learning relevant to students' lives. He discussed the need to 'Adjust the learning, or adjust the learning climate to their world' (T4-356). A third teacher valued transformation in learning in regard to making learning relevant to students' lives by listing the skills they would need to be successful in life and the teacher's role in developing those skills,

Because we know that the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner needs to have problem solving skills and be good collaborators and good communicators, and do deductive reasoning and all these sorts of fascinating strategies. By standing up the front and saying, this is what I know and this is what I'm going to tell you, doesn't transform a learner (T8-315).

A fourth teacher described valuing transformation in learning and making learning relevant to students' lives by listening to the student voice. This teacher recognised the importance of involving students in decision-making about their learning due to the focus on moral purpose within PALM, 'we've learned to talk to kids more I think. To ask them what they want to learn and how they want to learn, things like that' (T3-348). In the documentary data, student voice was reported as a descriptor of valuing transformation from the perspective of teachers listening to students in the first instance and secondly students learning from other students. TI recorded in Stage meeting minutes that students could learn from each other, 'Sometimes the children who are not the most academic are getting the opportunity to have a voice. Children get to see how others think mathematically. This can help transform the learner' (30/03/09-S3).

In valuing transformation, half of the interview participants mentioned giving students meaningful and purposeful learning experiences. One teacher referred to exploring real-life experiences when planning for authentic learning in order to focus the learning and give it meaning for various students in the class, ‘we used lots of real-life differentiated activities, so it gave scope for the needs of the children in the class’ (T1-19). Another teacher explained valuing transformation and teachers providing meaningful and purposeful experiences as a direct result of professional learning. He described how students are more engaged in their learning due to the change in activities teachers are bringing to the classroom, ‘It’s making a difference in how – the children want to learn, want to be engaged in their learning. It’s a positive’ (T4-206). Another participant, in recounting discussion at a Stage meeting explained valuing transformation where a Year 2 teacher shared some great mathematics sites. A Kindergarten teacher decided these activities would be purposeful and meaningful for the students in her class,

I had some really brilliant maths kids that year. The next day I showed them some of these sites and they go but that’s Year 2 and I’m going that’s okay because you love maths and you could be doing this... It wasn’t a Year 2 maths program. It was a Year 2 website that they went on. There was just so much excitement. Those children are now in Year 2. They still talk about I remember you let me go on Year 2 Wiki (T9-88).

Six of the fourteen one-to-one interview participants and the focus group, described the value of transformation in terms of challenging students to take responsibility for their own learning including inspiring students to learn. The value of transformation was explained by one teacher in regard to asking students to nominate the content and process of their learning, ‘It never crossed my mind to ask the children what they wanted, and now I do, lots – I ask them what they want, and how they like to learn...they will tell you how they want to learn’ (T1-214). Another teacher reported that attending to the transformed learner involves not only challenging herself to take responsibility for learning but also challenging students,

I now look at students and I even ask them. So, I not only challenge myself as to why I’m doing this, I actually say to them, well what is it you need to know? How would you like me to explain it to you? (T3-124).

One teacher explained valuing transformation in regard to students taking responsibility for their own learning and the change in students’ participation in social outreach. This teacher noted that in the past students participated in teacher-initiated activities and with a focus on values and ethics they are now responsible for the social justice initiatives, ‘the children come up with the ideas.... I mean we’re there to guide and facilitate, they help drive what we’re doing’ (T4-372). Another teacher described valuing transformation and students taking responsibility



for their own learning in terms of the implementation of games to teach mathematical concepts. This teacher recognised infants students being more responsible for their own learning, ‘I realised the kids were getting more out of the games than what they were out of my classes, out of my actual lessons (T2-72), and ‘games just had more of an impact on them than anything I could teach them, and it taught them so much (T2-89).

Throughout her interview one teacher made nine comments about valuing transformation in terms of inspiring students to learn which speaks to her commitment to go beyond forming and informing students. This teacher clearly defined her core purpose as helping students to want to learn rather than teaching them. ‘I’m not here to teach them. That doesn’t mean there’s not teaching moments but I want to inspire them to want to learn as well’ (T6-159). She describes how it is possible to carry out these aspirations given the time to plan for learning, ‘now that we’re given this time to stop, we look at actually what we’re doing. We want to transform these learners. We want to inspire them’ (T6-457). This same teacher believes that inspiring students to have a love of learning will transform them for life, aware of her personal responsibility, ‘I could be the person who just inspires them to have a love of learning. Or inspires them to be a particular person for their whole life, not for their one year in my grade, for their whole life’ (T6- 282).

Three teachers described the value of transformation as the promotion of self-knowledge both in students and teachers. One teacher explained that the explicit teaching strategies taught at university were not sufficient for transformational learning and the focus on values and ethics encouraged teachers to use a mixture of explicit and implicit instruction, ‘It is the letting go and letting them control their learning and the pace with which they learn. To be honest, they are learning.... I am finding they are learning far faster than they ever did before’ (T1-84). Another teacher described valuing transformation as promoting self-knowledge and explained how her teaching style had to change as a result of the focus on moral purpose, ‘into a more collaborative work space where children are feeding off each other and all having their role to play within their own learning’ (T8-75). In the documentary data, transformation in learning was explained in Stage meeting minutes as teachers’ self-reflection leading to changed practice,

the question that is being asked now as a matter of course at the Stage meetings is; ‘how did that transform the learning of the students?’ Staff are expecting this approach and are able to explain how what they are offering has changed the learning.... (SMM-159).

One teacher explained valuing transformation as challenging students to live out their values and be present by visiting residents at a local retirement village, ‘that’s helping with the value of presence and children’s understanding of it ...the children are learning that – at their

own stage – what it actually means and we're trying to promote that through the school' (T14-90).

The data shows that interview participants valued transformation in terms of; ensuring learning is relevant to students' lives, providing meaningful and purposeful learning experiences, challenging students to take responsibility for their own learning, promoting self-knowledge and challenging students to live out their own values.

In the documentary data, teachers were asked how a focus on moral purpose within PAL sessions had transformed learning in their classroom in a staff survey and 20% responded, 'focus on teaching'. Whilst, valuing transformation in terms of students' learning was described in staff survey data by 20% of the teachers as, 'active engagement of students, better results'. The next section focuses on valuing the common good in learning.

### ***Valuing the common good in learning***

Three one-to-one interview participants described valuing the common good as promoting collaborative practice in learning. One teacher reinforced the school staff's shared responsibility for all children's learning; 'I think we're all responsible for the learning of our children, and not just the learning of the children in our class, but the learning of the children in the school' (T1-177). In regard to collaborative practice in learning, this same teacher reiterated her responsibility for the learning of children in the school then focused on teachers as learners, 'I think if we work collaboratively together as teachers, we can help each other to learn and to grow as teachers and leaders of teachers too' (T1- 179). A focus group participant expanded this view, in discussion focused on the ethic of responsibility and the professional learning teachers have participated in as part of the PALM process focused on moral purpose, 'They're taking more responsibility for themselves but not only for themselves for the community as a whole' (CG2-209). Likewise, valuing the common good was explained in documentary data as promoting collaborative practice and ensuring good learning for all students, 'The PAL sessions are a great way for grade partners to communicate about the program and things we could do better to incorporate authentic learning. We can collaborate as a grade so every child is not missing out...' (TVI-T14). The next section focuses on valuing Catholicity in learning.

### ***Valuing Catholicity in learning***

Two teachers explained valuing Catholicity as being present to their faith and delivering a quality Religious Education (RE) program. One teacher described professional learning

developed as part of the school improvement process where teachers discerned the school values, which included being present to faith ‘present to our faith and present to the curriculum so it was important. I think through that process it reaffirmed that the values we had identified were really our true values and it was a good learning thing’ (T4-414). Another teacher described valuing Catholicity as producing a quality RE program. She explained how valuable the PAL sessions were particularly for planning learning in religious education, ‘You don’t have time to go through – the religion, especially the religion ones.... having that time to sit and go through the scripture and discuss the scripture, and even just that fact of discussing the scripture’ (T2-510). The focus group participants and documentary data did not describe valuing Catholicity.

### **6.1.3 Triangulation of data in learning**

The first data set as presented in table 6.2 *Triangulation of Data in Learning* (see Appendix F) identified many areas that ethics and core values influenced teachers’ learning in particular the areas of; staff professional development and learning, promoting a collaborative culture of practice, valuing professional relationships, reflective practice and challenging students to take responsibility for their own learning. The focus group and documentary evidence supported some of these, especially the areas of promoting authentic professional learning, being present to professional learning and present to learning in the form of self-reflection. In addition, the focus group data verified teachers’ perceptions of valuing transformation in challenging students to take responsibility for their own learning, and excellence in regard to professional learning and a collaborative culture of practice. The focus group data also reinforced teachers’ perceptions of explicit attention to the ethics of authenticity, presence and responsibility in terms of authentic interpersonal relationships including those relationships characterised by trust and honesty, authentic reflective practice, being present to relationships within community and personal and shared responsibility for professional learning. The documentary evidence supported teachers’ valuing transformation in regard to student voice in learning, valuing the common good in terms of promoting collaborative learning and developing school structures that nurture authentic learning.

Two of the five core values were seen in the one-to-one interviews as being important to the nature of learning, these were excellence and transformation however excellence seemed to have greater importance, whereas in regard to ethics, one predominately stood out as being the most important in terms of its impact on learning that being the ethic of authenticity, while responsibility did have some impact it was not as critical as authenticity. In the values, there was not a consistent understanding across the five areas of how they impacted on the nature of

learning however, within the ethics of authenticity and presence there were three recurring themes recognised across all three data sets and these were professional learning, promoting authentic learning and reflective practice. Promoting authentic learning was indicated by all three data sets in relation to the ethic of authenticity. Further discussion of the themes in relation to explicit attention to ethics and core values will be discussed in the next section.

## **6.2 DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

Explicit attention to moral purpose in terms of ethics and core values influenced teachers' perceptions and practice of learning in a number of ways. First in the promotion of personal professional learning as a moral issue; second in teachers' contribution to a professional learning community characterised by trust, collaboration and structures that nurture authenticity; and third in the advancement of authentic learning that would transform learners into richer, fuller, deeper human beings. There were three themes related to the ethics of presence and authenticity in learning that the teacher interviews, focus group and documentary data all supported and these were; collaborative professional learning, promoting authentic student learning and authentic (real, honest) professional learning. Although teachers did not explicitly describe Catholicity in learning this may be because it is culturally embedded in the school and second nature to them. All of the participants were Catholic and chose to teach in a Catholic culture therefore it was difficult to isolate the value of Catholicity and may explain why teachers were unable to identify Catholicity explicitly.

### **6.2.1 Professional learning as a moral issue**

Teachers' explicit sustained cognizance of the ethic of responsibility was achieved in the PALM process through their participation in continuous cycles of professional learning, planning for teaching and learning and sustained dialogue focused on shared understandings about the transformation of the learner. Teachers valued professional learning and owned this as their particular issue or concern. This finding is supported by the research of Langlois and Lapointe (2010) in their TERA training program aimed at developing greater ethical sensitivity, judgement and awareness amongst educational administrators, who found that participants had a better understanding of the moral dimensions of their work and in particular the concept of responsibility, 'the participants redefined and clarified the boundaries of their responsibility by going beyond naïve administrative procedures to consider the impact of their decisions on the people around them' (p. 154) Similarly, teachers in the present study recognised professional learning as a personal necessity, rather than merely the responsibility of administrators,

once upon a time, we would have sat back and left that to everyone else. But now, I think we all see the need for our own professional development and our own professional learning, which then enhances our teaching practices (T1– 113).

Although focused on school leaders, rather than teachers, Cranston (2013) describes professional responsibility as opposed to external accountability in terms of school leaders who are ‘enacting an overt moral commitment to their students’ (p. 8). Likewise, teachers in the present study did not view professional learning in terms of their accountability to agencies outside the school. Personal professional responsibility was described as an ‘internal responsibility,’ by teachers who gained the confidence to return to university study after more than 20 years without participating in formal study. As a consequence of their participation in the PALM process, teachers viewed professional learning as ‘an integral part of our job, not something extra’ (T9-337).

There was an awareness amongst teachers in the present study that they had a moral obligation to their students to participate in professional learning and apply this in practice, ‘the biggest shift for me was I realised there was a need to be learning all the time.... I realised I needed to go off and engage in more professional development and university study’ (T4-71-76). Campbell (2008), in writing for the field of teacher education, calls for ‘responsible professionalism in teaching’ (p. 378) due to explicit attention to the moral aspects of educating rather than an implicit understanding of teaching as a moral profession. Teachers in the present study were in a ‘state of moral agency’ as described by Campbell (2004), since they ‘live out through their actions, attitudes, and words the same virtues they hope to instil in their students’ (p. 32). Teachers became learners, acknowledging that previous to their participation in professional learning and planning for authentic learning as part of the PALM process, they had not considered themselves learners or had the courage to act ethically in promoting real, honest and true learning,

I'm a learner too now. I always – I didn't put teachers in that category of learners until this whole project of authenticity and am I being ethical? Am I doing the right thing, is this the right thing for this person? Or am I just being a sheep and following? (T3-139-141).

Bandura’s (2006) agentic theory of human development supports this finding that teachers have become moral agents adopting, ‘standards of right and wrong that serve as guides and deterrents for conduct’ (p. 171) as mentioned previously in regard to valuing relationships in teaching. Teachers in the present study were conscious of not simply following the status quo, such as utilising the latest commercial program or popular pedagogy in terms of student

learning, rather, they were reflecting on the individual needs of each student and acting in an ethical way.

To summarise, teachers' specific consideration of the ethic of responsibility at professional learning and planning for authentic learning sessions led to their belief that professional learning was a necessity. Teachers' moral motivation to participate in professional learning was intrinsic rather than as a result of external pressures leading to a state of moral agency.

### **6.2.2 Professional learning community**

This study contributes to the understanding of responsibility for learning in relation to teachers' participation in a professional learning community (PLC) and in particular their real contribution to a collaborative school culture. Dufour and Marzano (2011) suggested there are three 'big ideas' that direct the PLC process; these are (a) ensuring all students learn at high levels, (b) teachers working collaboratively to meet the needs of each student, and (c) educators providing evidence of student learning and using that evidence to drive continuous improvement. Dufour and Marzano (2012), Harris and Jones (2010), Leithwood and Louis (2012) and Stoll et al. (2006) all recognise the need for 'communities of continuous inquiry and improvement' (p. 223) for enhanced learning in schools. Fullan (2016) would agree and argued that the 'wrong driver' for system or school improvement is to focus on individuals rather than the power of the group. How people make sense of the nature of their world sometimes contributes to the nature of how the organisation works according to Weick (1995), however, in this study the organisation stayed the same despite the push for individualism in a neoliberal society. Teachers in the present study attributed professional collaboration and cycles of collaborative enquiry to their understanding of the ethic of responsibility within the PALM process,

we feel that responsibility for our professional learning and our professional development. There's not as many opportunities for professional development these days... But there are many opportunities for professional learning. It comes back to that culture of learning that I see at this school... people go out for professional development ... when they come back they enhance my professional learning. So, they have that responsibility to me, as well as me having that responsibility to learn (T6-753).

Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) argued that the key to transforming professional culture and communities is to find the connection between what people believe and why, making it essential for people to reflect on their own culture and its influence. Deal and Peterson (2009) agreed that school culture is shaped by teachers' explicit attention to values and in the present

study a learning culture was created by teachers' valuing excellence. The clear motive for this teachers' responsibility to participate in professional learning was focused on valuing excellence in relation to the transformation of the learner,

... if the child is going to be the centre of everything that we do – and I firmly believe that – then we have a responsibility to be the best who we can be so that they can be the best who they can be (T6-765).

There is a recognition amongst teachers in the present study that they are an integral part of the school improvement process and responsible for developing a professional learning community, 'professional learning communities have sprung up because of this PALM model, where we take the responsibility... for our own professional development, where we choose to further develop our ideas, to do the professional readings,' (T1-104). Stoll et al. (2006) in their definition of a PLC describe teachers continually seeking and sharing learning as mentioned by the participants of this study whilst, Harris and Jones (2010) also recognise that PLCs in Wales are focused on teachers' decision-making and having joint responsibilities for the outcomes of their work. Furthermore, the OECD (2011) report concentrated on teacher engagement in education reform suggests teachers not only need to be actively involved in school improvement, they should also be part of the planning. Although teachers did not report creating the structures inherent in the PALM process, they did consider themselves responsible for the creation of a professional learning community where they worked collaboratively to meet each students' learning needs as illustrated by the following teacher,

But I think when we get to our Stage meetings, we get another dimension, just because we're seeing what – for example, for starters, we've built on the base of people who are contributing to our ideas. But also, we can see where our children are moving to and they can see where their children have come from (T6-364).

Research concentrated on Educational Leadership recognises the need for trust in building teacher capacity for school improvement. Hutchings et al. (2010) in the London Challenge and Bryk and Schneider (2003) in Chicago schools, in relation to moral purpose and moral obligation respectively whilst, Liu et al. (2016) in terms of the principal's role in engaging teachers in professional learning in China. Teachers in the present study described trusting relationships that developed during professional learning due to specific attention to the ethic of presence, where teachers were able to freely share their teaching practice as discussed in chapter four. Additionally, teachers reported 'becoming authentic' and being completely focused on 'critically analysing' students' learning at PAL sessions, indicative of a professional learning community where relationships are characterised by truth and trust,

we were honest. We trusted the people who were with us. I've said this before today as well. In all of this, the thing that I've really liked is that I've never felt fearful about commenting. That comes from – there's a trust. I must trust the people who I'm working with or the people who I'm engaging with at that particular moment, that no matter what I say, I'm going to be valued (T6-111).

