

**TEACHER LEADERSHIP
IN
SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND
ANGLICAN SCHOOLS**

Submitted by

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Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution.

To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

All research procedures reported in this thesis received the approval of the University Ethics Committee.

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Abstract

This research study explores the issue of teacher leadership in South-East Queensland Anglican schools. An initial exploration of the context of Anglican education in South-East Queensland confirmed that both nationally and within the Anglican system, hierarchical understandings of school leadership were being challenged amidst a growing expectation of teacher leadership. However, despite this expectation of teacher leadership, there was little in respect to formal policy and resource support for teacher leadership within South-East Queensland Anglican schools. This research study seeks to gain a more informed and sophisticated understanding of teacher leadership, with particular focus on the perspective of classroom teachers.

A comprehensive analysis of key literature in educational change, professionalism in education and educational leadership, revealed a number of key insights that informed this study. Significant socio-economic change in recent decades has brought about corresponding educational change. This has resulted in a call for greater professionalism in education and a new paradigm of educational leadership. Within this context, there is new interest in distributing leadership beyond the formal role of the principal and into the hands of teacher leaders. However, a further review of the literature highlighted the lack of a clear conceptualisation of teacher leadership. While teacher leadership is predominantly considered in the literature as the domain of those in formal, positional roles, less is known about informal, in-class teacher leadership.

Based on these insights, the researcher identified one major research question:

How do teachers, who are recognised as teacher leaders in South-East Queensland Anglican schools, conceptualise teacher leadership?

To answer this research question, four research sub-questions were posed:

Behaviour of teacher leaders - What do they do?

Purpose of teacher leadership - Why do teachers strive for this?

Feelings of teacher leaders - How do they feel about what they do?

Support for teacher leaders - What do they need?

This research study is situated within the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism. As both a perspective and a method, symbolic interactionism is situated within a pragmatic constructivist research paradigm. This research study explored a restricted group of 16 teachers within three South-East Queensland Anglican schools, and employed qualitative research methods including Experience Sampling Method and focus group interviews.

The findings of this research study suggest that teacher leaders in South-East Queensland Anglican schools have a confused conceptualisation of teacher leadership, with little common symbolic language to delineate the phenomenon. This study made the following conclusions in relation to teacher leadership in South-East Queensland Anglican schools:

- The broad understanding of teacher leadership is unrecognised in the field of education
- Teacher leadership is a complex phenomenon
- Teacher leadership is principled action in support of learning
- There is untapped potential for teacher leaders to act as change agents in school revitalisation
- Collegial relationships, the provision of time, relevant professional development and administrative support enable teacher leadership
- There is a need for a role-making policy to support teacher leadership.

The development of teacher leadership in South-East Queensland Anglican schools requires support from the Anglican Schools Commission, school principals and the teachers themselves, through deliberate action in developing appropriate policy and practice.

List of Abbreviations

ASC	Anglican Schools Commission
ACE	Australian College of Educators
APAPDC	Australian Principals' Associations Professional Development Council
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training
ESF	Experience Sampling Form
ESM	Experience Sampling Method
NIQTSL	National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership
QERC	Quality of Education Review Committee
SMS	Short Message Service
TA	Teaching Australia

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The impetus for this study was a pragmatic concern for teacher leadership. The researcher as a principal in a South-East Queensland Anglican school, has for some time been intrigued by the fact that some teachers naturally assume a leadership role amongst their peers through their regular classroom teaching, while others, although allocated positions of responsibility or formal, out-of-class roles, sometimes fail to engage their leadership potential. This inconsistent approach to teacher leadership has proved problematic for consistency and cohesion in a new school¹ that, by necessity, relies on the active engagement of teachers in the development of both policy and practice.

Beyond this pragmatic concern, the researcher was also aware that there are significant challenges confronting schools today as they attempt to adequately prepare students for the twenty-first Century (Bottery, 2004). Consequently, new times call for new measures of leadership. “Thus a new paradigm of the teaching profession is needed, one that recognizes both the capacity of the profession to provide desperately needed school revitalization and the striking potential of teachers to provide new forms of leadership in schools and communities” (Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, & Hann, 2002, p. 3). Appreciating the need for this “new paradigm of the teaching profession”, the Brisbane Anglican Schools Commission has been active in promoting teacher leadership for effective teaching and learning, and improved outcomes for students and their schools. This systemic goal further

¹ The researcher is the foundation principal of a Gold Coast Anglican school that commenced operations in 1997.

focused the researcher's attention on the research problem of teacher leadership in Anglican schools.

1.2 Context of the Research

An initial exploration of the contemporary educational context revealed both a national and systemic concern for teacher leadership. Both nationally and within the Anglican schools system the phenomenon of teacher leadership was clearly situated within the discourse of quality education. Over time, teacher leadership, professionalism in education and quality teaching and learning were inextricably linked.

1.2.1 A national concern for teacher leadership

The call for teacher leadership is situated within an on-going, public conversation about quality in education. A series of national reports have linked the quality of education with the quality of teaching (Beazley, 1993; Dawkins, 1987; Karmel, 1985). The Quality of Education Review Committee (QERC) suggested that student achievements in literacy were best served by innovative approaches to teaching and learning (Karmel, 1985). Furthermore, diversity and quality in teacher education programmes were deemed essential to enhance professional expertise of teachers to enable improved educational outcomes for students (Beazley, 1993). In short, these reports argue that quality education depends on quality teaching which in itself, depends on teachers having a set of professional standards, and taking on leadership within their schools.

More recently, the Commonwealth Government report *Teachers for the 21st Century*, recommended funding initiatives to raise standards of school education and to maximize student learning outcomes. Four key elements were identified for funding:

1. Quality teachers
2. Quality leaders
3. Quality school management
4. Recognition of quality (DEST, 2000)

The objective for the first of these key elements was “To improve teachers’ skills and understandings and enhance the status of teachers through teacher professional development and the further development of professional standards” (p. 8). The objective for the second element of *Teachers for the 21st Century* was “To support school principals and their leadership teams to be highly effective educational leaders, people leaders and managers” (p. 9).

In addition, the Commonwealth Government funded a research project conducted by the Australian College of Educators (ACE) in teacher standards, quality and professionalism. The resulting *National Statement from the Teaching Profession on Teacher Standards, Quality and Professionalism* released in May 2003, identified common and agreed understandings about professional teaching standards and their relationship to teacher quality and teacher professionalism (ACE, 2003). This ‘work in progress’ stressed the need for a spirit of cooperation between governments, systems and sector authorities to be maintained to enable the profession to contribute to national policy and programme development. Moreover, it is clearly stated that there is a need for teachers to demonstrate their leadership by driving the standards debate: “Provided the profession can maintain its role as the driver of the standards agenda, these measures of teaching quality can be used in ways that will support teachers individually and collectively” (p. 1). In addition, “many envisage standards being used as a framework for continuous professional learning and development which is teacher directed and controlled” (p. 2).