One of the barriers to building whole school learning communities can be organisational structures (Harris and Jones, 2010) however, teachers interviewed in the present study believed that the school organisational structures within PALM were ample, in particular, the time given to them within the school day to collaboratively reflect on learning. 'It's time – the time is the essence for everything. That's what these do. Give you time to be able to reflect and develop as a teacher and as a learner, because we're all continually learning' (T10-235). Furthermore, Argyris and Schon's (1996) theory of organisational learning states 'when organisational inquiry leads to learning, its results are manifested in thought and action that are in some degree new to the organization' (p. 33). The culture of reflective practice seemed to link teachers' thoughts about the moral imperative of education and their action out of moral purpose to generate school improvement.

Fullan et al. (2015), in discussion focused on how accountability works in successful school systems, recognised that effective teacher collaboration can be promoted by 'flexible structures within the school day and year that allocate time for teachers and leaders to participate in collegial planning, job-embedded professional learning opportunities, and collaboration focused on analyzing evidence of student learning' (p. 9). In this study, experienced teachers showed an awareness of the purpose for time being allocated to collaborative professional learning within the PALM process, and invested in them as teachers, 'I've never been in a school where they've taken the time or the energy to try and transform the teacher to be authentic' (T10-255). This was also supported in Hargreaves and Fullan's (2012) previous work as building professional capital including, the components of human and social capital. Elmore (2016) would describe this teachers' perception of professional learning in terms of 'the principle of transparency,' as his research reveals that policy driven educational reform has proven unsuccessful over the past 25 years, particularly in the United States and that educators need to view learning as a social activity where, 'every act or set of ideas that is central to the practice of a learning environment should be open and accessible to everyone in that environment' (p. 534). Teachers' perceptions of professional learning as a social activity have been influenced by structures within the PALM school improvement process that have fostered a shared understanding of the ethic of authenticity.



The ethic of presence and its nuances were discussed in chapter four in relation to teachers valuing relationships with colleagues and students when teaching, however, there are also fine distinctions to understanding the ethic of presence when it comes to the pursuit of learning. Starratt (2012), refers to presence as a virtue since it is one of the ‘ways of engaging the good that one is seeking’ (p. 121). The ‘good’ in the context of learning is to become ‘more fully human’. Teachers in the present study valued respectful relationships in collaborative learning and described learning to listen critically to their colleagues whilst, appreciating and learning from their expertise. Harris and Jones’ (2010) research concentrated on professional learning communities in Wales, supports the finding that in a successful professional learning community respect amongst colleagues is essential. The respectful relationships described by teachers in the present study are attributed to specific attention to the ethic of presence.

The one-to-one interview data suggests that the participants’ emphasis was more on teachers’ learning than students’ learning in relation to a professional learning community, however, Dufour and Marzano (2011) argue that the primary purpose of a PLC is to influence and improve teaching.

In summary, teachers’ explicit attention to values and ethics in the present study influenced their perception of learning in terms of their understanding of, and participation in, a professional learning community characterised by personal and shared responsibility for learning, trusting and respectful relationships or presence, and structures that foster authenticity.

### **6.2.3 Transforming learning**

This study contributes to the understanding of authentic learning in terms of teachers’ owned sense of educational purpose and their role as facilitators of learning. Moral ownership is described by teachers in the present study in regard to the ethic of authenticity and is considered an element of moral potency along with moral courage (Klaassen, 2010; Shields, 2014). Much of the research in the field focused on moral potency is related to leadership particularly in the military (Hannah and Avolio, 2010) and teachers’ courage as moral leaders (Klaassen, 2012) however, the commonality with teachers in the present study is a ‘sense of ownership over the ethical conduct of oneself’ (Hannah and Avolio, 2010, p. 293) and in the call for ‘new professionalism’ in education, Klaassen (2012), found that teachers want to keep to particular moral and professional standards. Professional learning and collaborative planning within the PALM process with specific attention to the ethic of authenticity, encouraged teachers to not only be accountable for learning, rather, take personal responsibility or

ownership for students' learning as explained by this participant after attending a seminar with educational researcher John Hattie,

I was challenged by Hattie when I went and saw him talk, because he asked us a question about why is this group of children not learning? We thought up all of these reasons, oh they've probably had a bad day, they were sick, their parents are separated. Anyway, why does nobody ever say, I didn't engage or I didn't meet the needs of those students? (T3-35).

Burford and Bezzina (2014) in research concentrated on the link between leadership and learning developed the LTLL conceptual framework which gave certain aspirations to the notion of 'transformed learner', that is, showing respect for the subject and process of learning, being a responsible lifelong learner and being actively engaged in society in order to make a difference. The findings focused on teachers' attention to the ethic of authenticity in learning in the present study suggest that teachers' perceptions and practice changed from teacher-directed and content-driven learning to student-centred learning and a commitment to the transformed learner. Teachers' understanding of the ethical nature of transforming learning in this study is supported in the scholarly literature. Wrigley et al. (2012) refer to 'pedagogies of transformation ... as reflecting on society, values, history, environment and learning itself' (p. 99) and Starratt (2012) explains how students as ethical beings are connected in learning to their cultural, natural and social worlds as clearly described by one teacher:

Because we know that the 21st century learner needs to have problem-solving skills and be good collaborators and good communicators and do deductive reasoning and all these sorts of fascinating strategies. By standing up the front and saying, this is what I know and this is what I'm going to tell you, doesn't transform a learner (T8-315).

Teachers' shared understanding of the transformed learner, a concept at the centre of the school improvement model, is illuminated by the following teacher's comments regarding their role as a facilitator of learning, 'the teacher ... has become more of a facilitator in learning rather than a dictator. You see children engaged in all sorts of different learning happenings throughout the school. You rarely see children all sitting at their desks now' (T8-307). Teachers in the present study described changed attitudes from content-centred to learning-centred education. Rather than simply learning foundational knowledge students were encouraged to learn how to learn, be caring, focus on the human dimension of learning and apply and integrate their learning. Fink (2013), in his taxonomy of significant learning, although focused on higher education, supports this paradigm shift. Significant learning is comparable to authentic learning in the present study, in relation to teachers encouraging students to learn how to learn, as explained by this teacher who gave her class a survey about learning Mathematics,

... it was about what they liked about maths, what they struggled with in maths, what would help them with their maths, how they like to learn maths, and what would they like me to do in future with their maths learning. I asked them all this – I gave them this survey, because I want to improve (T1-194).

Teachers in the present study described, ‘placing the student at the centre of everything’ when making decisions about learning, similarly, there is a call amongst researchers (Frick, 2009; Shapiro and Stefkovich, 2016; Stefkovich and O’Brien, 2004), for educational leaders to place ‘the best interests of the student’ at the centre of the ethical decision-making process. Furthermore, Stefkovich and O’Brien (2004), found that decisions made in the ‘best interests of the student’ in U.S. court decisions involved rights, responsibility and respect, however, Frick (2011) in research involving secondary school principals found that ‘characterological virtue’ should precede any moral imperative such as ‘best interests of the student’ (p. 558). Teachers at the case study school described a ‘values initiative’ that grew out of the PALM process focused on moral purpose where the school values discerned were, ‘respect, responsibility and presence’. These values were comparable to the characterological virtues of, ‘responsibility, care, patience, integrity (truthfulness, honesty, genuineness), fairness and love’ discerned by the secondary principals in Frick’s (2013, p. 138) research. However, in the present study teachers described both, focusing on the moral imperative to transform learners, by placing them at the centre of ethical decision-making and understanding the virtues that build character concurrently.

Shapiro and Stefkovich’s, (2016) notion of teachers ‘accepting and teaching students to accept responsibility for one’s actions’ (p. 27) is illustrated in teachers’ discussion concerning authentic learning within PALM and a student-centred social outreach known as ‘mini Vinnies’. This point is highlighted by the following teacher’s comment: ‘our “mini Vinnies” and that kind of stuff has become really more authentic. We used to talk a lot about helping others and that's all good but now we actually really do it’ (T4-367).

The human dimension of teaching and learning has been discussed previously in chapter 4, in terms of teachers’ understanding of presence in teaching as a commitment to building and maintaining honest, trusting, caring relationships with students and colleagues for the purpose of transforming learners. The ethic of presence has also been described by participants in the present study in relation to teachers’ accepting responsibility for students’ learning. This responsibility is expressed by a teacher who believes that if she is absent from school the learning should continue as if she were present at school, ‘like if I have a day off. I leave my

day plans so well structured, because I think, well, it's got to be like I'm there, even though I'm not there' (T2-128).

To summarise, teachers' overt attention to the ethics of authenticity and presence within the PALM process has led to a commitment from teachers to transform learning. Teachers no longer blame students for not learning, rather they own this as their particular issue and consider that their role as teacher is to be a responsible facilitator of learning.

### **6.3 FINDINGS FROM RESEARCH SUB-QUESTION 3**

There are six main findings regarding teachers' perception and practice of learning as influenced by explicit attention to moral purpose within a school improvement model and these are listed below.

1. Reflecting on the values and ethics of teaching in professional learning, professional dialogue and planning for learning can lead to changes in understanding and ownership of the moral purpose of teaching.
2. Teachers' motivation to participate in professional learning and development can be strengthened by regular reflection and discourse with colleagues focused on educating the whole child for participation in society.
3. Providing teachers with school structures built on a philosophy of personal and shared responsibility for learning can contribute to the development of professional learning communities.
4. Collaborative learning cultures can best be developed when teachers engage in honest, trusting and respectful relationships with colleagues focused on improving student learning.
5. Professional learning concentrated on the end goal of transforming learners can lead to changes in teachers' attitudes to learning.
6. Reflective processes focused on moral purpose lead to teachers' ownership of student learning as their specific concern.

## Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

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The purpose of this research was to investigate how explicit attention to moral purpose within a model of leading for learning influenced teachers' perceptions and practice in teaching, leading and learning. This case study of teachers as leaders of learning is significant research as it adds to the body of knowledge for school leaders in understanding the gap in the research between teachers' exposure to the moral imperative of education and teachers' action out of moral purpose to bring about change in schools.

This chapter includes a review of the research findings, recommendations from this study and conclusions of the research. The findings are reviewed in relation to the main research question and conclusions are discussed in association with the three sub-questions, which are restated below.

The main research question asked: how has explicit attention to moral purpose within a model of leading for learning influenced teachers' perceptions and practice?

The three sub-research questions, designed to explore the main research question were;

1. How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions and practice of teaching?
2. How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions and practice of leading?
3. How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions and practice of learning?

The findings from this case study are based on a review of the scholarly literature and the analysis of, rich descriptions provided by teachers in interviews and documentation relevant to the school improvement process.

### 7.1 EXAMINATION OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

The research findings discussed in previous chapters in relation to either moral purpose and teaching, moral purpose and leadership or moral purpose and learning, presented common themes across all three areas of school improvement in terms of the participant's responses and these are in relation to; a collaborative culture of practice, professional learning, professional relationships and reflective practice. These four themes represent teachers' experience of the

moral imperative of education within the school improvement process PALM. The subsequent discussion is a synthesis of these themes and the findings, as illustrated in Figure 7.

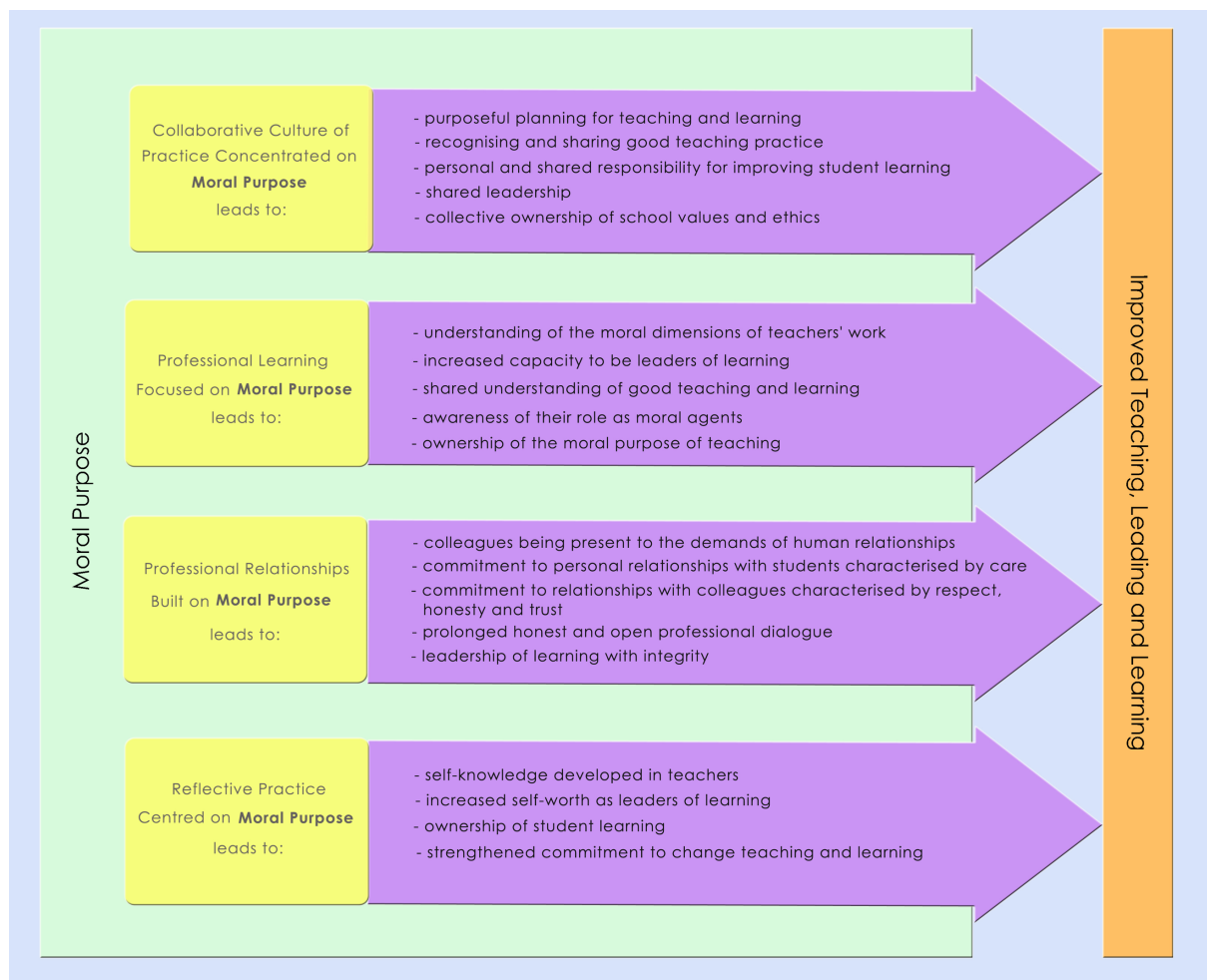


Figure 7.1. Teachers' action out of moral purpose to generate school improvement.

### 7.1.1 Collaborative culture of practice concentrated on moral purpose

Teachers' perceptions of the factors that precipitated moral action to improve teaching, leading and learning included developing a collaborative culture of practice. The findings from this case study for school leaders, focus on understanding how to build a collaborative culture of practice in the quest to fill the gap between teachers' experience of the moral imperative of education and their action out of moral purpose to generate school improvement. These findings are reiterated below:

4.3.3 *Purposeful collaborative planning for teaching and learning and regular prolonged dialogue between colleagues about the moral dimensions of their work can lead to teachers' development of an existential commitment to teaching.*

5.3.3 *Shared leadership can be developed when teachers take collective ownership of school values and ethics within a collaborative culture.*

- 5.3.5 *The provision of collaborative structures can give teachers a voice in recognising and sharing good practice during professional learning and planning for learning.*
- 6.3.3 *Providing teachers with school structures built on a philosophy of personal and shared responsibility for learning can contribute to the development of professional learning communities.*
- 6.3.4 *Collaborative learning cultures can best be developed when teachers engage in honest, trusting and respectful relationships with colleagues focused on improving student learning.*

Teachers' explicit attention to the ethic of authenticity in particular and valuing excellence and the common good led to their understanding of a collaborative culture of practice. Participants from all three data sets described in rich detail the importance of planning for authentic learning with colleagues. In the process of planning for teaching and learning teachers developed ethical sensitivity, ethical decision-making skills and ethical motivation, or the three components of moral literacy (Tuana, 2014). Teachers together discerned whether educational situations involved an ethical issue by identifying the ethics and values involved, reflected on the relevance of their actions or inactions, and subsequently their reason for acting ethically. As Tuana (2014), reminds us "Moral action happens in the midst of living in and through our interactions with others – our family, our friends, our co-workers. And it is in the midst of these relationships that we enact moral literacy" (p. 170). It is clear from this research that regular, persistent conversations with colleagues focused on the moral purpose of teachers' work fostered teachers' commitment to transform learners. As discussed previously, 'purposeful doing' can build teachers' capacity and commitment (Fullan and Quinn, 2016) however, the commitment to transform learners expressed by teachers in the present study was not simply motivated by emotion, politics or the intellect (Crowther, 2011) rather, teachers described their commitment in terms of what it means to be truly human (Starratt, 2004).

The provision of collaborative structures built on a philosophy of personal and shared responsibility for students' learning was a major theme in the review of the literature related to developing teacher leadership (Muijis and Harris, 2007). Participants in this research suggested that teacher efficacy in leading good learning was developed due to shared goals and values amongst teachers and this efficacy resulted in shared leadership and collective responsibility for student learning experienced at professional learning and planning (PAL) sessions. Moral courage was demonstrated in terms of teachers' transformative leadership (Shields, 2018) and as a component of moral literacy (Tuana, 2014) or moral potency (Hannah and Avolio, 2010) where teachers in the present study collectively gained the courage to continue being people of

integrity despite any opposition. This was evidenced in the area of technology, where teachers were particularly courageous in regard to their responsibility to be leaders of learning,

Teachers were cognisant of the organisational structures and especially the time afforded them during school hours, to plan collaboratively for authentic learning and share good practice. Teachers proposed that a change in school leadership would not impact on the ethical culture and climate of the school due to the solid collaborative structures.

Evident in the scholarly literature and widely accepted amongst researchers in the field is the importance of developing professional learning communities in the quest to improve teaching, leadership and learning (Dufour and Marzano, 2011; Harris and Jones, 2010; Leithwood and Seashore Louis, 2012; Stoll et al, 2006). This research recognised that a professional learning community (PLC) is not only characterised by “continuous cycles of inquiry and improvement” (Stoll et al., 2006, p. 223) in relation to student learning, furthermore, PLCs are built on a collaborative culture grounded in honest, trusting and respectful relationships which can be attributed to teachers’ understanding and ownership of the ethics of authenticity and presence.

Improved teaching, leading and learning was experienced when teachers;

- participated in purposeful planning for teaching and learning,
- recognised and shared good teaching practice,
- took personal and shared responsibility for improving student learning,
- shared leadership of learning and
- took collective ownership of school values and ethics.

The first two recommendations arise from these findings.

### ***Recommendation 1***

It is recommended that school leaders establish consistent cycles of professional learning firstly for a core group of leaders, then including the school executive and subsequently classroom teachers, focused on a philosophy of personal and shared responsibility for improving student learning. Ideally, school leaders would model their commitment to a collaborative culture of practice by developing honest, trusting and respectful relationships with teachers whilst taking ownership of the school values and ethics.



## ***Recommendation 2***

It is recommended that school leaders provide the necessary organisational structures for teachers to participate in, regular purposeful collaborative planning for teaching and learning, and regular opportunities to acknowledge and share good teaching and learning balanced by standards of excellence in education.

### **7.1.2 Professional learning focused on moral purpose**

Teachers' perceptions of the factors that caused moral action to improve teaching, leading and learning included, their participation in professional learning focused on moral purpose. The findings from this research for school leaders, concentrate on understanding how professional learning for teachers focused on moral purpose led to moral action and consequently school improvement. These findings are restated below:

- 4.3.6 Teachers' experience of professional learning with colleagues that is based on a shared understanding of good teaching and learning may lead to an awareness of their role as moral agents.*
- 5.3.1 Teachers' capacity to be leaders of learning is developed when they understand and gain ownership of the moral dimensions of their work through regular participation in professional learning.*
- 6.3.1 Reflecting on the values and ethics of teaching in professional learning, professional dialogue and planning for learning can lead to changes in understanding and ownership of the moral purpose of teaching.*
- 6.3.2 Teachers' motivation to participate in professional learning and development can be strengthened by regular reflection and discourse with colleagues focused on educating the whole child for participation in society.*
- 6.3.5 Professional learning concentrated on the end goal of transforming learners can lead to changes in teachers' attitudes to learning.*

Participants from all three data sets described explicit attention to the ethics of authenticity, presence and responsibility in relation to their participation in professional learning. The nature of professional learning focused on moral purpose, as described by participants was characterised by four main features. Firstly, persistent cycles of professional learning concentrated on the moral dimensions of teachers' work and in particular, the ethic of responsibility, enabled teachers to understand and explain their professional role as moral agents. The issue of teachers' professional role as a moral agent was evident in the scholarly

literature (Campbell, 2004; Fenstermacher et al., 2009) in regard to the relationship between teachers' ethical knowledge and their ethical behaviour. Teachers in this study described consistently reflecting with colleagues on the ethics and values of education which enabled them to gain a shared understanding about the 'good' in teaching, leading and learning, this in turn, led to teachers' 'heavy' or substantial responsibility be an agent of change.

Secondly, reflecting on values and ethics led to changes in teachers' understanding of learning and ownership of the moral purpose of teaching. It is clear from this research that teachers changed view of learning from content-driven learning to student-centred learning and their personal responsibility for meaningful and purposeful students' learning, was attributed to professional learning focused on the moral purpose of teaching. Professional learning encouraged teachers to understand *connectedness* in learning and their pivotal role in connecting students to the world in which they live (Starratt, 2012; Wrigley et al., 2012) rather than focusing on performativity, marketisation and managerialism in learning (Ball, 2010). Thirdly, regular professional learning focused on the moral dimensions of teachers' work and specifically the ethic of authenticity, gave teachers the motivation to lead learning resulting in capacity building. Participants described increased teacher efficacy in; young inexperienced teachers who had the confidence to share their knowledge, and teachers with over 30 years' experience who, previously would not have ventured out of their 'classroom kingdom', who began sharing their expertise with colleagues within and across schools. An experienced teacher communicated her role as a moral agent in regard to valuing the common good in learning and technology, "If you see something that's working that's good, then I think you have responsibility to share that with your work colleagues as well for the good of the school, really" (T1-163).

Finally, this research revealed that teachers' motivation to participate in professional learning was focused on the moral imperative to transform learners, by placing them at the centre of ethical educational decision-making and understanding the virtues that build character in students. Moral hope, which is considered part of moral potency or the courage to act ethically was explained by teachers in the present study in regard to professional learning.

Teachers' increased responsibility to participate in professional learning has influenced their teaching, leadership and learning in terms of;

- understanding of the moral dimensions of teachers' work
- increased capacity to be leaders of learning
- shared understanding of good teaching and learning

- awareness of their role as moral agents
- ownership of the moral purpose of teaching The next two recommendations stem from these findings.

### ***Recommendation 3***

It is recommended that school leaders provide professional learning opportunities for teachers focused on developing a shared understanding of the moral dimensions of teachers' work including; the characteristics of the transformed learner and good teaching and learning that is relevant to students' lives.

### ***Recommendation 4***

It is recommended that school leaders provide professional learning for teachers that incorporates regular reflective processes focused on the moral purpose of teaching, and the role of teachers as moral agents. Schools would be encouraged to engage educational researchers and academics from tertiary institutions who have expertise in the area of school improvement that is driven by moral purpose.

#### **7.1.3 Professional relationships built on moral purpose**

Teachers' perceptions of the factors that triggered moral action to improve teaching, leading and learning included developing professional relationships built on moral purpose. The findings from this research for school leaders, focus on understanding how professional relationships between teachers built on moral purpose lead to moral action and subsequently school improvement. These findings are reiterated below:

- 4.3.4 Teachers' commitment to being present to the learning needs of students may improve when they participate in professional learning focused on the demands of human relationships.*
- 4.3.5 Regular sharing of teaching practice and its moral purpose can strengthen teachers' commitment to building and maintaining honest and trusting professional relationships with colleagues.*
- 5.3.6 Teachers' leadership of learning with integrity can be developed through persistent cycles of professional learning and planning for learning characterised by open and honest dialogue with colleagues.*

School communities are hives of human relationships and one of the challenges facing school leaders is to provide professional learning for teachers focused on the demands of human relationships. It is evident in this research that explicit attention to the ethic of presence for the purpose of transforming learners, prompted teachers to reflect on their relationships with both students and colleagues. Transformation of the learner was understood by teachers as building knowledge and understanding which leads to action including; showing respect for the subject and process of learning, being a responsible lifelong learner and being actively engaged in society in order to make a difference. Teachers' commitment to being present to the learning needs of students improved with professional learning concentrated on human relationships. Although the focus group described teachers' understanding of presence in terms of physical presence, classroom teachers described being present to the curriculum and students' learning. Strong in the scholarly literature, and commonly accepted amongst researchers, is the importance of trust (Bryk and Schneider, 2003; Hutchings et al., 2010; Liu et al., 2016) in building professional relationships for school improvement and the ethic of care (Noddings, 2010; Starratt, 2012; Shapiro and Stefkovich, 2016) in fostering relationships with students. Teachers in this research understood presence as a commitment to building and maintaining honest, trusting and caring relationships with both students and colleagues. Teachers showed moral literacy in terms of understanding the ethic of presence in professional learning situations, moral potency or courage in regard to sharing good teaching and learning, despite the notion that it may have been condemned by peers and moral agency in relation to acting ethically by inviting other teachers into their classrooms. In their judgement, regular sharing of teaching practice that was focused on the core values of excellence in learning and transformation of the learner, strengthened teachers' professional relationships.

This research suggested that explicit attention to moral purpose, and in particular the ethic of authenticity, encouraged teachers to lead learning with integrity. Participants described the development of professional relationships characterised by prolonged honest and open professional dialogue. Evident in the scholarly literature, and widely accepted by educational leadership researchers is the importance of ethical knowledge for leaders of learning (Fullan and Quinn, 2016; Langlois and Lapointe, 2010; Tuana, 2007). It is evident in the research that teachers who led professional learning for their peers as part of the school improvement process, were cognizant of their learning intentions ensuring they were ethically relevant.

Improved teaching, leading and learning occurred when teachers showed;

- colleagues being present to the demands of human relationships,
- commitment to personal relationships with students characterised by care,

- commitment to relationships with colleagues characterised by respect, honesty and trust,
- prolonged honest and open professional dialogue and
- leadership of learning with integrity.

#### ***Recommendation 5***

It is recommended that school leaders acknowledge, understand and value professional relationships characterised by respect, honesty and trust, and provide professional learning for teachers concentrated on the value of good human relationships.

#### ***Recommendation 6:***

It is recommended that school leaders facilitate the development of shared protocols and norms for teachers participating in professional learning and prolonged dialogue focused on the moral dimensions of their work.

### **7.1.4 Reflective practice centred on moral purpose**

Teachers' perceptions of the factors that precipitated moral action to improve teaching, leading and learning included participating in reflective practice. The findings from this case study for school leaders, focus on understanding how to build a culture of reflective practice in the quest to fill the gap between teachers' experience of the moral imperative of education and their action out of moral purpose to generate school improvement. These findings are restated below:

- 4.3.1 Self-knowledge is developed in teachers when they are required to reflect on the ethical aspects of their own teaching experience and are compelled to regularly communicate the values and motives inherent in their work.*
- 4.3.2 Ethics sensitivity may be nurtured in teachers who experience regular, structured reflective processes focused on the values and ethics fundamental to the practice of teaching.*
- 5.3.2 Teachers' leadership for change and the courage to act ethically can be due to imposed reflective processes.*
- 5.3.4 Teachers' self-worth as leaders of learning is increased through the use of an appreciative inquiry approach to teaching and learning.*

### *6.3.3 Reflective processes focused on moral purpose lead to teachers' ownership of student learning as their specific concern.*

Participants described improved teaching, leadership and learning due to the reflective processes concentrated on moral purpose that were used within the PALM school improvement model. It is clear from this research that regular reflection on the values and ethics inherent in teachers' work led to three main outcomes.

First, teachers developed self-knowledge by critically reflecting on their own teaching practice, predominantly in light of their understanding of the ethic of authenticity. It is evident in the scholarly literature that the role of deeply structured self-reflection processes focused on emotions, beliefs, values and motives are the means for leaders to gain knowledge of the inner Self or the personal values that affect behaviour and that this self-knowledge could be used to change behaviour (Branson, 2007, 2014). This research suggested that teachers regularly communicated the values and motives inherent in their work leading to changed teaching practice or ethical sensitivity which is considered the first step in developing moral literacy (Tuana, 2007, 2014).

Second, participants described how enforced reflective processes about the moral aspects of teachers' work led to leadership for change. This research suggested that teachers' motive for becoming leaders of learning, in terms of their increased level of influence on other teachers to change practice, was intrinsic and focused on the ethic of authenticity rather than externally motivated. Teachers described colleagues who had the courage to act ethically or who displayed moral potency (Hannah and Avolio, 2010) by giving explicit attention to the ethic of responsibility and taking ownership of student learning.

Third, regular appreciative inquiry and self-evaluation processes developed self-worth or internal accountability (MacBeath, 2006) in teachers as leaders of learning. It is clear from this research that consistent cycles of appreciative inquiry gave teachers the confidence to lead professional learning sessions for colleagues. Although adapted from positive psychology in the business sector, appreciative inquiry in the context of this research was more than an intellectual exercise building leadership capacity, since teachers described giving explicit attention to the ethic of authenticity in relation to the inner Self.

Improved teaching, leading and learning was experienced when teachers participated in reflective processes leading to;

- self-knowledge developing in teachers,
- increased self-worth as leaders of learning,

- ownership of student learning and
- strengthened commitment to change teaching and learning.

### ***Recommendation 7***

It is recommended that school leaders enlist an appreciative inquiry approach to teaching and learning balanced by standards of good teaching and learning.

### ***Recommendation 8***

It is recommended that school leaders impose continuous cycles of structured reflective processes involving classroom teachers and school leaders focused on the moral dimensions of their work. Reflective processes should include a balance between teachers' personal beliefs and experiences and those understandings shared with colleagues.

## **7.2 CONCLUSIONS: RESEARCH SUB-QUESTION ONE**

The first research question asked: How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions and practice of teaching? This study found that explicit attention to the ethic of authenticity in teaching characterised by truth and integrity, led to teachers' critical self-reflection and existential commitment to the end goal of transforming learners. Self-knowledge was developed in teachers due to their participation in structured reflective processes, collaborative planning for authentic teaching and learning and regular prolonged dialogue about the moral dimensions of their work.

The conclusion reached from this research was that professional learning focused on the ethic of presence, in terms of the demands of human relationships, lead teachers to value relationships with students and professional relationships with colleagues. Teachers' commitment to relationships with students lead to teacher efficacy whilst teachers' relationships with colleagues changed in terms of their commitment to honesty, care and trust. The professional learning and professional development (PALM) process provided opportunities for teachers to grow in their commitment to these relationships when planning teaching and learning and sharing their teaching practice. Teachers' participation in reflective processes led them to gain a shared understanding of good teaching and learning by focusing on the core values of excellence and transformation. Evident in this research was teachers' increased responsibility to provide excellent and transformative teaching and learning and an awareness of their role as moral agents to facilitate the transformation of good students into better human beings.

### **7.3 CONCLUSIONS: RESEARCH SUB-QUESTION TWO**

The second research question asked: How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions and practice of leading? In summary, professional learning and planning for learning characterised by shared leadership and concentrated on teachers' responsibility to transform learners led to teachers' increased awareness of their self-worth as leaders of learning, ownership of moral issues and moral potency or the courage to act ethically.

Teachers' explicit attention to the ethic of authenticity within a school improvement process has led to shared understanding and ownership of the moral dimensions of leadership for learning. Professional learning and planning for teaching and learning with a specific focus on truth and honesty in the quest to transform learners has resulted in teachers leading with integrity within an ethical culture and climate.

A limitation of this study is that it is a snapshot over a period of three years. It may be of interest to the field of educational leadership to do a longitudinal study of how explicit attention to moral purpose has influenced teachers with changing school leadership, particularly the principal, to discover whether the ethical culture and climate created during this study prevailed.

### **7.4 CONCLUSIONS: RESEARCH SUB-QUESTION THREE**

The third research question asked: How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions and practice of learning?

Teachers' specific consideration of the ethic of responsibility at professional learning and planning for authentic learning sessions led to their belief that professional learning was a necessity. Teachers' moral motivation to participate in professional learning was intrinsic rather than as a result of external pressures leading to a state of moral agency.

Explicit attention to values and ethics in the present study influenced teachers' perceptions of learning in terms of their understanding of, and participation in, a professional learning community that was distinguished by personal and shared responsibility for learning, trusting and respectful relationships or presence, and structures that fostered authenticity. The professional learning community described by teachers in this research was created within a three-year time frame. Systems of schools may benefit from further research into the sustainability and transferability of professional learning communities, within and between schools, that are built on moral purpose.



Teachers' overt attention to the ethics of authenticity and presence within the PALM process led to a commitment from teachers to transform learning. Teachers no longer blame students for not learning, rather they own this as their particular issue and consider that their role as teacher is to be a responsible facilitator of learning.

## **7.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

A limitation of this study was the methodology for coding teacher interviews, the focus group interview and documentary data. The LTLL Reflection Tool was used as a framework to code the three sets of data since teachers at the case study school were familiar with this tool. Although the data was coded according to its similarity to the indicators of values and ethics in the LTLL reflection tool, there were various additional themes that arose from participant responses such as, valuing Catholicity centred on the school's charism and faith community, which were not explicitly mentioned in the reflection tool. There was a clear orientation towards Catholicism and Christianity in the valuing structures and practices at the case study school therefore this research may not lend itself to transference in the area of values. Similar studies could be done in a school with a secular basis.