Beyond this project, the advancement of professional teaching standards provides an opportunity for improving career pathways and building capacity for leadership. The Australian Principals' Associations Professional Development Council (APAPDC)² has identified the need to “extend the concept of school leadership beyond school principals to include teachers in positions of responsibility” (DEST 2000, p. 10). Further to this, the Commonwealth Government established the National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership (NIQTSL) in June 2004, with the aim of raising the status, quality and professionalism of teachers and school leaders throughout Australia. In short, NIQTSL was established to provide “a national focus and voice for the teaching profession, offering strong advocacy and intellectual leadership. It has four main functions involving school leaders, classroom teachers, and the profession as a whole:

1. Professional standards development
2. Professional learning for school leaders and classroom teachers
3. Research and communication
4. Promotion of the profession” (Nelson, 2004)

The establishment of NIQTSL followed extensive consultation and submissions from members of the profession with a keen interest to expand school leadership. In 2006, NIQTSL became Teaching Australia – Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, with a mandate to raise the status, quality and professionalism of teachers and school leaders throughout Australia; One of its first tasks was to produce *A Charter for the Teaching Profession*. Following wide consultation during 2006, this Charter was written

² The four peak principal's associations (Australian Primary Principals' Association; Australian Secondary Principals' Association; Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia; Catholic Secondary Principals Australia) established APAPDC in 1993 with the aim of providing professional development for principals and aspiring principals.

and distributed for comment in 2007, and will be finalised and publicly released early in 2008. *The Charter for the Teaching Profession* claims that teaching is:

- A knowledge-based profession
- A collaborative profession
- An ethical profession
- A collegial profession
- A responsible profession (Teaching Australia, 2007)

In addition to the ‘teaching charter’ development, Teaching Australia also released a consultation paper in March 2007, entitled *National Professional Standards for Advanced Teaching and School Leadership*. Under the leadership of Dr Gregor Ramsey as Chair, Teaching Australia is leading the national agenda for teaching and leadership. In a recent Teaching Australia newsletter Ramsey (2006) states: “At the heart of everything we do is the fundamental commonality and unity of interests and purposes of the teaching profession, coupled with the recognition of the need for and value of, the various dimensions of the profession” (p. 3).

1.2.2 A systemic concern for teacher leadership

This new understanding of teacher leadership has also been considered in the Anglican Schools system. In South-East Queensland, there are 25 Anglican schools³ representing a variety of history, ownership and governance. Some are long-established ‘high fee’ schools with a rich tradition spanning 100 years; some are ‘low fee’ schools established within the last 15

³ Anglican schools in South-East Queensland are either Diocesan-owned, separately incorporated, order-owned or jointly owned by the Anglican and Uniting Churches

years; others fall somewhere on the continuum between these two extremes. Whilst compliant with the same Ethos Statement⁴, South-East Queensland Anglican schools are renowned for their unity through diversity.

Historically, Anglican schools were hierarchically structured with leadership associated with a formal management position. For example, Scott's (1998) case study of one Anglican grammar school, found a "two-tier" structure with the headmaster on the first tier of management and "the Director of Studies, the Head of the Senior School, the Head of the Junior School and the Deputy Principal form[ing] a second-tier of management under the Headmaster" (p. 7).

This understanding of hierarchical leadership was challenged in 2002, when the Anglican Schools Commission (ASC) created a Leadership Development Standing Committee made up of employees of various schools to strengthen leadership within the Anglican school system. A principal chaired the Leadership Development Standing Committee, but the majority of members were teachers from a range of Anglican schools. The aim of this committee was:

To identify, develop and strengthen [teacher] leadership in our schools: leadership that enables our schools to create learning environments that generate high quality outcomes for our students, and the development and retention of talented, committed teachers and support staff (ASC, 2004).

⁴ All Anglican schools in the Province of Queensland operate according to *An Ethos Statement for Anglican Schools in the Province of Queensland*.

Particularly, this leadership development experience was to be promoted amongst newly appointed positional leaders (teaching and non-teaching); experienced positional leaders (teaching and non-teaching); aspiring positional leaders; potential leaders/non-positional leaders; chaplains; and members of governing bodies. Students were also identified as a possible future target group.

While this committee worked towards strengthening leadership across Anglican schools, the current Anglican Industrial agreement reinforces a traditional leadership model by recognising formal, positional leaders only. Positions of Added Responsibility (PAR) are awarded to Heads of Department, Pastoral leaders and other teachers in positions added responsibility outside the classroom. Such positional leaders receive time release and cash allowances according to subject hours timetabled, or how many students they pastorally monitor. The informal, in-class teacher leader remains unrecognised under this system.

It is clear that leadership in Anglican schools is becoming increasingly acknowledged as more than just the domain of the principal. Staff are being encouraged to pursue leadership aspirations through a range of in-service days and activities planned by the committee to explore teacher leadership, parallel leadership and non-positional or informal leadership. For example, a seminar, held on Tuesday 17 August 2004, entitled *Parallel Leadership: A day of inspiration and exploration with Professor Frank Crowther*, was attended by 41 participants from 12 Anglican Schools. Thus, the issue of leadership in Anglican schools is very much focused on teacher leadership. However, this understanding of teacher leadership remains problematic as there continues to be no formal policy for Leadership in Anglican schools. Little is known about teacher leadership within this specific educational context. Moreover, a restructure of the Anglican Schools Commission in 2005

to fulfil more of a governance role, has resulted in the discontinuation of the Leadership Development Standing Committee. Nevertheless, a number of Heads of Anglican schools, including the researcher, remain motivated to promote teacher leadership across the sector.

1.3 Prior Research

International contemporary literature on leadership refers to the present as a “golden age” (Leithwood & Day, 2007, p. 1) of school leadership. “Educational reformers widely agree that school leadership is central to the success of their reforms” (Mulford, 2007, p. 3), and there is plenty of empirical evidence to suggest that school leadership matters (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Given this international focus on school leadership, it is hardly surprising that this scholarship is also reflected in Australian writing. For example, Mulford (2007), following a review of four leading Australian education journals⁵ for the period 2001 to 2005, found “a period of major ferment in the area, and of major change in the views about schooling and school leadership” (p. 3). Inspired by Mulford’s review, and to search the literature more extensively, the researcher conducted a similar electronic review of the literature published in the ten years from 1997-2006. More specifically, the researcher sought articles and research studies involving teacher leadership in the same four journals chosen by Mulford.

This review of the literature revealed a dearth of articles directly related to teacher leadership. In the *Australian Journal of Education* between 1997 and

⁵Mulford (2007) reviewed four leading Australian-based educational journals including the *Australian Journal of Education*, *Australian Educational Researcher*, *Leading and Managing*, and the *Journal of Educational Administration*.

2006, of 226 articles published, only 3 involved teacher leadership. Singh, Doyle, Rose and Kennedy's (1997) reflective internship study, and Parker and Rennie's (1997) examination of the implementation of single sex classes in coeducational schools, reported on the work of teachers in the classroom. Further, Whitehead (2001) examined the changes in teachers' work during the 1990s by analysing four middle schooling reports. Whitehead's (2001) conclusion confirmed a domination of hierarchical school leadership. While these articles reported on the nature of teachers' work, none spoke specifically about teacher leadership within the classroom. In addition, none of these articles were based on Queensland data.

The *Australian Educational Researcher* published 201 articles between 1997 and 2006, of which only 4 related to teacher leadership. Retallick, Groundwater-Smith and Clancy (1999) looked at enhancing teacher engagement with workplace learning, while Loughran, Mitchell, Neale and Toussaint (2001) reported on two beginning teachers who undertook important leadership roles and became important sources of innovation for colleagues. Thomas (2005) examined policy documents and the effect that teachers have on their development, and concluded that teachers "have been 'taken out of the equation' in relation to education policy decision-making" (p. 45). Finally, Metcalf and Game (2006) researched the role played by teacher enthusiasm in their effectiveness as teachers and leaders. None of these articles contained Queensland data, and none closely examined teachers' in-class leadership.