## **7.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The research question asked, *How has explicit attention to moral purpose within a model of leading for learning influenced teachers' perceptions and practice?* This case study research involving 14 classroom teachers and three school leaders has made findings that suggest ways in which school leaders challenge teachers' engagement, commitment and enactment of moral purpose as a driver for change in schools. This research has made 18 findings and 8 recommendations for school leaders and teacher leaders, suggesting that certain practices involving teachers' explicit attention to moral purpose will improve teaching, leading and learning within primary schools.



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# Appendices

## Appendix A:

### *Excerpt from Leaders Transforming Learning and Learners*

#### *School Reflection Guide (2nd ed.)*

##### **Focus 3: Values**

Our values shape our behaviours. If we genuinely hold particular values, they should be visible in what we do in schools and how we do it. Different schools may choose to name different values as central to their activities. The LTLL2 model proposes 5 as a starting point, and elaborates on each of them. Your school may choose to name others, but if you do so, you need to seek to elaborate each with indicators as we have done for ours below.

##### *Catholicity*

The defining characteristic of our schools is that they are Catholic – a work of love, for the full human development of our students, grounded in the teachings of Christ and at the service of society. They are a key element of the evangelising mission of the Church as they strive to bring culture and faith into harmony in the school community.

An effective Catholic School:

- Makes the teachings of the Church explicit
- Expresses a spirit of hope, mutual regard and forgiveness
- Promotes an active prayer life
- Builds strong partnerships with parish
- Delivers a quality Religious Education program
- Makes Gospel values explicit and evident in all its activities



##### *Excellence*

Catholic schools must be good schools. That is, they must seek the very best outcomes for all their students. This comes down to ensuring the highest quality of teaching and learning both for staff and students.

An effective Catholic School:

- Shares an explicit view of what constitutes good teaching and learning
- Has high expectations of students and teachers
- Embeds best current understandings of teaching and learning in practice
- Celebrates a whole range of achievement within the community
- Expects and supports continuous staff professional development
- Builds collaborative cultures of practice
- Expects that students are able to articulate values and live them out



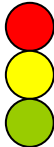

##### *Justice*



*Justice has been defined by the Catechism of the Catholic Church as the 'will to give their due to God and neighbour'. The document The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium makes it clear that Catholic schools should have 'a special attention to those who are weakest' (n15), and are 'at the service of society' (n16). Catholic schools are challenged to be inviting, inclusive and just.*

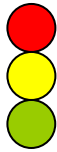
*An effective Catholic school:*

- Embraces the diversity of people and cultures
- Actively seeks to serve the poor and marginalised
- Tailors its policies and procedures to give priority to the poor and least powerful
- Is prepared to take a public stance on issues of inequity or injustice
- Embodies the principles of justice in its teaching



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| <p><b>Transformation</b></p> <p><i>Catholic schools must go beyond the informational and even the formational to the transformational. As Jerry Starratt says, through transformative learning, the learner becomes a fuller, richer, deeper human being. An effective Catholic school will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that learning is relevant to students' lives</li> <li>• Provide experiences that are meaningful and purposeful</li> <li>• Promote self knowledge in learners</li> <li>• Empower students to be active in society</li> <li>• Challenge students to take responsibility for their own learning</li> <li>• Challenge students to live out their values</li> </ul>  |  |  |
| <p><b>The Common Good</b></p> <p><i>We see society not just as a collection of individuals but as a community called to share for the common good. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says that the common good has three elements: concern for the individual, concern for the group and the maintenance of stability and good order. An effective Catholic school:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Builds community around shared norms</li> <li>• Places great value on relationships</li> <li>• Promotes collaborative practice in teaching and learning</li> <li>• Ensures that decisions making involves those most likely to be affected by the outcomes</li> <li>• Distributes resources equitably</li> <li>• Ensures stability and safety for all</li> </ul> |  |  |

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|---|---|--|
| <p><b><u>Focus 4: Ethics</u></b></p> <p>Ethics are the norms and virtues by which members of a community bind themselves to a moral way of living. They provide a way of discriminating among competing values. Starratt (2004) suggests that they are maps that we consult only when the familiar terrain we are traversing becomes a tangle of underbrush. Duignan et al (2003) found that for leaders of service organisations, the choice was often between two 'goods' rather than a 'good' and a 'bad'.</p>   |   |  |
| <p><b>Authenticity</b></p> <p>The ethic of authenticity challenges us to act in truth and integrity in all our interactions as humans, citizens, teachers and leaders.</p> <p>An effective Catholic school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires truth and integrity in all its members</li> <li>• Demonstrates reciprocity in interpersonal relationships</li> <li>• Promotes authentic learning</li> <li>• Challenges staff and students to engage with society in ways that promote authenticity</li> <li>• Develops school and class structures that nurture authenticity</li> </ul> |  |  |
| <p><b>Presence</b></p> <p>The ethic of presence challenges us to relate to others, and to develop self awareness, in ways that are truly open and truly engaging.</p> <p>An effective Catholic school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourages insightful self reflection and self awareness</li> <li>• Promotes sensitivity to others</li> <li>• Values relationships which increase engagement within the school community</li> <li>• Affirms and supports students and staff in their achievement</li> <li>• Demonstrates clear communication and empathic listening</li> </ul>        |  |  |

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| <p><i>Responsibility</i></p> <p>The ethic of responsibility challenges us to act in ways that acknowledge our personal accountability for our actions, for shaping learning and for providing growth promoting environments for transforming relationships and learning.</p> <p>An effective Catholic school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes responsibility for the learning outcomes of all students</li> <li>• Builds a culture of shared accountability for the core values of the school</li> <li>• Promotes habits of self-responsibility among students</li> <li>• Creates a healthy organisational environment</li> <li>• Promotes the pursuit of virtue in the community</li> </ul> |  |  |
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**Appendix B:**  
**One-to-One Interview Questions**

- A. Can you tell me about a time when you saw the ethic of authenticity at work during the PALM process?
- B. Can you think of an example in which you were involved that reflected the ethic of authenticity as we talked about it in the PALM project? How did that experience influence your role as a teacher? (If the answer is no – Are there other examples of your experience of authenticity that did?)
- C. Can you tell me about a time when you saw the ethic of presence at work during the PALM process?
- D. Can you think of an example in which you were involved that reflected the ethic of presence as we talked about it in the PALM project? How did that experience influence your work as a teacher? (If the answer is no – Are there other examples of your experience of presence that did?)
- E. Can you tell me about a time when you saw the ethic of responsibility at work during the PALM process?
- F. Can you think of an example in which you were involved that reflected the ethic of responsibility as we talked about it in the PALM project? How did that experience influence your leadership? (If the answer is no – Are there other examples of your experience of responsibility that did?)

**Summary Question:**

Is there anything else that you'd like to say, anything you'd like to add about how you think these ethics of authenticity, presence and responsibility have influenced your role as a teacher or your work or your leadership?



**Appendix C:**  
**Focus Group Interview Questions**

- A. Can you tell me about a time when you saw the ethic of authenticity at work during the PALM process?
- B. Can you think of an example in which teachers reflected the ethic of authenticity as we talked about it in the PALM project? How did that experience influence their role as a teacher?
- C. Can you tell me about a time when you saw the ethic of presence at work during the PALM process?
- D. Can you think of an example in which teachers reflected the ethic of presence as we talked about it in the PALM project? How did that experience influence their work as a teacher?
- E. Can you tell me about a time when you saw the ethic of responsibility at work during the PALM process?
- F. Can you think of an example in which teachers reflected the ethic of responsibility as we talked about it in the PALM project? How did that experience influence their leadership?

**Summary Question:**

Is there anything else that you'd like to say, anything you'd like to add about how you think these ethics of authenticity, presence and responsibility have influenced teachers' role, work or their leadership?

## Appendix D:

### Tables 4.1F, 4.2F, 4.3F and 4.4 Triangulation of Data

**T** = teacher identification

**Numerals** = Line in the transcript of teacher interview, e.g. T1-17, 38 refers to lines 17 and 38 in the interview with teacher one

**Bold headings** = themes from the data

**Sub-headings** = Subsequent themes in relation to the bold theme.

#### 4.1F One-to-One Interview Frequency of Themes and their Source in Teaching

| Research Question  | ETHICS   |  |   | CORE VALUES  |         |  |   |  |
|--|--|--|---|--|---------|--|---|--|
|  | Authenticity:  | Presence:  | Responsibility:   | Transformation   | Justice | Excellence   | Catholicity   | Common Good  |
| How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions and practice of teaching?<br>*Recognised as an ethic and core value.<br># Recognised as two core ethics/values | <b>Learning</b><br>T1-17, 38, 151, 170, 226<br>T2-34, 55<br>T5-129, 157<br>T1.2-94<br>T4.2-36<br>T13-29<br>Professional learning<br>T9-156, 208<br>T10-476<br>Programmin g<br>T1.2-35<br>T8-32, 142<br>T10-459, 462<br>T9.2-35, 39,<br>T11-28, 310<br>Collaborative<br>T7-60<br>T9-34, 37, 98, 101, 103, 107<br>T10-102<br>students<br>T9.2-27<br>T14-27, 339<br>Catholic principles<br>T2-114<br>Real teacher – Sense of self<br>T1-183, 207, 237, 239<br>T2-108*, 351, 362, 381, 389, 392, 405, 417, 435, 453<br>T3-85<br>T6-192, 785, 829<br>T10-39, 53 | <b>Values relationships</b><br>within community<br>T5-251<br>T4-276<br>T6-313<br>With Students<br>T2-118, 266<br>T5-178, 243, 320, 338<br>T6-324, 631*<br>700<br>T1.2-18<br>T8-81<br>T10-142, 148<br>T14-95<br>Respect/ listening<br>Students<br>T11-84, 90<br>T12-73, 75, 79, 84, 101, 115-119<br>T14-97, 103, 328, 333<br>Colleagues/ Professional<br>T7-Trust - 193, 223<br>T10-130<br>T11-81, 83, 88<br>T12-74, 87, 108<br>T13-114, 116, 121, 166, 168, 292, 294<br>Teachers support each other<br>T1-174<br>T5-245, 247<br>T7-176, 180, 184, 226<br>T10-136, 564, 578, 581<br><b>Commitment to a personal</b> | <b>Providing a caring environment</b><br>Personal resp.<br>T2-242<br>T6-721, 728<br>T13-141<br>-Shared resp.<br>T2-227, 247, 257<br>T3-305, 315<br>T12-140, 147<br>T13-130, 143, 162, 163*<br><b>Change</b><br>T3-247<br>T4-198<br>T6-800<br>T12-155<br>T7-84<br>T8-365<br>Personal<br>T9-128, 396<br>T14-166, 172<br><b>Children's learning:</b><br>T1-228<br>T7-260*, 375, 376-381*<br>T8-160, 370, 372<br>Personal<br>T11-122, 125, 127, 306<br>T12-155<br>T14-148, 151<br>Professional<br>T7-587*, 590*, 597*<br>T12-130<br>T13-129, 147-148<br>T14-342<br><b>Professional Learning</b><br>T4.2-35<br>T10-171*<br>T13-152, 172<br><b>Collaborative practice</b> | <b>Transform students for life</b><br>T6-240, 281, 283<br><b>Promoting self-knowledge in learners</b><br>T6-619<br><b>Challenge students to take responsibility for their own learning</b><br>T1.2-81, 85<br>T14-48, 53<br><b>Challenging students to live out their values</b><br>T4-440<br>T5-287, 295-98, 541<br>T10-453, 536<br><b>Providing meaningful &amp; purposeful experiences</b><br>T4-353, 379<br>T5-593-596<br>T1.2-36, 38<br>T8-62<br>T10-110, 306<br>T12-151<br>T13-33, 40, 45<br><b>Ensures learning is relevant to students lives</b><br>T7-110<br>Educate | T2-242* | <b>High expectations</b><br>Teachers<br>T1-198<br>T2-462, 465<br>T3-227*, 350<br>T4-248<br>T5-129*, 135<br>T6-166, 765<br>T8-372*<br>T9-241<br>T13-150<br><b>Shares explicit view of good teaching and learning</b><br>T1-185<br>T2-22, 492<br>T3-92-94, 98, 259*<br>T4-31, 34*<br>238, 292, 297, T6-101, 120<br>T7-67, 93, 118<br>T9-173<br><b>Collaborative culture of practice</b><br>T2-48#, 495, 508<br>T3-328<br>T5-106, 109<br>T5-74<br><b>Embeds best current understandings of teaching and learning in practice</b><br>T4-111*<br>T5-115, 445<br>T4-35*<br>Catering to individual needs<br>T1.2-40, 42<br>T8-127*<br>T10-204, 464<br>T14-163 | <b>Catholic principles</b><br>T2-108, 114*<br><b>Founding order's Charism</b><br>T2-212, 312<br>T13-92, 94<br>T2-215<br>treat chn like <i>St John</i><br><b>Present to faith and school charism</b><br>T2-216<br><b>Promotes an active prayer life</b><br>T11-48, 52*, 56<br><b>Makes the Teachings of the Church explicit</b><br>Personal experience- St Vincent de Paul<br>T11-60 | <b>Promotes Collaborative practice</b><br>T3-63<br>T1.2-163<br><b>Building Community around shared purpose/understanding</b><br>T3-257, 363<br>T7-260*<br>Concern for the group<br>T1.2-147<br><b>Valuing relationships</b><br>Professional relationships<br>T3-316<br>T7-296, 587*, 590*, 597*<br>Students<br>T4-228<br>T5-338*<br><b>Individual valued</b><br>T6-787<br><b>Ensuring stability/safety</b><br>T2-246, 258<br>T6-631,*798 |

|  |   |   |   |  |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|---|--|--|
|  | <p><b>Self-reflection</b><br/> T7-36, 40,<br/> 56, 58, 65, 80<br/> T9- 176, 180<br/> T10-38, 41,<br/> 229, 304,<br/> 434<br/> T11- 52*,<br/> 57*, 304<br/> T12- 41, 159,<br/> 169<br/> Reflective<br/> practice<br/> T2- 478, 544<br/> T3- 15, 197-<br/> 202, 227<br/> T4 - 34<br/> T5-43, 46<br/> T6-126, 238,<br/> 359, 384<br/> T8- 36<br/> T9- 163<br/> T10- 195,<br/> 504<br/> T11- 32, 43<br/> T12- 32, 36<br/> T14- 33<br/> Child-<br/> centred<br/> T2 – 93, 538<br/> T3 – 24-27,<br/> 214<br/> T5- 150, 647<br/> T6- 37, 108,<br/> 356<br/> T7 – 247,<br/> 303, 308<br/> T8 - 261<br/> T10- 34, 93,<br/> 159<br/> challenging<br/> staff to<br/> change<br/> T1.2 -173<br/> T4- 111, 256,<br/> 283, 288<br/> T5 – 203<br/> T8-28<br/> T14- 31<br/> <b>Relationshi<br/> ps</b><br/> T2 –42, 44<br/> T3 – 135,<br/> 315#<br/> T6-39, 89<br/> Professional<br/> relationships<br/> T7- 96-107<br/> T9- 66<br/> T10-171<br/> T13 - 253<br/> T12-66<br/> Students<br/> T6 - 845<br/> T11- 37*, 63,<br/> 71-76<br/> T13- 90<br/> T14- 37<br/> shared<br/> understandi<br/> ng<br/> T1 –136<br/> T4 – 267<br/> T6 - 56<br/> Support<br/> T2 –19</p> | <p><b>relationship<br/> with children</b><br/> T2 –159, 186<br/> T5-224, 257,<br/> 259<br/> T6-288, 322<br/> Sense of Self<br/> T2-177, 337<br/> T6 –277, 627,<br/> 630<br/> <b>Clear<br/> communicatio<br/> n and<br/> Empathetic<br/> listening</b><br/> T7 – 229-235,<br/> <b>Insightful self-<br/> reflection</b><br/> T8- 339, 341,<br/> 351<br/> T10- 160<br/> <b>Being<br/> attentive/<br/> sensitive to<br/> others</b><br/> T2 - 329<br/> T3 –160<br/> T5- 317, 324<br/> T6- 308, 310,<br/> 368, 369<br/> T10- 138, 140<br/> T11- 94-104<br/> <b>Professional<br/> learning/<br/> curriculum</b><br/> T8- 80, 93, 101<br/> <b>Affirming</b><br/> T1- 83, 84, 90<br/> T8- 127 *</p> | <p>T1.2- 163*<br/> T8-138, 148<br/> <b>Shared<br/> accountability<br/> for school<br/> core values</b><br/> T2 – 290<br/> T4-394<br/> <b>Pursuit of<br/> virtue in the<br/> community</b><br/> T5-355, 358,</p> | <p>students for<br/> society<br/> 376-381*<br/> T8- 66<br/> T10-43<br/> T9.2- 49<br/> T11- 37<br/> T13- 49</p> |  | <p><b>Students able<br/> to articulate<br/> values</b><br/> T13- 97</p> |  |  |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|---|--|--|

|              |   |           |           |           |          |           |           |           |
|--------------|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|              | T4-228<br><b>School structures that nurtures authenticity</b><br>T1 – 160<br>T2- 20, 38, 57-60<br>(Collegiality)<br>T4- 108, 137, 219<br>Promotes collaborative practice<br>T1 – 165<br>T2-48<br>T4- 44 |           |           |           |          |           |           |           |
| <b>Tally</b> | <b>152</b>  | <b>91</b> | <b>57</b> | <b>33</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>48</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>18</b> |

#### 4.2F Focus Group Interview Frequency of Themes and their Source in Teaching

| Research Question   | ETHICS  |  |  | CORE VALUES  |         |   |                                     |             |
|---|---|--|--|--|---------|---|-------------------------------------|-------------|
|   | Authenticity:   | Presence:  | Responsibility:  | Transformation   | Justice | Excellence                              | Catholicity                         | Common Good |
| How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions and practice of teaching?<br>*Recognised as a core value and ethic.<br># Recognised as two core values/ethics | Reflective Practice<br>CG2- 127, 147, 329, 436, 894<br>CG3 – 103, 107,109, 236,<br>CG1 – 177, 179, 182, 184<br>Promoting Authentic Learning (Collaboration)<br>CG3-115<br>CG2- 160 (risk taking)<br>CG3 – 186, 193<br>Ethical culture<br>CG3 – 112, 121<br>Interpersonal Relationships<br>Professional- (truth/honesty)<br>CG2-125, 132,136 (Support)<br>CG2-195<br>Students-<br>CG2- 154, 159, 165 (child-centred) | Affirming and supporting staff in professional learning<br>CG3- 448<br>School Charism<br>CG1 – 298, 380, 397<br>CG2- 408, 413, 489<br>Physical presence<br>CG1- 402<br>CG3- 405<br>Challenge<br>CG1 – 343, 393<br>CG3 – 395<br>Religious Education<br>CG2 – 485, 491<br>Explicit attention<br>CG1- 494<br>Reflective practice<br>CG1 – 305 | Professional learning<br>CG2- 619, 626<br>CG1- 693<br>Children's learning<br>CG2-675<br>CG1- 696<br>Culture of shared accountability<br>CG1- 676, 706<br>Shared understanding<br>CG2- 429,<br>CG1 -477 | Learning relevant to students' lives<br>-190, 192 (Deep thinking, wikis) |         | Catering to individual needs<br>CG1-699 | CG2 -339 – value Catholic community |             |
| <b>Tally</b>  | 26  | 16   | 9  | 2  | 0       | 1                                       | 1                                   | 0           |

### 4.3F Documentary Data Frequency of Themes and their Source in Teaching

| Research Question  | ETHICS   |           |                 | CORE VALUES                                   |          |  |   |  |
|--|--|-----------|-----------------|---|----------|--|---|--|
|  | Authenticity:  | Presence: | Responsibility: | Transformation                                | Justice  | Excellence   | Catholicity   | Common Good  |
| How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perception of teaching?<br>*Recognised as a core value and ethic.<br># Recognised as two core values/ethics. | <b>Reflective Practice</b><br>SMA – 85, 158.<br>TVI- T1, T4,<br><b>Promoting Authentic Learning</b><br>SMA- 44-47<br>SMM – S2 (02/03/09)<br>SMM – S3 (30/03/09) TJ, TK<br>LTLLJ-78, 129, 135, 488<br>TVI-T12<br>SS-1<br>LTLL SRG - 8<br>Collaborative<br>LTLLJ - 206<br>Differentiation<br>SMM – Specialist teachers (2/02/09)<br>MPSE - 173<br>Professional learning<br>SMM-S2 (4/05/09)<br>SMM-S3 (4/05/09)<br>TVI – T3, T12 (change)<br>Resource allocation<br>SMM- ES1/S1, TH<br><b>Interpersonal Relationships</b><br>Teacher/student<br>SMM- S2 (30/03/09) TL<br>trust<br>LTLLJ- 346<br>TVI – T12<br><b>Structures that nurture authenticity</b><br>Class<br>SMM- ES1/S1. TA, TH, TD (2/02/09)<br>SMM – S3. TN, TO (2/03/09)<br>School<br>SMM- ES1/S1, TE<br>LTLLJ- 167<br>TVI-T4<br><b>Integrity</b><br>SMM – S2. (30/03/09) TM |           |                 | Reflective practice<br>LTLLJ – 803<br>SMA- 84 |          | Embedding best current understandings of teaching and learning in practice.<br>SMM – S1 (07/09/09) | Making the teachings of the Church explicit<br>LTLL SRG - 3 | Decision-making involving those most likely to be affected<br>LTLL SRG-7 |
| <b>Tally</b>   | <b>35</b>  |           |                 | <b>2</b>                                      | <b>0</b> | <b>1</b>   | <b>1</b>  | <b>1</b>   |

**Table 4.4 Triangulation of Data in Teaching**

| Ethics and core values: | Themes:<br># Themes supported by all three data sets                | One-to-one interviews | Focus group | Documentary data |
|-------------------------|---|-----------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Transformation          | -transforming students for life                                     | 3                     |             |                  |
|                         | -promoting self-knowledge in learners                               | 1                     |             |                  |
|                         | -challenging students to take responsibility for their own learning | 4                     |             |                  |
|                         | -challenging students to live out their values                      | 6                     |             |                  |
|                         | -providing meaningful and purposeful experiences                    | 12                    |             |                  |
|                         | -ensuring learning is relevant to students' lives                   | 7                     | 2           |                  |
|                         | -reflective practice  |                       |             | 2                |
| Justice                 | -seeking to serve the marginalised                                  | 1                     |             |                  |

|                |  |    |    |    |
|----------------|--|----|----|----|
| Excellence     | -high expectations   | 13 |    |    |
|                | -shares explicit view of good teaching and learning                      | 17 |    |    |
|                | -collaborative culture of practice                                       | 7  |    |    |
|                | -embeds best current understandings of teaching and learning in practice | 4  |    | 1  |
|                | -students able to articulate values                                      | 1  |    |    |
|                | -catering to individual needs  | 6  | 1  |    |
| Catholicity    | -Catholic principles   | 2  |    |    |
|                | -values founding order's charism   | 5  |    |    |
|                | -present to faith and school charism                                     | 1  |    |    |
|                | -promotes an active prayer life  | 3  |    |    |
|                | -Makes the teachings of the Church explicit                              | 1  |    | 1  |
|                | -values the Catholic community   |    | 1  |    |
| Common Good    | -promotes collaborative practice   | 2  |    |    |
|                | -building community around shared purpose/understanding                  | 4  |    |    |
|                | -valuing relationships -professional relationships                       | 5  |    |    |
|                | - relationship with students   | 2  |    |    |
|                | -individual valued   | 1  |    |    |
|                | -ensuring stability/safety   | 4  |    |    |
| Authenticity   | -decision-making involving those most likely to be affected              |    |    | 1  |
|                | <b>Promoting authentic learning:</b>                                     | 12 |    | 11 |
|                | - professional learning  | 3  |    | 4  |
|                | - programming  | 9  |    |    |
|                | -#collaborative learning   | 11 | 2  | 1  |
|                | - Catholic principles  | 1  |    |    |
|                | - Real teacher/sense of self   | 20 |    |    |
|                | - Self-reflection  | 19 |    |    |
|                | -#Reflective practice  | 21 | 13 | 4  |
|                | - Child-centred  | 16 |    |    |
|                | - Challenging staff to change  | 8  |    |    |
|                | - Risk taking  |    | 2  |    |
|                | - Ethical culture  |    | 2  |    |
|                | - Differentiation  |    |    | 2  |
|                | - Resource allocation  |    |    | 1  |
|                | Relationships –  | 6  |    |    |
|                | - professional relationships   | 5  | 4  |    |
|                | - shared understanding   | 5  |    |    |
|                | -#relationships with students  | 6  | 3  | 1  |
|                | - trust  |    |    | 2  |
| Presence       | School structures that nurture authenticity                              | 10 |    | 8  |
|                | Integrity  |    |    | 1  |
|                | Values relationships – within community                                  | 3  |    |    |
|                | - with students  | 26 |    |    |
|                | - professional relationships   | 16 |    |    |
|                | - with teachers/support each other                                       | 11 |    |    |
|                | Commitment to a personal relationship with students                      | 7  |    |    |
|                | - sense of self  | 5  |    |    |
|                | Clear communication and empathetic listening                             | 1  |    |    |
|                | Self-reflection  | 4  |    |    |
|                | Being attentive/sensitive to others                                      | 11 |    |    |
|                | Professional learning  | 3  | 1  |    |
|                | Affirming  | 4  |    |    |
|                | School charism:  |    | 6  |    |
| Responsibility | - Physical presence  |    | 2  |    |
|                | - Challenge  |    | 3  |    |
|                | - Religious education  |    | 2  |    |
|                | - Explicit attention   |    | 1  |    |
|                | Reflective practice  |    | 1  |    |
|                | Providing a caring environment – personal resp.                          | 4  |    |    |
|                | - shared resp.   | 11 |    |    |
|                | Change   | 6  |    |    |
|                | Personal responsibility for change                                       | 4  |    |    |
|                | Children's learning  | 7  | 2  |    |
|                | - personal resp.   | 7  |    |    |
|                | - professional resp.   | 7  |    |    |
|                | Professional learning  | 4  | 3  |    |
|                | Collaborative practice   | 3  |    |    |
|                | Shared accountability for school core values                             | 2  |    |    |
|                | Pursuit of virtue in the community                                       | 2  |    |    |

|  |  |  |        |  |
|--|--|--|--------|--|
|  | Culture of shared accountability<br>- shared understanding |  | 2<br>2 |  |
|--|--|--|--------|--|

***Recurring Themes:***

Reflective practice

Collaborative Culture/practice

Professional learning

Professional Relationships

Relationship with students

## Appendix E:

### Tables 5.1F, 5.2F, 5.3F and 5.4 Triangulation of Data

**T** = teacher identification

**Numerals** = Line in the transcript of teacher interview, e.g. T1-17, 38 refers to lines 17 and 38 in the interview with teacher one

**Bold headings** = themes from the data

**Sub-headings** = Subsequent themes in relation to the bold theme.

#### 5.1F One-to-One Interview Frequency of Themes and their Source in Leading

| Research Question  | ETHICS  |  |   | CORE VALUES   |         |   |  |
|--|---|--|---|---|---------|---|--|
|  | Authenticity  | Presence   | Responsibility  | Transformation  | Justice | Excellence  | Common Good  |
| How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions and practice of leading?<br>*Recognised as a core value and ethic.<br>#Recognised as two core values | <b>Leadership for Professional Learning</b><br>T3- 102<br>T4 -256<br>Appreciative inquiry<br>T3-346<br><b>Leadership through collegiality</b><br>Self-efficacy<br>T13-59, 62, 67<br>T14- 203, 205, 209, 212<br>Promoting a sense of staff efficacy<br>T4- 340<br>Valuing Relationships<br>T4 - 344<br>T14 - 59, 219<br><b>Being given time – School structure</b><br>T6- 417<br>T10-218<br><b>Integrity</b><br>T8-249<br>T14 – 65, 346<br><b>Challenges staff to act with authenticity</b><br>T7-99<br>T11- 136<br>T12- 45, 48, 57<br><b>Promotes authentic learning</b><br>Professional learning<br>T7 – 44, 69, 75 – being real<br>T14- 216, 220<br>Change<br>T7-123-126<br>T9 – 115<br>T12- 176-180<br>Some people will never change T12- 431<br>Inspiration<br>T7 -149<br>Collaborative practice<br>T7-336<br>T9 – 41 | <b>Values relationships –</b><br>within community<br>T3 – 175<br>Teachers support each other<br>T4-149<br>T7-361*<br>T8- 110<br>T9- 217, 221, 238<br>Presence as part of the school charism<br>T13- 81-86<br>Teacher voice<br>T14- 116<br>Professional<br>T7 – 220, 343<br>T12- 119<br>T14- 113<br><b>Collegial Leadership</b><br>T1 -76, 80*<br>T3 –173, 181<br>T4 – 152<br>Teacher initiative<br>T7-161, 169<br><b>Affirming</b><br>T4 – 336<br>T7-210<br>T9-287, 301<br><b>Leadership for Professional learning</b><br>Staff efficacy<br>T9- 575, 581<br>T10 – 221, 226<br><b>Sensitivity to other</b><br>T4- 331 | <b>Building Capability</b><br>T3- 289, 293<br>T4 - 222<br>T5 - 605<br><b>Leadership through collegiality</b><br>T5- 379<br>Self-efficacy<br>T3 - 286<br>T4 – 116, 118, 125, 135, 223, 226, 230, 240<br>T6-177<br>T8- 162<br>T9- 226, 232, 234, 368, 383, 399, 430<br>Staff efficacy<br>T9- 370, 380<br>T11- 142, 149<br>Professionalism<br>T8-251<br><b>Leadership for Change</b><br>T7 – 136-143<br><b>Professional learning</b><br>Personal<br>T1 – 143<br>T7 – 288, 325, 364, 561<br><b>Healthy organisational environment</b><br>- School structures<br>T7-367<br>T9-567<br><b>Culture of shared accountability</b> | <b>Providing meaningful &amp; purposeful experiences</b><br>T4 – 319<br><b>Inspire students</b><br>T6- 75<br><b>Leadership for Professional learning</b><br>T1 – 171<br>T7-355<br><b>Ensuring learning is relevant to student's lives</b><br>T8- 262, 265, 269, 272 |         | <b>Collaborative cultures of practice</b><br>T5- 551, 564, 569<br>T6- 404, 412<br><b>Embeds best current understandings of teaching and learning in practice</b><br>T5-578<br>T8- 280<br>T12- 63<br><b>Celebrating a range of achievement within the community</b><br>T4-323<br>T6-415<br><b>Leadership building capability</b><br>T12- 436 | <b>Leadership through collegiality</b><br>T3- 283<br>Contributors to society<br>T7-372<br><b>Promotes collaborative practice in Teaching</b><br>T1- 80<br>T1-160, 177<br><b>Leadership for professional learning</b><br>T7- 94 |



|       |    |    |                     |   |   |    |   |   |
|-------|----|----|---------------------|---|---|----|---|---|
|       |    |    | T7 – 263<br>T8- 152 |   |   |    |   |   |
| Tally | 34 | 29 | 44                  | 8 | 0 | 11 | 0 | 6 |

### 5.2F Focus Group Interview Frequency of Themes and their Source in Leading

| Research Question  | ETHICS  |   |  | CORE VALUES    |         |  |             |             |
|--|---|---|--|----------------|---------|--|-------------|-------------|
|  | Authenticity  | Presence  | Responsibility   | Transformation | Justice | Excellence   | Catholicity | Common Good |
| How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions and practice of leading?<br>*Recognised as a core value and ethic.<br>#Recognised as two core values | Teacher as leader<br>CG2- 210, 244<br>CG1-881, 888, 906<br>CG3- 909<br>efficacy<br>CG2- 249<br>CG1-876, 887, 892<br>CG3- 965<br>Reciprocity of interpersonal relationships/environment<br>CG2- 216, 255<br>CG1- 729, 734<br>Collegial/shared leadership<br>CG2- 262, 263, 910, 922,<br>CG3-953<br>CG1- 957, 977, environment & shared vision<br>CG3 – 271<br>School structures that nurture authenticity<br>CG2 – 268, 742, 747, 750<br>CG1- 745<br>CG3-958<br>Sustainability<br>CG3-240, 277<br>CG1-274<br>Integrity<br>CG1-889, 983<br>CG3- 987<br>Professional learning<br>CG2-220 | Values<br>Relationships with students<br>CG1- 526, 531<br>CG2- 534<br>CG3- 536<br>Reflective Practice<br>CG3-384<br>CG2 – 461 | Embeds understanding of ethical culture.<br>CG1-468<br>Change<br>CG2- 648, 654, 660, 666, 678, 926<br>CG1- 225- disciplined, self-regulated change 936, 942<br>CG3- 964<br>Shared accountability for the core values of the school<br>CG2- 78<br>CG2 – 111 (expectation) |                |         | Embeds best current understandings of teaching and learning in practice<br>CG2- 1010 |             |             |
| Tally  | 36  | 6   | 13   | 0              | 0       | 1  | 0           | 0           |

### 5.3F Documentary Data Frequency of Themes and their Source in Leading

| Research Question  | ETHICS   |   |  | CORE VALUES                             |          |            |             |             |
|--|--|---|--|---|----------|------------|-------------|-------------|
|  | Authenticity   | Presence  | Responsibility   | Transformation                          | Justice  | Excellence | Catholicity | Common Good |
| <b>How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions of leading?</b><br>*Recognised as a core value and ethic.<br>#Recognised as two core values | <b>Promoting authentic learning</b><br>Professional learning SMA- 118, 125.<br>LTLLJ - 688, 770<br>MPSE - 203<br>T12ALR - 125<br>LTLL SRG - 13<br>Integrity - T12ALR-149<br>Reflective practice- T12ALR - 18, 24, 29, 40, 109<br><b>Reciprocity of interpersonal relationships</b><br>LTLLJ - 88, 869<br><b>Collegial/shared leadership?</b><br>LTLLJ - 187, 224, 504,<br><b>Structures that nurture Authenticity</b><br>LTLLJ-389, 517<br>Reflective practice<br>LTLLJ - 636-641, | <b>Reflective practice</b><br>LTLLJ- 800, 890, 916 (learning) | <b>Culture of shared accountability</b><br>SMA - 7-10<br>LTLLJ- 984<br>LTLL SRG - 10<br><b>Responsibility to change</b><br>LTLLJ- 85<br><b>Professional learning</b><br>LTLLJ - 81, 531,<br>Shared understanding<br>LTLLJ- 583 | <b>Students' learning</b><br>LTLLJ- 241 |          |            |             |             |
| <b>Tally</b>   | <b>21</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>7</b>   | <b>1</b>                                | <b>0</b> | <b>0</b>   | <b>0</b>    | <b>0</b>    |