Leading and Managing published 171 articles between 1997 and 2006, of which only 16 were connected with teacher leadership. These articles generally discussed middle management (Cranston, 2006; Deece, 2003; White & Rosenfeld, 2003), trust in leadership (Bishop, 1999), collegiality (Jarzabkowski, 2000), teacher efficacy (Mawhinney, Haas, & Wood, 2005),

moral community development (McGahey, 2000), the changing role of the head (Morgan, 2001), pedagogy (Lewis, 2006) and directions in educational leadership (Gurr, 2003). More specifically, six of the 16 articles appeared in Volume 10, number 2, (edited by Frank Crowther) which was devoted to teacher leadership. In these articles, Harris (2004b) reviewed the literature predominantly reflecting distributed leadership as a tool to analyse leadership activity, and highlighted the overlap between distributed leadership and teacher leadership without going into detail about the latter. Durrant (2004) outlined the power and potential for teacher leadership to influence school improvement. Youitt (2004) suggested that leadership is becoming thought of as organisational behaviour, seen as a process rather than a role, and is instrumental in school reform. Katyal and Evers (2004) reported on relationships between teacher and students that influence the learning process. Hipp (2004) conducted research into how teachers and principals were involved in the development of professional learning communities. Finally, Frost (2004) conducted a case study in an underachieving school where a team approach to leadership was used to build capacity for school improvement. In the editorial for this journal volume, Crowther (2004) concluded that “teacher leaders come in all shapes and sizes and they manifest a range of personality types and styles of organisation and management. [Further]...we can’t predict in advance of a successful innovative activity who will emerge during the course of the innovation as teacher leaders and there exists no formula to describe the personal qualities of those professionals” (p. iii).

Journal of Educational Administration published 313 articles between 1997 and 2006, of which 10 refer to teacher leadership in some way. These articles reported on teacher and principal stress (Allison, 1997; McCormick, 1997; Conley & Woosley, 2000), motivation (Barnett & McCormick, 2003), efficacy (Adams & Forsyth, 2006), teacher role satisfaction (Dinham & Scott, 1998, 2000; Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2004), teacher-principal

relationships (Moye, Henkin, & Egley, 2005) and finally, Crowther's (1997) article that reports on teacher leaders in the classroom.

In short, of 911 articles published in the 4 major educational journals in Australia in the ten years between 1997 and 2006, only 33 articles, or less than 4%, involve the concept of teacher leadership. Most of the 33 articles simply report on issues that impact on teacher leadership, and mostly linked teacher leadership with formal, administrative roles. For example, Youitt (2004) notes that "Teacher leaders through their administrative roles act as department heads, leading or senior teachers, school union representatives, school council members, year level coordinators, and/or members of a range of school-related committees" (p.36). Meanwhile, there is little reference to the informal, in-class teacher leader whose role is implied rather than described in literature on distributed leadership. The exception here is the work by Crowther and his colleagues (Crowther, 1997). In short, while the literature contains "numerous detailed accounts of teachers' leadership activity" (Harris, 2004b, p. 2), these focus on teacher leaders with formal administrative roles and the teacher's 'voice' in respect to informal, in-class teacher leadership remains silent.

1.4 The Research Problem and Purpose

The researcher came to this study intrigued by the phenomenon of teacher leadership within Anglican schools in South-East Queensland. An initial exploration of the context of Anglican education in South-East Queensland confirmed that both nationally and within the Anglican system, hierarchical understandings of school leadership were being challenged amidst a growing expectation of teacher leadership. However, despite this expectation of teacher leadership there was little in respect to formal policy and resource support for teacher leadership within South-east Queensland Anglican schools. In addition, a review of contemporary research identified a paucity of research in respect to teacher leadership. Moreover, this limited and

restrictive research seemed to link teacher leadership with formal, administrative roles rather than focusing on informal, in-class teacher leadership.

In recognising the limits of both theory and practice in respect to the phenomenon of teacher leadership, the purpose of this study is described in terms of gaining a more informed and sophisticated understanding of teacher leadership in South-East Queensland Anglican schools. Teacher leadership from the perspective of classroom teachers is of particular interest. Such an understanding would not only contribute to development of policy and practice in Anglican schools across South-East Queensland, but also contribute to theoretical developments in the field of education.

1.5 Research Questions

With the basis and purpose of the research problem in mind, the researcher completed a more intensive review of the literature. Here, the intention was to identify relevant research questions by focusing attention on the 'gaps' in the scholarly literature to determine specific areas for further research. This review of the literature confirmed the problematic nature of teacher leadership. In particular, it was noted that the literature lacks a clear conceptualization of teacher leadership. In short, "definitions [of teacher leadership] are slippery, [and] as labels used to describe the work, authority and position of these teachers are not uniform" (Gunter & Fitzgerald, 2007, p. 5). Recognising the challenge posed by this lack of conceptual clarity, this research study focused on finding answers to one major research question:

How do teachers, who are recognised as teacher leaders in South-East Queensland Anglican schools, conceptualise teacher leadership?

In selecting this research question, the researcher was influenced by the seminal work of Fullan (1991) on educational change. Here, Fullan identifies the importance of finding meaning in respect to educational change as well as developing theories around what Fullan labelled “organised commonsense” (p. xii). In short, we have to know what change looks like from the point of the key stakeholders in a change context, “if we are to understand the actions and reactions of individuals...” (p. xi).. If we accept Fullan’s (1991) advice, it would be important to develop a more informed and sophisticated understanding of teacher leadership from the perspective of the major stakeholders: namely, the teachers themselves.

The review of the literature also helped the researcher to identify a number of research sub-questions pertinent to the major research question. Each of these sub-questions focuses attention on a ‘gap’ or issue identified in the literature.

Firstly, this review revealed a wide variety of teacher leadership behaviours: taking principled action, shaping meaning for students and adults, teaching [strategies], team building and initiating change (Crowther et al., 2002; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; and Lambert, 2003). This range of activities confirmed the lack of clarity in respect to the behaviour of teacher leaders, and highlighted the importance of further research into the behaviour of teacher leaders. This precipitated the first of the sub-questions:

Behaviour of teacher leaders – What do they do?

Secondly, the literature offered a variety of reasons for teacher leadership: gaining greater work satisfaction through the application of democratic principles and collegial interaction; implementing school improvement

initiatives leading to quality teaching and learning; and enhancing teacher professionalism and accountability (Beauchum & Denith, 2004; Crowther et al., 2002; Gonzales & Lambert, 2001). More recently, teacher leadership has been associated with new forms of managerialism that paradoxically serve to restrict teacher agency (Fitzgerald & Gunter, 2006; Gunter & Fitzgerald, 2007). Given these claims, it was considered appropriate to focus the second sub-question on the purpose of teacher leadership within this study:

Purpose of teacher leadership – Why do teachers strive for this?

Thirdly, this literature review suggested that teacher leadership provides new and exciting opportunities for teachers. However, research into middle leadership in schools also suggests that work satisfaction is diminished as teachers in formal leadership roles are “swamped by operational matters” (Cranston, 2006, p. 104), and perceive that “their potential contribution to the leadership capacity of their schools is not being fully realised” (p. 91). This finding is significant given that studies of work satisfaction and teacher satisfaction consistently identify the importance of intrinsic rewards in sustaining engagement at work (Beatty, 2007; Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Mulford, 2003). Hence, the third sub-question:

Feelings of teacher leaders – How do they feel about what they do?

Finally, the literature identifies a number of factors that enable and inhibit the effective implementation of teacher leadership in schools. Here, it is recognised that “[teacher] leadership...does not happen in a vacuum” (Gunter & Fitzgerald, 2007, p. 3), and that teacher leadership is supported by the provision of adequate time for professional development. In addition, it is claimed that the presence of positive relationships with the principal and colleagues will support teacher leadership (Muijs & Harris, 2007). The identification of these enabling factors in the literature highlights the

importance of deliberately providing supportive structures and strategies in respect to teacher leadership. This perception is addressed in the fourth sub-question:

Support for teacher leaders – what do they need?