### 5.4 Triangulation of Data in Leading

| Ethics and core values: | Themes:<br># Themes supported by all three data sets                     | One-to-one interviews | Focus group | Documentary data |
|-------------------------|--|-----------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Transformation          | -providing meaningful and purposeful experiences                         | 1                     |             |                  |
|                         | -inspire students  | 1                     |             |                  |
|                         | -leadership for professional learning                                    | 2                     |             |                  |
|                         | -ensuring learning is relevant to students' lives                        | 4                     |             |                  |
|                         | -students' learning  |                       |             | 1                |
| Excellence              | -collaborative cultures of practice                                      | 5                     |             |                  |
|                         | -embeds best current understandings of teaching and learning in practice | 3                     | 1           |                  |
|                         | -celebrating a range of achievement within the community                 | 2                     |             |                  |
|                         | -leadership building capability  | 1                     |             |                  |
| Common Good             | -leadership through collegiality   | 2                     |             |                  |
|                         | -promotes collaborative practice   | 3                     |             |                  |
|                         | -leadership for professional learning                                    | 1                     |             |                  |
| Authenticity            | #leadership for professional learning                                    | 3                     | 1           | 7                |
|                         | - reflective practice  |                       |             | 5                |
|                         | # leadership through collegiality  | 7                     | 7           | 3                |
|                         | - Promoting sense of staff efficacy                                      | 1                     | 5           |                  |
|                         | - Valuing relationships  | 3                     | 1           |                  |
|                         | - Environment and shared vision  |                       |             |                  |
|                         | - reciprocity of interpersonal relationships                             |                       | 4           | 2                |
|                         | #School structures that nurture authenticity                             | 2                     | 6           | 2                |
|                         | - Sustainability   |                       | 3           | 2                |
|                         | - Reflective practice  |                       |             |                  |
|                         | #Integrity   | 3                     | 3           | 1                |

|                |  |    |   |   |
|----------------|--|----|---|---|
|                | - challenges staff to act with authenticity  | 5  |   |   |
|                | - promotes authentic learning                | 12 |   |   |
|                | - teacher as leader                          |    | 6 |   |
| Presence       | Values relationships – within community      | 1  | 4 |   |
|                | - teachers support each other                | 6  |   |   |
|                | - school charism                             | 1  |   |   |
|                | - teacher voice                              | 1  |   |   |
|                | - professional relationships                 | 4  |   |   |
|                | - with students                              |    |   |   |
|                | Collegial leadership                         | 5  |   |   |
|                | - teacher initiative                         | 2  |   |   |
| Responsibility | Affirming                                    | 4  |   |   |
|                | Professional learning                        | 4  |   |   |
|                | Being attentive/sensitive to others          | 1  |   |   |
|                | Reflective practice                          |    | 2 | 3 |
|                | Building capability                          | 4  |   |   |
|                | Leadership through collegiality              | 1  |   |   |
|                | - Promoting sense of self-efficacy           | 18 |   |   |
|                | - Promoting sense of staff efficacy          | 4  |   |   |
|                | - Professionalism                            | 1  |   |   |
|                | #Leadership for Change                       | 1  | 9 | 1 |
|                | Professional learning – personal             | 6  |   | 2 |
|                | - shared                                     | 5  |   | 1 |
|                | - Healthy organisational environment         | 2  |   |   |
|                | Culture of shared accountability             | 2  |   | 3 |
|                | Embeds understanding of ethical culture      |    | 1 |   |
|                | Shared accountability for school core values |    | 2 |   |

**Recurring Themes:**

Leadership for Professional learning

Leadership through collegiality

Reflective practice

Collaborative practice

Values relationships

## Appendix F:

### Tables 6.1F, 6.2F, 6.3F and 6.4 Triangulation of Data

**T** = teacher identification

**Numerals** = Line in the transcript of teacher interview, e.g. T1-17, 38 refers to lines 17 and 38 in the interview with teacher one

**Bold headings** = themes from the data

**Sub-headings** = Subsequent themes in relation to the bold theme.

#### 6.1F One-to-One Interview Frequency of Themes and their Source in Learning

| Research Question  | ETHICS   |  |  | CORE VALUES   |         |  |   |  |
|--|--|--|--|---|---------|--|---|--|
|  | Authenticity   | Presence   | Responsibility   | Transformation  | Justice | Excellence   | Catholicity   | Common Good  |
| <b>How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions and practice of learning?</b><br>*Recognised as a core value and ethic.<br>#Recognised as two core values | <b>Promoting authentic learning experiences</b><br>T2 -69- 79, 84<br>T3 -105, 113<br>T4 -367<br>T5-101<br>T1-26, 39<br>T9- 123,193, 200<br>T10- 73, 279<br>Owned sense of educational purpose<br>T4 -414, 418, 423, 431<br>Facilitator of learning<br>T1-64, 68<br>T1 - 29<br>T8 - 307, 310, 321, 327<br>T9-147<br>T10- 99, 297<br>T14- 55<br><b>Professional learning</b><br>T1 -156<br>T3 - 60, 139, 141, 321<br>T6 - 377, 436<br>T1- 173<br>T9 - 43, 48, 69, 76, 98, 101, 110, 136, 153, 168<br>T9- 41, 45<br>Collaborative<br>T2-31<br>T3 - 343<br>T5-105, 123<br>T6-104, 131-146, 363.<br>T7 -66, 388 - 392<br>T9 - 72, 76,119, 402<br>T10 - 68, 80 | <b>Self-Reflection</b><br>T4 -408<br><b>Professional learning</b><br>Collaborative<br>T1-154<br>T4 -61, 155, 167, 173, 186<br>T6-99, 685<br>T9- 259<br><b>Teaching</b><br>T1 -58, 84, 174<br>T2 -128<br>T4- 156<br>T6-353<br>Teacher voice<br>T3 - 58<br>T6- 660, 669<br>T9 - 261, 275, 284<br>T12- 165<br>T14- 108, 120*<br><b>Affirming</b><br>T3 -153<br>T10 -76,<br><b>Values</b><br><b>Relationships</b><br>Respect<br>T3- 21, *55, 66, *68, 137, 149, 156* 170<br>T6-680<br>T9-121<br>T10 -192, 202<br>T11- 111<br>T14-326<br>Professional<br>T12- 112<br>T14- 110<br>Within community<br>T13- 105<br>T14- 72, 75, 80, 85<br><b>Sensitivity to other</b><br>T10- 108 | <b>Shared accountability for school core values</b><br>T2 -286<br>T4 -399, 407<br>T6- 741, 746<br><b>Children's Learning</b><br>Personal<br>T3 -35-40, 225, 239, 243, 247, 261, 350<br>T1 - 139<br>T14 - 344<br>Shared<br>T1 - 177<br>T3 -41, 63, 256<br>T13-170,<br>T14- 149<br><b>Professional Learning</b><br>Personal<br>T1-104, 107, 113, 128<br>T3 -231-233<br>T4 -71, 93,<br>200, 210-214, 313,<br>T5 - 384, 447, 448, 454, 465<br>T6-168, 438,<br>739, 765, 766, 815<br>T4- 17<br>T7 - 273, 292<br>T9-319, 322,<br>338, 561<br>T10 - 172, 176, 208, 265<br>T11-314<br>Shared<br>T1 -122, 127, 155<br>T3 - 74<br>T4- 221, 353<br>T5-371, 480, 494<br>T6- 753, 759 | <b>Relevant to students' lives</b><br>T1- 28-34, 173, 189, 223, 226,* 228<br>T4-208, 214*, 356<br>Student voice<br>T3- 348<br>T8- 315<br>T10- 445<br><b>Providing meaningful &amp; purposeful experiences</b><br>T1- 19<br>T2 -495<br>T4- 203-206*<br>T5 -587<br>T6 - 189<br>T8-71<br>T9 - 83, 88, 90<br>Sense of achievement in learning<br>T1- 47<br>Differentiating<br>T1 -54<br><b>Challenging students to take responsibility for own learning</b><br>T1 - 94, 214<br>T2-72*, 89<br>T3- 124<br>T4- 372<br>T10- 97, 101, 114<br>Inspire learning<br>T6 -159, 268, 282, 457<br><b>Promoting self-knowledge</b><br>T1 -42, 77, 84, 86 |         | <b>Expects and supports continuous staff professional development and learning</b><br>T1 -110<br>T3-191<br>T4 - 80, 83, 91, 184, 307, 310<br>T5-611<br>T6 - 374, 382<br>Teachers as learners<br>T1 - 151<br>T3 - 51<br>T4 -71*, 76, 169<br>T5 - 435<br>Obligation to learn<br>T4-93*, 313*<br>T5 -381,<br>Culture of Learning<br>T6 -201, 214, 431<br>T7- 242, 347, 554, 572<br>T10- 84, 86, 529<br><b>Collaborative culture of practice</b><br>T1 -109,<br>T3-231-33*<br>T4-100<br>T5 - 475, 476, 480*, 489<br>T6 - 219, 364<br><b>Shares explicit view of good teaching and learning</b><br>T3- 261<br><b>High expectations</b><br>T1-194<br>T3 - 215<br>T6- 807<br>T9-309 | <b>Present to faith and and delivering a quality RE program</b><br>T4-414*<br>T2-510* | <b>Promotes Collaborative practice</b><br>T1-177*, 179, T4- 156*<br>T1- 161*<br>T8- 297, 329 |

|              |  |  |  |   |  |  |          |          |
|--------------|--|--|--|---|--|--|----------|----------|
|              | <b>Appreciative Inquiry</b><br>T3 –32, 330<br>T4- 48<br>T6-170<br><b>Interpersonal Relationships</b><br>Student voice<br>T1- 204, 213<br>T3- 203, 96*<br>Trust/honest Relationships<br>T3 – 68<br>T6- 111, 113, 114<br>Professional relationships<br>T3- 323<br>T7- 193, 204<br>T8-42<br><b>Being given time – School structure</b><br>T2 – 488-494, 510, 532<br>T4 –42, 100*, 102<br>T10- 189, 235, 247, 255, 440, 486, 499<br><b>Reflective practice</b><br>T8- 52<br>T7- 105, 125, 131<br>T14- 317, 322 | Leader of learning<br>T8- 87<br>T14- 62<br><b>Empathetic listening</b><br>T2- 531<br>T3- 150<br>T4 – 191<br>T11- 152 | T1- 161<br>T7-71, 254, 299, 329, 393<br>T14- 155<br><b>Responsibility to cultivate a caring, productive environment.</b><br>T6-771 | T8 – 75, 323<br>T10- 287, 296<br><b>*Challenging students to live out their values</b><br>T14- 90 |  | T7 – 240, 282 students<br>T5 –71<br>T6 – 633, 634<br><b>Embeds best current understandings of teaching and learning in practice</b><br>T5 –88<br>T4 – 22, 38<br>T8- 169*<br>Program revitalised<br>T9 – 68 |          |          |
| <b>Tally</b> | <b>98</b>  | <b>55</b>  | <b>72</b>  | <b>45</b>   |  | <b>54</b>  | <b>2</b> | <b>6</b> |

## 6.2F Focus Group Interview Frequency of Themes and their Source in Learning

| Research Question   | ETHICS  |   |  | CORE VALUES  |          |  |             |  |
|---|---|---|--|--|----------|--|-------------|--|
|   | Authenticity  | Presence  | Responsibility   | Transformation   | Justice  | Excellence   | Catholicity | Common Good                                |
| <b>How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions of learning?</b><br>*Recognised as a core value and ethic.<br>#Recognised as two core values | <b>Promoting authentic learning</b><br>CG2- 557, 569, 615,<br>Professional learning<br>CG2- 142, 203,755, 758,<br>Professional learning<br>community<br>CG1-364<br>CG2-137, 139<br>Reflective practice<br>CG3-114<br><b>Interpersonal relationships</b><br>CG2- 740<br>Trust<br>CG3- 834<br>CG2-198,201 | <b>Professional learning</b><br>CG1 – 508, 727<br>CG2- 550<br>CG3-355<br>Pedagogy<br>CG3-3367-369<br><b>Individualised Student learning</b><br>CG3- 515, 517, 523<br>CG1- 516<br><b>Reflective practice</b><br>CG2- 562<br>CG1- 587<br>(global understanding)<br><b>Values relationships</b><br>CG2-304 | <b>Professional learning</b><br>Shared<br>CG1-601, *693<br>CG2-206, 616, (power/control)<br>209, 630, 799, 805<br>Personal<br>CG1-609, 711, 728, 811, 826, 830<br>CG2- 366, 716<br>CG3- 717(own time)<br>Student learning<br>CG1- 345, 603 | <b>Challenging students to take responsibility for own learning</b><br>CG3- 842, 854, 856<br>CG2 – 849 |          | <b>Expects and supports continuous staff professional development and learning</b><br>CG2- 769<br><b>Embeds best current understandings of teaching and learning in practice</b><br>CG2- 791<br>CG3- 847 |             | CG2-*209<br>(responsibility for community) |
| <b>Tally</b>  | <b>16</b>   | <b>14</b>   | <b>19</b>  | <b>4</b>   | <b>0</b> | <b>3</b>   | <b>0</b>    | <b>1</b>                                   |

### 6.3F Documentary Data Frequency of Themes and their Source in Learning

| Research Question   | ETHICS  |  |   | CORE VALUES  |         |  |             |                                   |
|---|---|--|---|--|---------|--|-------------|-----------------------------------|
|   | Authenticity  | Presence   | Responsibility  | Transformation   | Justice | Excellence   | Catholicity | Common Good                       |
| How has explicit attention to ethics and core values within a school improvement process influenced teachers' perceptions of learning?<br>*Recognised as a core value and ethic | <b>Promoting authentic learning</b><br>SMM – S3, TK (30/03/09)<br>*TVI- T14<br>Professional learning<br>LTLLJ-384<br>TVI-T3 (self/real)<br>Shared understanding<br>MPSE-30<br>SS- 1<br><b>Structures that nurture Authentic learning</b><br>TVI – T12 | <b>Professional learning</b><br>LTLLJ- 858<br><b>Reflective practice</b><br>LTLLJ- 793<br>LTLL SRG - 9 | <b>Student responsibility for own learning</b><br>*SMM – S3 (30/03/09) TI | <b>Change</b> (reflective practice)<br>LTLLJ – 159<br>SS-2<br>Active engagement – SS-2<br>Student voice<br>SMM – S3 (30/03/09)<br>TI |         | <b>Students being able to articulate school values and live them out</b><br>LTLL SRG - 4 |             | <b>Collaboration</b><br>*TVI- T14 |
| Tally   | 7   | 3  | 1   | 4  | 0       | 1  | 0           | 1                                 |

Table 6.4 Triangulation of Data in Learning

| Ethics and core values: | Themes:<br># Themes supported by all three data sets   | One-to-one interviews | Focus group | Documentary data |
|-------------------------|--|-----------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Transformation          | -ensuring learning is relevant to students' lives<br>- student voice   | 9<br>3                |             | 1                |
|                         | -providing meaningful and purposeful experiences   | 11                    |             |                  |
|                         | -challenging students to take responsibility for their own learning<br>- inspire learning  | 9<br>4                | 4           |                  |
|                         | -promoting self-knowledge in learners  | 8                     |             |                  |
|                         | -challenging students to live out their values   | 1                     |             |                  |
|                         | - active engagement  |                       |             | 1                |
|                         | -change  |                       |             | 2                |
| Excellence              | -expects and supports continuous staff professional development and learning<br>- Teachers as learners<br>- Obligation to learn<br>- Culture of learning | 11<br>6<br>3<br>10    | 1           |                  |
|                         | -collaborative culture of practice   | 7                     |             |                  |
|                         | -shares explicit view of good teaching and learning  | 4                     |             |                  |
|                         | -high expectations   | 1                     |             |                  |
|                         | -embeds best current understandings of teaching and learning in practice   | 6                     | 2           |                  |
|                         | -students able to articulate school values and live them out   |                       |             | 1                |
| Catholicity             | -present to faith and school charism   |                       |             |                  |
| Common Good             |  | 2                     |             |                  |
|                         | -promotes collaborative practice   | 6                     |             | 1                |
| Authenticity            | -responsibility for the community  |                       | 1           |                  |
|                         | #Promoting authentic learning:   | 13                    | 3           | 2                |
|                         | - Owned sense of educational purpose   | 4                     |             |                  |
|                         | - Facilitator of learning  | 11                    |             |                  |
|                         | - Professional Learning community<br>- Shared understanding  |                       | 3           | 2                |
|                         | #Professional learning   | 20                    | 4           | 2                |
|                         | - collaborative learning   | 15                    |             |                  |

|                |  |    |   |   |
|----------------|--|----|---|---|
|                | Appreciative inquiry   | 4  |   |   |
|                | <b>Interpersonal Relationships –</b>                         | 6  | 1 |   |
|                | - student voice  | 4  |   |   |
|                | - trust/honest relationships                                 | 4  | 3 |   |
|                | - professional relationships                                 | 4  |   |   |
|                | School structures that nurture authenticity                  | 13 |   | 1 |
|                | Reflective practice  | 6  | 1 |   |
| Presence       | Values relationships within community                        | 5  | 1 |   |
|                | - respect  | 14 |   |   |
|                | - professional relationships                                 | 2  |   |   |
|                | <b>Teaching</b>  | 6  |   |   |
|                | - Teacher voice  | 9  |   |   |
|                | Clear communication and empathetic listening                 | 1  |   |   |
|                | #Self-reflection/ Reflective practice                        | 1  | 2 | 2 |
|                | Being attentive/sensitive to others                          | 3  |   |   |
|                | #Professional learning                                       | 9  | 4 | 1 |
| Responsibility | - pedagogy   | 2  | 2 |   |
|                | Individualised student learning                              |    | 4 |   |
|                | Affirming  | 2  |   |   |
|                | Responsibility to cultivate a caring, productive environment | 1  |   |   |
|                | Children's learning  |    | 2 |   |
|                | - personal resp.   | 9  |   |   |
|                | - shared resp.   | 6  |   |   |
|                | Professional learning  |    |   |   |
|                | - personal resp.   | 33 | 9 |   |
|                | - shared resp.   | 18 | 8 |   |
|                | Student responsibility for own learning                      |    |   | 1 |
|                | Shared accountability for school core values                 | 5  |   |   |