1.6 Theoretical Framework and Design of the Study

This study was situated within the theoretical framework of “symbolic interactionism” (Collins, 2004; Stryker, 2002). In making this methodological choice the researcher was aware of the four dominant schools of symbolic interactionism and the “root images” (Blumer, 1998, p. 6) common to all: the symbolic nature of reality; the social sources of humanness; society as symbolic interaction; the constructive, emergent nature of human conduct; role-making and role taking processes. Collectively, these root images seek to balance the cognitive, emotional and social aspects of human agency, as well as providing a role-making process that is of particular interest to this study on teacher leadership. This theoretical framework is deemed appropriate for studies involving the influence of social interactions on social structures and the individual’s self-identity (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). As a research method, symbolic interactionism is best described as an interpretivist/constructivist persuasion within social research (Charon, 2001). The central principle of symbolic interactionism is that we can understand what is going on only if we understand what the actors themselves believe about their world. The researcher employed this methodology to generate in-depth understanding of a particular situation and the meaning for those involved. This study focused on a ‘bounded system” (Smith, 1978) or ‘integrated system” (Stake, 1995, p. 2) comprising 16 teacher leaders from three South-East Queensland Anglican schools. These teachers were nominated as teacher leaders using a non-probabilistic, purposeful sampling method (Merriam, 1998).

Again, in line with the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism, the design of this study involved two stages of research: the “exploration” stage and an “inspection” stage (Charon, 2004, p. 195). In the Stage One exploration, the researcher used a version of an “Experience Sampling Method” (Kubey & Csikszentimihalyi, 1981) that relied on mobile phone technology. Here, the intention was to gain an overview of ‘what is going on around here’, leading to the identification of specific issues for further inspection in Stage Two. Focus group interviews in Stage Two allowed the researcher to “uncover the complexity of layers that shape thinking...[and reflect]...life experiences” (Madriz, 2003, p. 383). In the course of these two stages of data collection, the researcher used a “three-step iterative process” (Neuman, 2006, p. 160) to analyse and interpret the data. The first step of analysis and interpretation involved learning about the research situation by focusing on the meaning coming from the participants themselves. The second step involved the generation of significant themes, and the final third step required the researcher to assign general theoretical significance to the research findings.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it was designed to develop a more informed and sophisticated understanding of teacher leadership in South-East Queensland Anglican Schools. An exploration of the contemporary educational context revealed both a national and systemic concern for teacher leadership. Both nationally and within the Anglican schools system, the phenomenon of teacher leadership was clearly situated within the discourse of quality education. Over time, teacher leadership, professionalism in education and quality teaching and learning were inextricably linked. However, whilst there is a growing expectation of teacher leadership in Anglican schools, there was little in respect to formal policy and resource support for teacher leadership within South-East Queensland

Anglican schools. Consequently, it is anticipated that this research will point to new policy and practice in respect to teacher leadership within South-East Queensland Anglican schools and extensionally to other Anglican schools.

The paucity of research in respect to teacher leadership makes this study significant. The literature identifies both formal, out-of class teacher leadership and informal, in-class teacher leadership (Rinn, 2003, p. 25). Moreover, while the literature contains “numerous detailed accounts of teachers’ leadership activity” (Harris, 2004b, p. 2), this writing tends to link teacher leadership with formal administrative roles rather than the informal, in-class teacher leadership. Thus, the ‘voice’ of the classroom teacher in relation to informal, in-class teacher leadership remains silent. This study of teacher leadership in South-East Queensland Anglican schools provides an opportunity to further the theory of teacher leadership by offering an in-depth account of this phenomenon to the broader educational community.

1.8 Structure of the Thesis

Whilst Chapter One has provided a succinct overview of the key elements of this study, the following chapters provide a more detailed account of the ‘learning journey’ undertaken by the researcher.

Chapter Two: Literature Review examines the literature in respect to educational change, professionalism in education, educational leadership and teacher leadership. This chapter reveals the impulses supporting new directions in teacher leadership as well as the complexity of the phenomenon. Within this study, this review of the literature served to clarify the research problem and identify the research questions and sub-questions. This review also helps the researcher to situate the study within an appropriate theoretical framework and explore various methodological choices in the design of the study. Finally, by providing a helpful conceptual

framework, this literature review allows the researcher to assign theoretical significance to the research data.

Chapter Three: The Theoretical Framework situates this study within the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism. In particular, this chapter describes the “root images” (Blumer, 1998, p. 6) of symbolic interactionism and justifies this epistemological choice within this study. This account of symbolic interactionism proves to be useful as the researcher begins the design of the study and, again, during the latter stages of interpretation of the data.

Chapter Four: Design of the Research outlines the approach taken in this study. In particular, this chapter considers symbolic interactionism as a research method. This chapter also outlines the two research stages in this study (ie. exploration and inspection) and details the various moments of data collection, analysis and interpretation within these two stages. The decision to engage a three-step iterative process of interpretation is also explained.

Chapter Five: Presentation and Analysis of Data seeks to display and analyse the data collected within this study. This presentation and analysis takes into account the two research stages of exploration and inspection, and follows the first- and second-order interpretation of the data to generate themes from each of the research sub-questions in response to the research question.

Chapter Six: Discussion of Findings presents a discussion of the findings of the study following a third order interpretation of the data. This third-order interpretation assigns theoretical significance to the findings, and allows the

researcher to proffer a number of assertions in response to the research question.

Chapter 7: Review and Conclusions provides an overview of the study and discusses the key findings in respect to the research question and sub-questions. Recognising these findings, the researcher is able to make a number of assertions in respect to teacher leadership in South-East Queensland Anglican schools and a series of recommendations follow. Finally, this chapter acknowledges the limitations of this study and identifies areas for further research.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter One, the researcher came to this study intrigued by the phenomenon of teacher leadership within Anglican schools in South-East Queensland. An initial exploration of the context of Anglican education in South-East Queensland confirmed, despite the growing expectation of teacher leadership, there was little in respect to formal policy and resource support for teacher leadership within South-East Queensland Anglican schools. In addition, there is a paucity of research to guide educational change in this area. Recognising the limits of both theory and practice in respect to the phenomenon of teacher leadership, the purpose of this study is described in terms of gaining a more informed and sophisticated understanding of teacher leadership in South-East Queensland Anglican schools. It is anticipated that such an understanding will not only contribute to development of policy and practice in the Anglican schools sector in South-East Queensland, but also contribute to further theoretical developments in the field of education.

With the research problem in mind, and accepting the advice of Hart (1998), the researcher embarked on a review of the literature with the intention of clarifying the research questions that would ultimately guide the various moments of data collection, analysis and interpretation. In general, this review of the literature sought to fulfil the four goals of a literature review:

1. To demonstrate a familiarity with a body of knowledge and establish credibility;
2. To show the path of prior research and how a current project is linked to it;
3. To integrate and summarise what is known in an area; and,

4. To learn from others and stimulate new ideas (Neuman, 2000, p. 111).

In particular, this review of the literature further clarified the research question and sub-questions that will eventually inform the design of this research study. Moreover, this account of the literature identified useful themes and categories as the researcher attempted, in the latter part of the study, to assign theoretical significance to the research findings.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

This review of the literature is organised according to a conceptual framework (Figure 2.1) that recognises that educational change has influenced, and has, in turn, been influenced by the challenging discourse of professionalism in education and theoretical developments of educational leadership. Within each of these spheres, teacher leadership is highlighted as a central factor in enhancing education and learning outcomes for students.

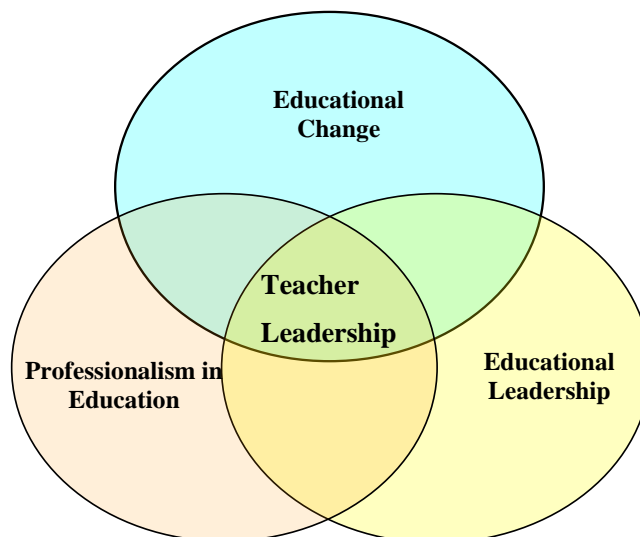


Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework guiding literature review

Thus, this review of the literature is primarily concerned with the conceptualisation of teacher leadership. Initially teacher leadership is situated within key theoretical developments relating to educational change, professionalism in education and educational leadership. This choice of literature reflects claims in the literature that:

Shared decision-making and teacher professionalisation are key elements of many school-restructuring plans. Both elements require teachers to routinely exercise more leadership outside the classroom than traditionally has been required of them. So facilitating the development of teacher leadership has become an important part of the role of those in formal school leadership positions (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbech, 1999, p. 115).

Guided by this conceptual framework, the literature review is divided into four sections: educational change; professionalism in education; educational leadership; and teacher leadership. This chapter concludes by identifying the research questions while pointing to an appropriate theoretical framework to guide methodological choices and design decisions for this research study. Figure 2.2 provides an overview of the structure of the literature review.

2.1	Introduction
2.2	Conceptual Framework
2.3	Educational Change
2.4	Professionalism in Education
2.5	Educational Leadership
2.6	Teacher Leadership

Figure 2.2: Overview of the organisation of the literature review.

2.3 Educational Change

The concept of educational change has been at the forefront of educational theory and practice for the past fifty years. This is hardly surprising given that “No century in human history has experienced so many social transformations and such radical ones as the twentieth century” (Drucker, 1995, p. 185). Such socio-cultural change has challenged scholars to advance new organisational forms and approaches to leadership, and to support their view of organisations as “microsystems of the larger society” (Kofman & Senge, 1993, p. 17). For over fifty years there has been a call for educational change, significant reform efforts in teaching and learning, improved work conditions of teachers, and a more involved, inclusive school administration (Lieberman, 2005; Miles, 1998).

An understanding of the history of educational change over the last fifty years provides an appreciation of the foundations of this contemporary theoretical development. Miles (1998) makes this point by clearly stating that, “effective school change efforts today need a conceptual base in work that’s gone before. The problem is that some current ideas about change in schools are, to put it charitably, poorly [historically] rooted” (p. 37). Consequently, this section reviews the literature of historical development of educational change before exploring emergent theories in this field.

Over time, the literature identifies a series of distinct phases relevant to educational change (Lieberman, 2005; Miles, 1998; Fullan, 1998). It seems, with every new decade, researchers identified the ‘failure’ of previous educational theories and were keen to offer alternative perspectives. Generally, the 1960s was a period of wholesale knowledge driven innovations stimulated by a Cold War dominated by a striving for supremacy in technology, science and weaponry. Within this adoption phase, policy makers tended to disregard contextual issues by offering generic programs

and heavily relied on 'top down', linear approaches to change management (Hopkins, 1997). However, before long, researchers expressed concern for what was happening. For example, Miles (1964) argued that:

A very wide variety of strategies for creating and controlling educational change is being employed - polemical, manipulative, technology, prestige-based, experimental, moralistic – with varying degrees of success. But, the dominant focus...tends to be on the *content* of the desired changes, rather than on the features and consequences of the *change processes* (p. 2).

By the 1970s, the phase of 'adoption' of innovations was widely viewed as a failure (Fullan, 1998) and there was new concern about implementation and the change process. It was during this "implementation phase" (Lieberman, 2005, p. 5) that researchers strongly argued that change occurs "through the steady development of individual users' capacities to play active roles" (Fullan, 1998, p. 218). Moreover, the term "supported implementation" (Miles, 1998, p. 39) became fashionable, and the importance of networking was recognised as a mechanism for teachers' support in change situations (Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996).

A sharp reduction in government spending on education in a time of international economic recession, saw a new phase of educational change in the decade of the 1980s (Istance, 2001; Vongalis-Macrow, 2006). Within this economic context, theorists searched for new cost-efficient ways of achieving educational change and, subsequently, identified the importance of meaning-making within the implementation process. At this point, Fullan (1982) argued that:

We have to know what change looks like from the point of view of the individual teacher, student, parent and administrator, if we are to

understand the actions and reactions of each; and if we are to comprehend the big picture, we must combine the aggregate knowledge of these individual situations with an understanding of organisations and interorganisational factors which influence the process of change as government departments, intermediate agencies, universities, teacher federations, school systems and schools interact (p. ix).

In the 1990s, the combination of individual and organisational factors with respect to educational change, was widely embraced as theorists focused on building “change capacity” (Fullan, 1998, p. 221) in schools and school systems. Influenced by new insights into chaos theory in mathematics and physics, theorists gained a new appreciation of the dynamic complexity of the change process; “change is non-linear and systems are not all that coherent” (Fullan, 2005b, p. 212). Moreover, developments in psychology and organisational theory resulted in a new awareness of the importance of moral purpose in change: when moral purpose is at the forefront, meaning and purpose for change is established, leading to an enhanced capacity for change (Fullan, 2005a).

In the change capacity decade of the 1990s, these new ideas “clicked together” (Fullan, 1998, p. 222) and, consequently, there was a new emphasis on inner and outer learning capacities. For example, Fullan (1993), early in this decade, describes the individual and the group in the learning organisation and learning society, grappling with the dilemmas of managing change by seeking to make a difference in the lives of their students and colleagues as well as in their own lives. Later, extending this thought, Fullan (1996) identifies the importance of starting the change process, with inner learning leading to self-knowledge, before attempting to make connection within the group and organisation through outer learning. Summarising these developments, he argues that:

...individual and organisational development is at the heart of educational reform...individuals must develop their own capacities, they must seek out kindred spirits *and* they must learn from those that disagree with them. At the same time, we pursued the new frontier of the role of emotion and hope with the vicissitudes of change. It is by the proactive action of these moral agents working against the grain that 'systems' have any chance of transforming for the good (Fullan, 1998, p. 224).

Given this theoretical development around the issue of educational change, there was a strong argument for the teaching profession itself to undergo fundamental reform by the late 1990s (Fullan, 1997, 1998; Hargreaves, Earl, & Ryan, 1996). "The fundamental problem with educational reform is that the teaching profession itself has not yet undergone the changes necessary to put it at the forefront of educational development" (Fullan & Watson, 1997, pp. 6-7). In other words, the "teaching profession is yet to come of age" (Fullan, 1998, p. 226). Here, it is acknowledged that educators who are "responsible for initiating and implementing change have limited understanding of the forces bearing down on their schools and do not really know how to respond" (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 289). Moreover, there is "virtually no time, resources, and other supports built into [the] learning of new roles" (Fullan, 1998, p. 218); hence teachers had little opportunity to understand the changes and positively engage in the change agency. This situation is problematic given that theorists continue to argue that "reform should increasingly be based less on 'informed prescription' by Government, a feature of reform efforts in the 1990s, and more on the 'informed professional judgement' of teachers" (Barber, 2001, p. 153).