***Recurring Themes:***

Professional learning

Collaborative practice

Professional relationships

Reflective practice

Student responsibility for own learning

## Appendix G:

### Documentary Data

#### *Stage Meeting Agendas (SMA): by Core Group*

- First Stage Meeting agenda – (27/01/09) **shared responsibility** for chairing and recording minutes.
- Second Stage Meeting agenda – (1.03.09) **authentic teaching and learning**
- Third Stage Meeting agenda- (30.03.09) appreciative inquiry **reflective practice/ valuing transformation**
- Fourth Stage Meeting agenda – (4.05.09) **professional learning** John Hattie article on feedback.
- Stage Meeting Reminder – (8.03.11) **reflective practice**

#### *Stage Meeting Minutes (SMM): by classroom teachers*

- (2/02/09) ES1/S1: Authentic learning requires us to know where children are at, responding to that knowledge - observation is really important (TA) Authentic learning is more likely to occur if we are organised and everything is in the right place.(TH) Pointed out the importance of creating the right learning environment for authentic learning - where things are, rules and lines of communication.(TD) **Class structures that nurture authenticity**
- (2/02/09) Specialist Teachers: As a group, we also looked at the specific learning needs of cohorts of students and individual students, and the authentic learning that was in place to meet their needs. Ongoing modification of programmes with an emphasis on differentiation was a priority. **Promoting Authentic Learning**
- (2/03/09) S3: (RE PALS Feedback) Role-play used to teach more authentically. All individual responses. This fits in with Bullying triangle being taught in Peer Support. Photostory strategy used to teach choosing life/death activity. Less pressure to produce bookwork and so more time for more authentic lessons. **Promoting authentic learning**
- (2/03/09) S2: (RE PALS Feedback) changed an Assessment task to reflect authentic teaching strategies (ie cloze passage changed to a concept map) **Promoting authentic student learning – Teaching**
- (30/03/09) S3: 3 **Students taking Responsibility for their Learning**
- (30/03/09) S3: Sometimes the children who are not the most academic are getting the opportunity to have a voice. Children get to see how others think mathematically. This can help transform the learner. TI **Valuing Transformation**
- (30/03/09) S3: TJ questioned that mixed ability is more 'Real world', which is at the core of authentic learning. TJ spoke about the fact that if you already think you're authentic you can't change and also that the thing that moves more slowly is the program. Discussed making a few changes at a time. TK said that even though the program may look the same as last year that how you are teaching with it is different. **Authenticity in Teaching** 'What are you doing? Why are you doing it?' Children should be able to answer these questions. Make signs that ask these questions. **Authenticity in Learning**
- (30/03/09) S2: TL talked about how her authentic learning was including each child every day - even if that is just through a conversation with each child. Others added to this and how important this is, in particular for some children. The link between behaviour management and authentic learning was covered. **Reciprocity in interpersonal relationships**



- (30/03/09) S2: TM has looked carefully at the authenticity of artworks within the school and realised that if we are to be truly authentic then children's artworks should be different. The discussion then focused on the reality of this and how best to implement this in the classroom. **(Teaching) truth/integrity**
- (4/05/09) S2: Discussion about feedback article: main goal is about the appropriate feedback and to make sure that it is relevant to the task and the child. **Professional Learning - Feedback**
- (4/05/09) S3: Discussion on Reading by Hattie on Feedback. Many people had ideas to share on how we give Feedback to students and to peers. The article is really worth reading and reflecting on as it requires us to think about how and when we respond to students and their work. **Professional Learning – Feedback**
- (7.09.09) S1: Our aim for this meeting was to share and discuss the grade developments with wikis... Everyone is very interested in the further development of their grade wikis and the excitement of putting web 2 learning into practice was shared by all present. **Valuing Excellence – Embeds best current understanding of teaching and learning in practice**
- (27/02/11) ES1/S1: TH wants to know if we are teaching 21st Century Learning we need up-to-date hardware. TE spoke about having a computer time for younger children at lunch.

**LTLL Journal (LTLLJ): by Core Group**

- Initial planning for PALM – (7.02.08) Area chosen – Students & Their Learning; 2.2 Rights & Responsibilities, with a specific focus on Point 1; 'There is a whole-school approach to respecting, valuing and protecting the rights and responsibilities of all to learn. Quality teaching and learning time is valued and consistently protected.'
- **Shared Responsibility (984)**
- LTLL (31/03/08) 'What does ethical presence look like in the modern day catholic primary school?' 'Learning Visits based on ethical presence transforming student learning.' **Presence – professional learning, valuing relationships (916)**
- (27/06/08) 'We need a 'Critical Friend' – in a way our Regional Consultant has been this for us so far – able to put into succinct words/phrases what we, as a group, are saying...' **valuing relationships (869)**
- (27/06/08) What is presence ? • What does it look like in the classroom ? • What does positive presence look like in the school ? • What is our moral purpose ? • What is successful in your classroom ? • How do you know when something is successful ? • How do we spread the successes throughout the school ? • How will things be different in the classroom ? • What do you see happening in the school ? • What might be a better approach ? • What should we stop doing ? • What should we start doing ? • What does a transformed learner look like ? • What does a teacher as leader look like ? The questions / processes developed to support / implement the above questions need to be well set up – make sure that we are going to get the answers that will tell us what we wanted to find out !! **EVIDENCE**; What are we doing now that can be used as a source of evidence ? • What evidence will we collect ? • How will we collect the evidence ? • Who will collect the evidence ? • When will we collect the evidence ? • How will we use the evidence ? • How will we store the evidence ? • How will we deliver the evidence to the school community ? **Presence – reflective practice – appreciative inquiry (890).**
- (31/03/08) 'What does ethical presence look like in the modern day catholic primary school?' Using 'Learning Visits based on ethical presence transforming student learning.' As the vehicle. We were given the Starratt book during this session and

we are in the process of reading it. **Presence – professional learning (858).**

- A shared common understanding of all aspects of the Project, including terminology, amongst ALL staff will be critical to the success of this Project • A goal of what is best for the ‘common good’ should pervade all we do in this Project • We need to look at the areas that we actually have control over • LTLL Team must use the language relevant to what we want to address e.g. authentic learning, authentic teaching, responsible to and for, what does being present look like and mean? What does affirming, critical and enabling presence look like in the classroom and in the school ? • Look at our Vision as well as the Learning Framework in relation to our project • If we want to transform learners and learning then we have to timetable a place for reflective prac into our school. It is only through opportunities to reflect that we can transform teaching • It is essential to look at ones own prac in order to gain personal meaning, which is essential before transformation can occur • We must have an enabling presence in the classroom for every child • We must be present to the School community, including children, parents and staff - **Presence – reflective practice (793). Valuing transformation (803)**
- (07/08/08) We have decided that we will look at the Portfolios that we use in our school in terms of authenticity. We chose this area because it affects all levels of our school community and we think it will be away of involving all staff in looking at something in terms of its authenticity that is relevant to all. We have decided that we will survey the staff, students and parents with a limited number of questions. With the data we think that we will be able to gauge which direction we should move in as a school re the use of the portfolios. We also gave the Leadership Team a section of the Duignan reading on Authentic education and asked them to fill out the stoplight sheets. **Promoting Authentic learning – leading professional learning (770)**
- (1/09/08) **Core Group** - We decided on a two-pronged approach to our Project covering, (A) Guided Planning, now to be referred to as ‘Planning for Authentic Learning’ or ‘PAL’ Program and (B) the role of the Leadership Team members as support people. The PAL will initially concentrate on the areas of RE, IT and Differentiation. These three areas cover all KLA's. We envisage it working in the following way; Each Grade will gather for their guided planning session and the REC, IT Co-ord and Differentiation Co-ord will spend an hour or so separately with each grade. Their role will be, jointly with the teachers, to discuss / suggest ways of developing or enhancing the use of their specialised area within the class program in order to support the teachers and ensure that the quality of the tasks students are being given will enhance their learning. The Grade members will plan accordingly to do this. This will give the REC, IT and Diff Co-ords an overview of what the grades, K - 6 are doing, lead towards developing an authentic continuum, and ensuring that the programmed work is authentic. Both groups, that is the teachers on the grade and the various Co-ords, are responsible in ensuring that the work is planned, carried out and assessed. The follow-up meeting at the end of each term and the PAL support program will allow for discussion / evaluation re the programming and teaching of these areas. **Promoting authentic learning (688)**
- (06/09/08) The Leadership Team broke into two groups to discuss their ratings in the stoplight and met again as a whole group to speak about those ratings. It became clear that we would not have time to give this exercise the depth of discussion that was needed. This highlights again, the fact that reflection time is crucial and there isn't much of it! The group was keen to discuss the findings and all voices were heard ! We didn't all agree on the outcomes however we did arrive at a consensus - the most important outcome I think, was that the group agreed that we needed to reflect on this

- exercise and discuss it again in a month or so - it was clear that the group valued the event. ***Structures that nurture Authenticity – Reflective practice.***
- (03/09/08) The Leadership Team Meeting this morning engendered a lot of discussion about ethical and authentic teaching. Generally the group is supportive of the direction we are moving in. I feel that we are in a challenging and important place - the L/ship team are keen however they are in a bit of a no-man's land in that they have read some of the readings we have but not quite enough for them to have our understanding - which is understandable (583) ***Authenticity - Professional learning – shared understanding.***
  - (17/11/08) ***Staff Meeting*** ‘We had planned to present a week earlier however, on reflection, we felt that the staff, being in the middle of report writing, may not be as committed to taking in the info as we would like them to be! Also, as part of being an authentic leader do we not have to be aware of the work pressures etc. on our colleagues? We presented as a quartet, each taking responsibility for sections of the presentation - by sharing the presentation we present a united front and, to the staff, showing that we are all fully involved. The staff appeared to be motivated, and participated in the personal reflection and sharing sessions with enthusiasm’ (531) ***Authenticity – responsibility for professional learning***
  - (9/12/08) ***Core Group Evaluation of Staff Meeting*** ‘...the staff on the whole recognised what Authentic teaching / learning looked like and were able, by using the AI approach, to discuss what was happening in their classes. The conversation over the days and weeks following the staff meeting, despite the fact that it was the end of the year and pressure and tiredness reigned, was peppered with the term ‘Authenticity’ and it was being used positively in relation to our work’ (488). ***Promoting authentic Learning***
  - (9/12/08) This meeting was so successful that we decided that if we were going to be fully Authentic and collegial, we would invite all staff members to attend LTLL meetings in 2009 (504). ***Collegial leadership***
  - (9/12/08) The Executive has decided that in 2009 instead of Grade meetings each fortnight, there will be Stage meetings lasting for an hour and that they will have an agenda where the first half is to share Authentic teaching / learning occurring in classes and the second half an hour is to work in Grade groups on general business in the grade. We feel that this will offer teachers an opportunity to share, collegially, their Authentic teaching / learning experiences (517) ***Structures that nurture authenticity***
  - (27/01/09) The data from the RE PAL evaluations was positive to the extent that all staff members valued the opportunity to be involved in the sessions and that across the board there were requests for the PALs to be extended to the other KLA's (384). ***Promoting Authentic learning***
  - (27/01/09) It is clear to the LTLL team that our Project is grounded in the PAL Sessions, the Stage Meetings and the Mentoring Program. Through these vehicles teachers will have the opportunity to discuss Authentic teaching and learning, to share, using the AI philosophy, their teaching expertise and experience collegially, to be an integral part of the planning and development of Authentic teaching / learning activities throughout their Stage, which will impact on the S&S throughout the school (389) ***Structures that nurture authenticity.***
  - (02/02/09) ***First Stage Meetings*** In Stage 3 there was, amongst other things, a discussion about the most Authentic method of organising groupwork in Mathematics lessons and Reciprocal Reading Groups. This eventuated in an offer from a Year 5 teacher to a Year 6 teacher to observe the groups in her room (346). ***Authenticity – trusting relationships***

- (26/03/09) **LTLL Meeting** 2 members from each grade will present a 3-4 minute talk on a lesson that they feel they do or have done well within their class, (AI), which is authentic and then speak about how it has transformed the students in regard to their learning (241). *Valuing Transformation*
- (31/03/09) **Stage Meetings** Each Stage and the Specialist teacher group felt that the meeting had a different feel than the previous meetings - on discussion we found that because our colleagues understood the format of the meeting they knew, to some degree, what to expect. The feedback was positive from all groups. The highlight for us was when one of our staff said to the group they were in, 'I have re-written my program for this term and I would like you to critique re its authenticity'(206)  
*Promoting Authentic learning*
- (31/03/09) **Stage Meetings** We have also decided to move our LTLL Meetings out of the 'boardroom' and into the staff meeting and invite all staff along. (224).  
*Collegial/shared leadership*
- (30/04/09) **LTLL Meeting** '...from an initial group of 4 we have expanded to about 15 people regularly attending our LTLL Meetings - this of course gives a different flavour to the proceedings! (187) *Collegial/shared leadership*
- (4/05/09) **Stage Meeting** '... the question that is being asked now as a matter of course at the Stage Meetings is; 'how did that transform the learning of the students?' Staff are expecting this approach and are able to explain how what they are offering has changed the learning - this has also led the discussion to Authenticity and Presence. (159) *Valuing transformation*
- (4/05/09) **Stage Meeting** Initially we scheduled the first 30 minutes of the hour allotted to Stage meetings to focus on LTLL and the second half to working in grades on day-to-day teaching issues and what we are finding is that the LTLL section is rolling on for 45 -60 minutes - this is common to all stages (167) *Structures that nurture authenticity*
- (27/06/09) **LTLL Meeting** We also discussed the fact that there is much discussion around the LTLL project indirectly - teachers don't speak about the project per se but rather the importance of authenticity, presence and responsibility - we think this is great!!! Mainly because the terms are not spoken about in relation to the project but rather in relation to their teaching! (129) *Promoting authentic learning*
- (27/06/09) **LTLL Meeting** '...our librarian / IT colleague, has reviewed her entire program (covering IT K - 6) and has changed her approach of working in Terms to working in projects (still with an end-date) with the Year 6 students - this change in mindset has resulted in the students feeling that they don't have to rush at the end of the term (135) *change – teaching- authenticity*
- (20/08/09) **LTLL Observations** 'The IT person on our staff is now a person who shares ideas and guides through being asked to assist, as opposed in the past, to "inflicting" edicts about the necessity of involving yourself and your students in computer technology' (88) *reciprocity of interpersonal relationships – authentic leadership.*
- (20/08/09) **LTLL Observations** 'The teachers are attending voluntary in-servicing after school, (28 at our last session); Teacher as leader is coming to the fore as teachers work not only in their grade/stage groups but cross those lines to coach, assist and share ideas; the conversation in the staff room is centred around the development of new ideas and ways to use this technology; staff members are online in the evenings as they explore more in this area; the IT person on our staff is now a person who shares ideas and guides through being asked to assist, as opposed in the past, to 'inflicting' edicts about the necessity of involving yourself and your students in computer technology (81)'. – *change*

- (20/08/09) **LTLL Observations** The teachers are questioning the authenticity of what they put onto the Wikis. (78) **Promoting Authentic Learning**

**Mathematics PAL Session Evaluations, Term 3, 2009 (MPSE): by PAL Leader**

- The conversation was open and they obviously had a shared understanding of what maths should 'look like' in the class. My general impression was one of collegiality and authenticity in the teaching of maths in Kindergarten (30) **Authenticity- shared understanding**.
- *Overall impression of working with Year 4. Their programming reflected differentiation - They were all positive about the authentic work being done in their classes (173). Teaching - Authenticity*
- *Overall impression of working with Year 5. Louise brought up the fact that she used her 'intro to the lesson' time to reinforce perceived areas of weakness in the class as a whole - she was unsure whether this was authentic and I suggested that an approach which identified needs within the children and then took authentic steps towards addressing those needs was pedagogically sound (203). Leading – promoting authentic learning*

**Teacher Video Interviews: (TVI)** presented at the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Catholic Educational Leadership, 'A Beacon of Hope: A Light for the Future' Sofitel Sydney, 2-4 August 2010 concurrent session.