In summary, Fullan (2005c) and others have identified educational change as a dynamic and complex process that relied on individual and group meaning-making and capacity-building within the organisation, whilst

developing strong relationships with the external environment. Reflecting on the lessons of educational change, Fullan (2005b) claims that “You cannot interrelate implementation, meaning and capacity without coming to the realization that the teaching profession must be different from the past, and the schools as we know them must be so transformed that they probably won’t be recognizable” (p. 227). With this thought in mind, it is interesting to turn to the discourse in literature regarding professionalism in education.

2.4 Professionalism in Education

The question about whether teaching is a profession and whether teachers are professionals has been around for some time (Grundy, 1989; O’Donnell, 1999; Senate Employment, Education and Training Committee, 1998). Consequently:

In Australia, many employers of teachers, government bureaucrats, and members of the public deny teachers full professional status because they have a perception that teachers do not control the standards of practice of their occupation. Quite recently, a prominent spokesman [sic] for employers in the independent schools sector in New South Wales remarked that he did not consider teachers to be professionals. Teachers, he said, were technicians who were good at implementing curricula and following practices and policies that are determined by others (O’Donnell, 2001, p. 85).

It seems that for most of the history of Australian education, teachers have acted as ‘technicians’ who are responsible for implementing the decisions of others. “With the establishment of Education Departments, as both the major provider of schools and the employer of teachers in the 1870s, teachers’ work, and to a large extent their lives, became minutely regulated” (Vick, 2001, p. 68). Thus, the teachers were cast as “regulated servants” (p. 68) or

the “obedient technocrat” (Woodhead, 2000, p. 16). In Australia, Education Departments insisted on the need for tight regulation “for the sake of uniformity. If we allow teachers to come up with their own ideal of what is required, there would be a state of confusion” (Senate Committee, 1881, p. 1077 as cited in Vick, 2001, p. 68).

However, by the late 1980s and into the 1990s, there was a growing appreciation of the interrelationship between teacher professionalism, quality teaching and quality learning. For example, at this time, Denmark (1985) and Preston (1996) posited that granting full professional status to teachers would bring about positive changes in teaching practices and improved learning outcomes for schools. Later, Ramsey (2000), referring to research that linked teacher professionalism with student learning, argues that: “a professional culture...results in better pedagogy, in which decisions are based on a guided philosophy about teaching and learning...and a thoughtful sensitivity to the needs of students” (p. 19). Thus, in the new century, there was a distinct move away from teachers as “regulated servants” (Vick, 2001, p. 68) or “obedient technocrat[s]” (Woodhead, 2000, p. 16). Instead, it is argued that “teachers deserve to have their professionalism recognised and be given power and responsibility for determining and guarding their profession’s standards. By treating teachers as autonomous professionals, the ultimate goal of education – the improvement in learning for students - will be achieved” (O’Donnell, 2001, p. 92).

In line with this new appreciation of teacher professionalism, there are strong arguments presented in the literature for a greater emphasis on self-regulation of the teaching profession through registration, accreditation and certification (O’Donnell, 2001). However, whilst there is general support for self-regulatory approaches to teacher professionalism in the literature, there is concern that these measures do not go far enough. Preston (1996), whilst

recognising teacher registration, accreditation and certification as useful first steps in enhancing teacher professionalism, also links teacher professionalism with the capability of professional judgement:

For school teachers, the need for professional judgements arises from the complex diversity of students, objectives, contexts and teachers themselves, which means that there can be no pre-determined 'one-right answer' and that rule-based application of knowledge, technique and materials, however sophisticated, is insufficient. Thus, judgement is constantly required. That judgement is 'professional' (rather than the judgement of the reasonable layperson) because effective teaching requires the application of high-level professional qualities (pp. 248-249).

Extending this thought, Sachs (2003) argues that "New times, [and] different challenges combined with conditions of uncertainty and ambiguity, require alternative ways of thinking about and engaging in the work of teaching" (p. 12). Here, Sachs suggests that an alternative view of teacher professionalism is founded upon five principles: "learning, participation, collaboration, cooperation and activism" (p. 35). Within Sachs' broader understanding of activist professionalism, educational leadership is not deemed to be the sole prerogative of those with positional authority. Whilst the leadership of "the senior person in the school was important...it was the intellectual leadership and often the courage demonstrated by individuals and groups that provide the motivation for other staff members to take risks and open up their classrooms for outside scrutiny" (p. 118). In particular, it is important that teachers who are often constrained by external policy regulation have "the authority to act" (p. 118).

In presenting this thought, Sachs accepts the argument advanced by Currie, Davey, and Grant (1996) that teachers should have:

...authority to implement a clear intellectual vision, for the learning of all students is a central requirement for school organisational capacity. When school action is constrained by external regulation, it is difficult for staff to feel a sense of ownership or collective responsibility for the school's success. Schools most able to build a professional community experienced high levels of [teacher] autonomy to act and influence their work in schools (p. 70).

This understanding of activist professionalism seems consonant with a growing appreciation of teacher leadership within the literature. Even a cursory reading of the educational literature leads to the conclusion that the way the teaching profession is currently viewed is ill-founded and out-of-date. While the challenges confronting schools worldwide are greater than before, and many teachers possess capabilities, talents and formal credentials more sophisticated than ever before, the responsibility or authority accorded teachers has not grown or significantly changed in decades (Andrews, Crowther, Hann, & McMaster, 2002, p. 24).

Thus, theorists argue that a new paradigm of the teaching profession is needed. This should reflect activist professionalism that involves alternate ways of thinking and engaging in teaching and encourages risk taking while providing the authority to act (Sachs, 2003). The new paradigm should recognise both the capacity of the profession to provide desperately needed school revitalisation, as well as the striking potential of teachers to provide new forms of leadership in schools and communities (Crowther et al., 2002).

With this argument in mind, it is appropriate to explore the 'fit' between new understandings of professionalism in education, and developments in respect to the theory and practice of educational leadership.

2.5 Educational Leadership

To understand developments in the theory and practice of educational leadership, it is necessary to review literature around the issues of postindustrial organisation and leadership. Within a context of socio-cultural change, theorists advance new organisational forms and approaches to leadership to respond to contemporary challenges of the postindustrial era. Developments such as globalisation, ground-breaking technologies, the information explosion, and the increasing diversity of our population have coalesced to “create a reality that is messy and ambiguous rather than orderly and predictable” (Shriberg, Shriberg & Lloyd, 2002, p. 212). Consequently, old organisational forms of bureaucracy that assume order and predictability are disappearing and being replaced by an emerging “adhocracy” (p. 212) that allows for creativity and flexibility. This organisational adhocracy would see hierarchical specialisation of labour replaced by transient units; sharply defined roles replaced by more flexible, temporary roles; chain of command replaced by participative decision making; vertical power replaced by horizontal power; predictable environment replaced by accelerating change and innovation; slow communication replaced by fast and lateral communication; self-interest replaced by social responsibility; and emphasis on efficiency replaced by emphasis on people.

Continuous learning has also been identified as a key function of this new adhocracy (Senge, Roberts, Ross, Smith, & Kleiner, 1994). The organisation needs to be continuously learning in order to master the new knowledge that will enable it to motivate, innovate, evaluate, solve problems and maintain productivity. With constant change endemic in the post-industrial society, the only way to survive is as a learning organisation: “to continually adapt, learn, to be change-responsive, to reinvent the reality and the future, to transform” (Rolls, 1995, p. 102). Extending this thought, theorists also recommend a model of organisation that is the embodiment of a community, by being based on a shared purpose that calls on the higher aspirations of all involved

(Bolman & Deal, 2003).

To support new organisational forms, organisational theorists have advanced a postindustrial understanding of leadership. For much of the 20th Century, leadership was associated with traditional forms of industrial leadership (Shriberg et al., 2002). In short, this paradigm “saw leadership as the property of the individual; considered leadership primarily in the context of the formal group and organisations, and, equated concepts of management and leadership” (p. 203). In this model, leaders exercise “power and influence through controlling the rewards in an organisation, rewards they can offer or withhold from the workforce” (Bottery, 2004, p. 16).

However, by the 1970s, this understanding of industrial leadership was challenged as theorists became aware that the reality of leadership in postindustrial society did not readily relate to these assertions. Initially, Greenleaf (1977) questioned the abuse of power and authority in the modern organisation and recommended “servant leadership” based on the notions of cooperation and support. Parallel to this work by Greenleaf, Burns (1978) recommended “transformational leadership” to address the issue of change. Here, Burns argues that transformational leaders influence others with their charisma and inspirational motivation, challenge their followers to be creative in problem solving, and provide a learning environment tailored to individual needs. Twenty years on, Rost (1991), again recognising the emergent postindustrial society and new organisational theories, advanced a postindustrial paradigm of leadership. This new theory describes leadership as “an influencing relationship among leaders and their collaborators who intend changes that reflect mutual purposes” (p. 7). Here leadership is based on influence rather than positional authority, and is characterised by collaboration and service rather than individualism and self-interest. Such leadership is deemed to promote goals that represent the aspirations of both the leader and his or her followers, and not just the wishes of the leader.

Since this seminal work by Rost, other theorists have developed this paradigm of postindustrial leadership further, by advocating a more relational approach to leadership. Aktouf (1992) raises the importance of leaders contributing to a “more human organisation” by restoring the meaning of work through collaborative decision-making. Wheatley (1992), reading leadership through the lens of the new science of quantum physics, calls for participatory leadership where “the quantum realm speaks emphatically to the role of participation, even to its impact on creating reality” (p. 143). Bensimon and Neumann (1993) also advance collaborative leadership as a response to the information-rich and complex environment of the twenty-first century. Thus, a new paradigm of leadership is emerging that “must be understood as a relationship, a collaborative process, a community of believers pursuing a transformational cause” (Shriberg et al., 2002, p. 217).

Educational reform literature reflects these theoretical developments in organisational theory and leadership. In the 1980s, the emergent adhocracy was reflected in the literature on the “self-managing school” (Caldwell & Spinks, 1988). Here, there was strong argument for decentralising a significant amount of authority and responsibility so schools could make their own decisions related to the allocation of resources and daily operation. Later, the notion of the learning organisation was applied to schools, with theorists such as Senge et al. (2000), advancing “schools that learn”:

It is becoming clear that schools can be re-created, made vital, and sustainably renewed not by fiat or command and not by regulation, but by taking a *learning orientation*. This means everyone in the system expressing their aspirations, building up their awareness, and developing their capabilities together (p. 5).

Parallel to this application of organisational theory to schools as organisations, scholars have addressed the issue of educational leadership

in the postindustrial context. For example, the term transformational leadership has been found in the educational literature since the 1980s (eg. Gronn, 1996; Kendrik, 1988; Leithwood, 1994). Moreover, by 1995, there was a substantial body of research seeking to identify the dimensions of transformational leadership in schools (Leithwood, Tomlinson, & Genge, 1996). Consequently, it was argued that “transformational leadership” comes closest to offering a “comprehensive approach to leadership that will help those in, and served by, current and future schools” (Leithwood et al., 1999, p. 21). Since the theory of transformational leadership was applied to educational leadership, there have been further developments that reflect more postindustrial approaches to leadership. These developments include new understanding of instructive leadership (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985), moral leadership (Bennis & Rhodes, 2006; Duignan & Macpherson, 1993), participative leadership (Hayes, 1995), cultural leadership (Dimmock & Walker, 2005; Harris, Moran, & Moran, 2004), managerial leadership (Myers & Murphy, 1995), contingent leadership (Leithwood, 1995) and inner leadership (Koestenbaum, 2002).

Drawing on these accounts of postindustrial educational leadership, Starratt (2003) links educational administration within the “cultivation of meaning, community and responsibility”:

The agricultural metaphor of *cultivation* suggests the work of the gardener: planting, fertilizing, weeding, watering, pruning...using the phrase *cultivating of meaning* enables me to focus on the outcome of teaching and learning, which is the construction of meaning...the phrase *cultivating community* [allows] exploring an education in a pluralistic sociality, collaborative civility, and participative self-governance...*cultivating responsibility* enables me to speak of both the neglected issues of social justice in the education of the poor and

children from minority groups, as well as to the education of the young in moral values of justice, care and critique (pp. 11-12).

In summary, reflecting on theoretical developments in organisational theory and postindustrial leadership, Leithwood et al. (1999) highlight the importance of those in formal school leadership positions taking deliberate steps to develop teacher leadership:

Shared decision-making and teacher professionalisation are key elements of many school restructuring plans. Both elements require teachers to routinely exercise more leadership outside the classroom than traditionally has been required of them. So facilitating the development of teacher leadership has become an important part of the role of those in formal school leadership positions (p. 115).

Thus, in making this claim, Leithwood and colleagues neatly bring together theoretical developments in educational change, professionalism in education and educational leadership. Moreover, within this research study such claims suggest the need for a closer review of the discourse of teacher leadership found in the literature.

2.6 Teacher Leadership

The idea of teacher leadership has been around for some time, and its potential with respect to educational change and enhancing teacher professionalism has been identified. Seminal writing by Lieberman and her colleagues links teacher leadership to “restructuring schools and professionalising teachers” (Lieberman, Saxl, & Miles, 1988, p.148). Since this early account, others (Ackerman, Moller, & Katzenmeyer, 1995; Harris, &

Muijs, 2003; Pellicer & Anderson, 1995) have extended this thought by confirming the importance of teacher leadership in the context of educational change. Moreover, notions of teacher leadership are woven throughout discussions of teacher professionalism (Little, 1998), seeking to increase the status and rewards for teaching, promote teaching excellence through continuous improvement, validate teacher knowledge about effective educational practices, and to increase teacher participation in decision making (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Of interest to this research study, a substantial research effort within Australia has followed international research in teacher leadership. For example, the Australian research study *Teachers as Leaders Research Project* (Crowther et al., 2002), was conducted in the period 1996 – 2000. This study involved three phases. In phase one, the research team investigated “ordinary teachers doing extraordinary things” (p. 16); their remarkable impact on their schools and communities won the acclaim of principals and colleagues. The findings from this initial phase enabled the researchers to develop a “Teachers as Leaders Framework” (p. 4). Phase two further explored the issue of teacher leadership in successful schools, with documented evidence of significant student outcomes. The findings from this phase enabled the research team to conceptualise school leadership as “parallel leadership” (p. 38). Phase three focused on the principal’s role in nurturing teacher leadership as a basis for school revitalisation.

Thus, national and international research studies have been substantial, and theoretical developments in respect to conceptualising teacher leadership are of interest. However, a further review of the literature soon reveals the confusion that surrounds the notion of teacher leadership. This confusion is due in part to the wide range of understandings about teacher leadership found in the literature.

Initially, it seems that teacher leadership was associated with teachers who assume formal 'positional' leadership roles such as head of department or senior teacher. For example, the literature review of teacher leadership conducted by Smylie (1997) focused only on teachers who assume these formal 'positional' leadership roles. These teachers either leave the classroom to conduct their leadership, or receive a time release and/or additional remuneration to complete their extra responsibilities. Such literature associated with teachers assuming formal leadership roles concludes that:

- Teachers aspire to and assume new leadership roles in order to promote school improvement or help colleagues solve problems of practice;
- Teachers are likely to support these new roles when they consider them opportunities for professional growth and when they see connections to their classroom and their work with students;
- Teacher leaders generally approach their new roles collaboratively, seeking to work as partners with other teachers, not as superiors;
- New relationships with administrators are approached cautiously, mindful of their new responsibilities, but also mindful of administrators' powers and prerogatives;
- There are positive affective outcomes of teacher leadership among teachers who assume these new roles, including professional learning and development. New teacher leadership roles alter authority relationships in schools and increase the amount of teachers' influence over curricular, instructional and administrative matters (p. 574).