- Q. How has the LTLL project transformed your teaching?  
A. 'We were given readings and things to think about... I had to change to become authentic. **Authenticity - Professional learning** If I wanted to become an authentic teacher I had to look at what I was teaching and who I was teaching and make some decisions about what I thought I knew and what I thought I knew, I no longer knew. I was refocused and re-energised' (Teacher with over 30 years experience).- T3  
A. 'Authentic learning... there's a lot of value. I think we do all need to sit back and look at ourselves and evaluate how we teach and I think it's made me a better teacher.'- T1 **Reflective practice**.  
A. 'Made me focus more on my teaching... made me refocus, look at what I'm teaching, making sure that what I am doing is authentic and benefiting the children.' – T4 **Reflective practice**.  
A. 'PAL sessions have allowed grades the opportunity to get together to reach a common understanding of authentic learning and what an authentic learning session should look like. It allows them to use the time collaboratively...' T12 – **Structures that nurture authenticity**.  
A. 'I think the PAL sessions have been really valuable in that it has given us and given me time to sit with colleagues and talk about what we're doing...future directions and I think to ensure that what we are teaching is authentic.' T4 **Structures that nurture authenticity/ Reflective practice?**  
A. 'The PAL sessions are a great way for grade partners to communicate about the program and things we could do better to incorporate authentic learning. We can collaborate as a grade so every child is not missing out...' T14 **Valuing the Common Good**  
A. 'The biggest change I've seen in staff... is the resistance to change is slowly -not slowly, it's been quite rapid – it's breaking down and we're seeing a lot more people willing to be involved in authentic learning in ICT.' (Leader of ICT professional learning) T12 **Authentic learning-change**  
A. 'In my role as facilitator of ICT PAL sessions over the past 12 months... in a small group be able to digest, be able to refer to any fears or any apprehensions around the changes that are taking place in ICT. But at the same time to remain focused on the idea that the learning sessions that we're planning with ICT also need to be authentic

and hopefully give them (teachers) the skills to be able to say to the children, “This is why we are doing this”.’ T12 ***Authentic learning-change – teaching?***

A. ‘The article on feedback was a bit of an eye-opener for me... I was so enthused and engaged by it that I told everybody I saw and I wanted everybody to read it... I read it once and I’ll read it again every year – I’ll make myself do that – because it’s one of those pieces of writing that you think this is... getting me back to ground level... it’s about what I do with each child. The way we interact, the way I look at what they do, how they do it and the way they learn. That’s where the authentic word... that article made it real for me because I became authentic and the learning became authentic.’ T3

***Authenticity – professional learning-self/real.***

***T12’s Authentic Learning Ramblings (T12ALR):*** Blog post shared with the core group by school Exec. Member on 28/03/09.

- ‘Here are some questions I would ask myself as a leader before taking any action regarding changes to programs or methods of professional development....’ (18) ***Leading- Authenticity- reflective practice.***
- If I sit down with one teacher per grade to really look at culling programming back to the essential, is that going to promote authentic learning? (24) Am I making the assumption that there is already authentic learning activities in the program but that they are somehow hidden or overwhelmed by the inauthentic stuff? (29).
- As a member of the leadership team do *I* know what authentic lessons look like? Or am I a very good ‘old school’ teacher - if I do *bring new and exciting things to the table* then there *is* a purpose for the whole grade to be there, as they will all learn something new. However in order for them to include it in their programs and actually use it in their classes they will have to see the value in it, they will have to want to teach it (40). ***Leading- Authenticity- reflective practice.***
- Would what I am offering to develop these teachers in be motivating and exciting and authentic enough to capture the ‘clock watcher’? To entice the ‘part timer’ up to school, unpaid, because it was so good they feared missing out? Do I want people to change their programs because I am there to ensure it happens, or because I want them to see there is a better option and *want* to change them? As a leader I want to instill in them the feeling that if they don’t change what they are doing their children will be missing out on something so valuable that as a teacher I could not let this happen if I was to live with myself (109). ***Leading- Authenticity- reflective practice.***
- Why did people come to Photostory 3 on a Wednesday, after school, when they had already had a staff meeting on a Monday and a business meeting on a Tuesday morning, for an hour or more each session (people had to be asked to leave), for three sessions + their own extra time? Why did casuals ask if they could sit in? Why do the groups who didn’t finish due to me not being there at the end of term 2 still ask me if/when they will get the chance to finish/showcase their work? Initially I bet because they thought they had to...but then.... because it was fun, engaging, well planned, well presented, trialled and evaluated first, learner centred, hands on, motivating, curriculum based etc etc. Interestingly those who didn’t make the effort to come to the first one, either went to the term 2 session, or are now kicking themselves and asking everywhere for people to show them what to do... (125) ***Authenticity – promoting authentic professional learning***
- Can I show teachers what I propose in action, after trying it out myself in a class, working out the bugs, proving it is all ‘doable’, seeing differences in student’s levels of engagement and learning...or was I planning to hand out wads of articles no one will read or dish out websites with pre-made stuff on them that are really no different to a fancy worksheet? Is it possible that I am one of the ones that needs change too? Can I be radical? Innovative? Challenging? Or am I a bit stuck too? A bit comfortable maybe? (149) ***Authenticity – integrity – reflective practice?***

***Staff Survey (SS) - Nov. 2009. Presented to staff on 27.01.10***

1. What were the benefits of the Planning for Authentic Learning Sessions?
  - 30% - ideas for authentic learning
  - 20% - collegial shared understanding
  - 15% - focus on teaching/learning
  - 10% - challenging tasks
  - 5% - culling
  - 5% - motivation
  - 5% - ownership
  - 5% - exploring future directions
2. How have Planning for Authentic Learning Sessions transformed the learning in your classroom?
  - 20% - focus on teaching
  - 20% - Active engagement of students, better results
  - 15% - teacher transformation
  - 10% - increased enthusiasm for learning
  - 10% - child-centred
  - 5% - conscious of constant opportunities
  - 5% - differentiation
  - 5% - less worksheets
  - 5% - questioning
  - 5% - wiser use of resources

***School Self-Portrait (SSP) – Nov. 2007 by Core Group***

1. Q.1 What is it that makes you most proud of:  
What your school values and lives out?
  - A. The *St Matthew's* ethos – being present to the children.  
How teachers influence teaching and learning across the school?
  - A. Their presence and passion.  
Q.2 What would be your best hopes for:  
the learning that occurs in the school?
  - A. Authentic/truthful

***LTLL School Reflection Guide (LTLL SRG) – Nov. 2007 and Aug. 2008 by Core Group(CG) (Sept.2008 School Executive(SE))***

**Key:** *Red – not in evidence*  
*Amber – unsure if present*  
*Green – clearly in evidence*

1. **The transformed learner** – green/amber (amber) CG named, students' inability to make connections, critical and creative thinkers and resilience as indicators for being unsure whether this value is present. (Learning)
2. **Teacher as leader** – amber/amber (light green) CG were unsure whether teachers had a clear and explicit understanding of the nature of the transformed learner and whether teachers were active contributors to the educative leadership of the school (Leading)
3. **Catholicity** – green/green (green) CG and School Executive (SE) agreed that this value was clearly in evidence in terms of making the teachings of the Catholic Church

explicit and reflected in the students' Archdiocesan Year 6 Religious Education Test results. (Teaching)

4. **Excellence** – amber/amber (green) the CG were unsure whether excellence was valued in the school in terms of sharing an explicit view of what constitutes good teaching and learning, celebrating a whole range of achievement within the school community and expecting continual staff professional development. The SE reported valuing excellence as clearly evident in regard to students being able to articulate school values and live them out. (Learning)
5. **Justice** – amber/amber (light green) the CG were unsure whether justice was valued in the school in terms of actively seeking to serve the poor and marginalised, giving priority to the poor and taking a public stance on issues of equality. SE noted that the school does not embrace the diversity of people and cultures. (Teaching)
6. **Transformation** – green/amber (amber) the CG and SE were unsure whether valuing transformation was evident in the school in terms of ensuring that learning is relevant to student's lives, promoting self-knowledge in learners and challenging students to take responsibility for their own learning. (Learning)
7. **The Common Good** – light green/light green (green) the CG reported some evidence of valuing the common good in terms of promoting collaborative practice in teaching and learning and distributing resources equitably. They did concede that the student council is clear evidence of decision-making involving those most likely to be affected by the outcomes. The SE reported valuing the common good clearly in evidence (Teaching).
8. **Authenticity** – red/red (light green) the CG reported the ethic of authenticity as not evident in the school in regard to teachers gossiping around children's behaviour and class profiles being handed on however the SE reported some evidence in terms of PALs.(Teaching)
9. **Presence** – green/amber (light green) CG were unsure whether the ethic of presence was evident in terms of not affirming and supporting students in their achievement and demonstrating empathetic listening. The SE reported some evidence of presence in regard to encouraging insightful self-reflection at Stage Meetings and PALs (Learning).
10. **Responsibility** – amber/amber (light green) CG were unsure whether the ethic of responsibility was evident in terms of building a culture of shared accountability and promoting the pursuit of virtue in the community. The SE reported some evidence.(Leading)
11. **Leadership through collegiality** – light green/amber (light green) CG were unsure whether leadership through collegiality was evident in the school in terms of empowering all staff to make decisions (efficacy), having agreed common standards for performance and engaging in collaborative professional learning. The SE reported some evidence.
12. **Leadership based on evidence** - light green/ light green (light green) CG and SE agreed there was some evidence in the form of Basic Skills and RE Test analysis in programs.
13. **Leadership for professional learning** – light green/amber (green) CG unsure of evidence in the school in terms of all teachers in all KLAs supporting team-based learning and placing a high value on ongoing teacher professional development. The SE reported leadership for professional learning as clearly evident.
14. **Leadership for sustainability** – green/green (green) CG and SE agreed this is clearly evident in the school.
15. **Leadership building Culture and Community** - light green/ light green (green) CG unsure of evidence in the school in terms of using clear, shared language to describe vision and core activities and having an accepted and lived set of norms for



- professional behaviour. The SE reported leadership building culture and community as clearly evident.
16. **Leadership for effective change** – amber/amber (light green) CG were unsure whether leadership for effective change was evident in terms of embedding innovative practice in the curriculum. The SE reported some evidence.
  17. **Leadership through networking** – green/green (Light green) CG reported leadership through networking as clearly evident due to developing networks with other schools within and beyond the system however the SE reported some evidence.
  18. **Leadership building capability** - green/green (green) CG and SE agreed building capacity was clearly evident in regard to appreciating the complexity of leadership capability and providing opportunities for all staff to develop capabilities.
  19. **Standards for learning** - light green/ light green (light green) CG and SE agreed there was some evidence of standards for learning (Learning).
  20. **Organising for learning** - green/green (amber) CG reported organising for learning as clearly evident in the school in terms of using technology to support teaching and learning and using a variety of groupings reflecting differing ability/interest. SE reported being unsure about evidence in terms of allocating resources with a priority on learning (Teaching).
  21. **Pedagogy** – green/amber (light green) CG were unsure of evidence of pedagogy in terms of making the most of learning time and cited weekly buddy class sessions. The SE reported some evidence of pedagogy in terms of making the most of learning time (Learning).
  22. **Student engagement** – light green/amber (light green) CG and SE were both unsure about the evidence of student engagement in terms of promoting student self-responsibility and promoting student decision-making (Learning).
  23. **Assessment FOR and AS learning** – green/amber (light green) The CG were unsure whether assessment FOR and AS learning was evident. The SE reported some evidence of assessment FOR and AS learning (Learning).

**Appendix H:**  
**Catholic Education Office Approval Letter**

Catholic Education Office **Sydney**  
www.ceosyd.catholic.edu.au



3 July 2012

Mrs Michelle Court  
Adviser: Religious Education Primary  
Catholic Education Office  
300 The River Road  
REVESBY NSW 2212

Dear Michelle

I refer to your request for approval to conduct research titled, *A Change of Heart: An investigation of the role of moral purpose within a model of leading for learning* at St John Bosco Catholic Primary School.

I wish to advise that the Catholic Education Office approves your research to be conducted at St John Bosco Catholic Primary School subject to the approval of the Australian Catholic University Ethics Committee.

At the conclusion of your study, the Catholic Education Office (CEO) requires that you provide a summary of your research results. The CEO also requires prior advice regarding any planned publications referring to the CEO or its schools resulting from this study.

I wish you the very best in this demanding study and I look forward to hearing more about your progress.

Yours sincerely

Seamus O'Grady  
Director of Curriculum

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Southern Region: 300 The River Road, Revesby Heights NSW 2212 • Phone (02) 9772 7000 • Fax (02) 9772 7009

**Appendix I:**  
**Ethics Committee Approval Letter**



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Human Research Ethics Committee  
**Approval Form**

**Principal Investigator/Supervisor:** Assoc. Prof. Charles Burford

**Co-Investigators:**

**Student Researcher:** Michelle Court

**Ethics approval has been granted for the following project:**

A Change of Heart: An investigation of the role of Moral purpose within a model of leading for learning.

**for the period:** 31/12/2014

**Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Register Number:** 2012 214N

This is to certify that the above application has been reviewed by the Australian Catholic University Human Research Ethics Committee (ACU HREC). The application has been approved for the period given above.

Researchers are responsible for ensuring that all conditions of approval are adhered to, that they seek prior approval for any modifications and that they notify the HREC of any incidents or unexpected issues impacting on participants that arise in the course of their research. Researchers are also responsible for ensuring that they adhere to the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* and the University's *Code of Conduct*.

Any queries relating to this application should be directed to the Research Ethics Manager ([resethics.manager@acu.edu.au](mailto:resethics.manager@acu.edu.au)).

**Kind regards**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Paschke', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Date 30/01/2018  
**Acting Research Ethics Manager**

**Research Ethics | Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)**  
Australian Catholic University  
T: +61 2 9739 2646  
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W: [ACU Research Ethics](#)

**Appendix J:**  
**Information Letter to Participants**



**INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS**

**TITLE OF PROJECT:** *A Change of Heart*

An investigation of how explicit attention to moral purpose within a model of leading for learning has influenced teachers' perceptions and practice in teaching, learning and leadership.

**PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR:** Associate Professor Michael Bezzina

**STUDENT RESEARCHER:** Michelle Court

**PROGRAMME IN WHICH ENROLLED:** Doctor of Education

Dear Participant,

I am writing to invite you to participate in a doctoral research project that I am undertaking through Australian Catholic University, Strathfield Campus. I am interested in your experiences within a school improvement project and how focusing on the transformation of learners has influenced your teaching, learning and leadership. My research involves the following data collection processes:

- document analysis;
- one-to-one interviews;
- focus groups to initiate and validate the research.

The participants will be invited to share their stories about their experiences of the school improvement project, *Leaders Transforming Learning and Learners*, LTLL, and the school-based initiative *Planning for Authentic Learning Model*, PALM including the underlying values and ethics. One-to-one interviews and focus group interviews will be conducted by the researcher on the school premises at a time convenient to you and with your permission, will be audio recorded and transcribed. It is anticipated that the time commitment for interviews would be approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Four participants will be asked to participate in two interviews and six participants will be asked to partake in a one-to-one interview and a final focus group interview for validation purposes.

This research study is of low physical and emotional risk and every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality. In the final document, data will be reported in an aggregated form and pseudonyms will be used in any narrative quotes that are used. If you feel distressed, embarrassed or are in discomfort during the interview process, you are free to suspend and/or discontinue your participation at any stage. Once collected, primary data will be stored securely according to the Australian Catholic University guidelines and will be destroyed five years after the research has been published.

For the participant, insights and perceptions have the potential to contribute to practitioner knowledge of the role ethical leadership plays within school improvement processes and how this is operationalized for teachers in schools. This case study of teachers is significant research as it adds to the body of knowledge for school leaders in understanding the gap in the research between teachers' exposure to the moral imperative of education and teachers' action out of moral purpose to bring about change in schools. This study aims to redress this gap in the literature by exploring through the interrelated constructs of moral literacy, moral potency and moral agency how teachers at the case study school make meaning of their work, role and

leadership.

Participants are free to refuse consent altogether without having to justify that decision, and to withdraw consent and discontinue participation in the study at any time without giving a reason. Please be assured that any withdrawal from the research will not prejudice participants' current or future employment in any way.

Any questions regarding this project should be directed to the Principal Supervisor and the Student Researcher:

Associate Professor Michael Bezzina  
School of Educational Leadership  
Australian Catholic University  
Locked Bag 2002  
Strathfield NSW 2135  
Tel: 9701 4357

Michelle Court  
[Michellecourt.sjb@gmail.com](mailto:Michellecourt.sjb@gmail.com)  
Tel: 0425324130

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University.

In the event that you have any complaint or concern, or if you have a query that the supervisor and Student Researcher have not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee:

Chair, HREC  
C/- Research Services  
Australian Catholic University  
North Sydney Campus  
PO Box 968  
North Sydney NSW 2059  
Tel: 9739 2105  
Fax: 9739 2870

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. The participant will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this project, please sign both copies of the Consent Form, retain one copy for your records and return the other copy to the principal supervisor or Student Researcher.

.....  
Principal Supervisor

.....  
Student Researcher

**Appendix K:**  
**Letter of Consent from Participants**



**CONSENT FORM**

**TITLE OF PROJECT:** *A Change of Heart*

An investigation of how explicit attention to moral purpose within a model of leading for learning has influenced teachers' perceptions and practice in teaching, learning and leadership.

**PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR:** Associate Professor Michael Bezzina

**STUDENT RESEARCHER :** Michelle Court

I ..... 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 this study by:

*(Please tick appropriate boxes)*

- ☐ answering questions in one-to-one interviews, and/or  
☐ participating in an audio recorded focus group discussion.

I realise that refusal or withdrawal of my consent will not affect my employment. I agree that the 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 STUDENT RESEARCHER: .....

DATE: .....