It is worth remembering that these conclusions pertain to teachers assuming formal, 'positional' leadership roles, rather than teacher leaders who remain

in the classroom. In recent times, theorists have nominated educational leadership, including that of the classroom teacher, as “a shared and collective endeavour that can engage the many rather than the few” (Harris & Muijs, 2003, p. 2). Consequently, there has been a redistribution of power and a realignment of authority within some schools, resulting in educational leadership becoming more fluid thus allowing new possibilities for classroom teachers to become teacher leaders (Harris & Muijs, 2003; Muijs & Harris, 2007). However, the introduction of site-based management in schools has produced new structural arrangements that once relied on teachers exercising formal, ‘positional’ leadership roles. Here, the teacher leader is positioned as a “middle leader” who acts as a “conduit between senior leaders and the classroom teachers” (Gunter & Fitzgerald, 2007, p. 4).

Thus, a more sophisticated understanding of teacher leadership is emerging, where “teacher leadership is conceptualised as a set of behaviours and practices that are undertaken collectively...(and involve) relationships and connections among individuals within a school” (Muijs & Harris, 2007, p. 112). In this vein, the differences between in-class and out-of-class teacher leaders are recognised. Here, it has been suggested that “teacher leaders who remain in the class use curriculum and relationships as the vehicle and vision for actions on behalf of work with children...There is an orientation towards children and learning conducted with others” (Rinn, 2003, p. 24). These teachers exhibit behaviours to “influence student or colleague performance within and beyond the walls of the classroom, but without leaving the classroom” (p. 24). In contrast, out-of-class leadership is associated with assigned roles or positions and leadership through an outside-in process (p. 24). Teacher leaders who leave the classroom even for part of the day, tend to see leadership as apart from classroom work or view administrative-like tasks as the primary vehicle for leadership. There is an orientation towards directing professional development or working *over* others as opposed to learning *with* others to empower their leading. They

improve the efficiency and effectiveness of colleagues through presentations and technical routines rather than collegiality and coaching. In short, Rinn (2003) speculates that:

Those who lead from the classroom do so through more informal means –relationships, collaboration and particular actions responding to school contexts. Those on the administrative-like strand lead through formal sets of tasks such as workshops or an established system of positional roles (p. 25).

Further, Rinn summarises the differences between in-class (informal) and out-of-class (formal) teacher leaders in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Distinguishing In-class from Out-of-class teacher leaders

In-class Teacher Leaders	Out-of-class Teacher Leaders
Full time work is in the classroom.	Part time or out of classroom work.
Leadership is defined through teaching and relationships.	Leadership is defined by supervisory tasks apart from teaching.
Leader works among others.	Leader works over others.
Lead through collaboration.	Lead through assigned roles, routines.
Student focus.	Systems focus.
Informal process	More formal process.

[Source: C. H. Rinn (2003), *The artistry of building teacher leadership*, Greensboro, p. 25.]

While this distinction between in-class and out-of-class teacher leadership may be useful, it does not necessarily simplify the concept. Teacher leaders have been identified among other things as “curriculum developers, bid writers, leaders of a school improvement team, mentors of new or less

experienced staff and action researchers with always a strong link to the classroom” (Harris & Muijs, 2003, p. 6). The lack of a clear definition for teacher leadership amongst researchers may be due in part to “the expansive territory encompassed under the umbrella term teacher leadership” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 260). Ways of thinking about teacher leadership have evolved over time. Silva, Gimbert, and Nolan (2000) describe this evolution in three waves. In the first wave, teachers served in formal roles (eg. head of department), given responsibility for increasing school operations efficiency. In the second wave, teachers were appointed to roles such as curriculum leaders and mentors of new teachers, in a bid to capitalise on teachers’ instructional expertise. The third wave recognises the central role of teachers in school reculturing, involving teachers as leaders both within and outside their classrooms (Ash & Persall, 2000).

In light of this conceptual confusion, it seems appropriate to look further into the activity of teacher leaders to establish what they do and how they work with their colleagues. For the most part, the literature recognises that teachers in leadership positions in schools exhibit distinctive leadership behaviours. Moreover, the purpose of teacher leadership is associated with notions of school improvement as well as meeting the emotional needs of teachers. In addition, the literature reveals a number of factors that support and inhibit the work of teacher leaders.

2.6.1 Teacher leadership behaviour

The literature describes teacher leadership behaviour and behavioural traits in a number of different ways. For example, Rinn (2003) describes teacher leader behaviour in terms of a continuum “from helper, to initiator, to collaborator, to leader capable of motivating others” (p. 41). In a similar vein, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) suggest that “teachers who are leaders lead

within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influence others towards improved educational practice” (p. 5). Similarly, Lambert (2003) defines teacher leaders as “those whose dreams of making a difference have either been kept alive or have been reawakened by engaging with colleagues and working within a professional culture” (p. 33). Those whose dreams have been kept alive are “reflective, inquisitive, focused on improving their craft, and action-oriented; they accept responsibility for student learning and have a strong sense of self. In particular, they are open to learning, and understand the three dimensions of learning in schools: student learning, the learning of colleagues, and learning of their own” (p. 33).

More specifically, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) argue that teacher leaders model participation, build habits of mind, and support people in becoming apprentices to their own learning. Yet again, Stone, Horejs, and Lomas (1997), Gonzales and Lambert (2001) as well as Rinn (2003) describe teacher leaders as competent, credible and approachable, and able to build positive interpersonal relationships. Here, teacher leaders build teams and listen respectfully to each other (Lambert, 2003; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). They engage colleagues in conversations about their practice (Muijs & Harris, 2007) to help them better understand their motivations and commitments to their students (Lieberman 2005). By working collaboratively (Conley & Muncey, 1999; Durrant, 2004) and planning together, groups of teachers and their assistants are able to implement new initiatives and coordinate curriculum across disciplines and year levels without having to seek prior approval of the principal. In fact, teacher leaders report principals seeking out their opinions on the most important school matters (Beachum & Dentith, 2004; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). “Teacher leaders can influence others, positively or negatively, toward accepting a change or a new idea” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 101). They use listening and communication skills to increase their proficiency in working with different leadership

scenarios. Finally, teacher leaders view leadership as they view their teaching: “creating a circle of people who share and learn from each other” (Lieberman , 2005, p. 155).

Thus, it appears that teacher leaders demonstrate behaviour in five domains. They:

- (i) Operate politically across all systems within schools (Silva et al., 2000);
- (ii) Nurture relationships by supporting the work of their colleagues (Lambert, 2003; Rinn 2003 ;Silva et al., 2000);
- (iii) Engage in professional development (Muijs & Harris, 2007; Silva et al., 2000; Youitt, 2004);
- (iv) Support their colleagues through change (Liebermann, Saxl & Miles, 1988; Lambert 1998; Silva, Gimbert & Nolan, 2000); and
- (v) Challenge the status quo by leading change to improve learning for their students (Durrant, 2004; Hipp, 2004; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Silva et al., 2000; Spillane, Diamond, & Jita, 2003).

Similarly, Australian researchers (Crowther et al., 2002) have identified six broad elements of teacher leadership. Here, teacher leaders:

1. Convey convictions about a better world;
2. Strive for authenticity in their teaching, learning and assessment practices;
3. Facilitate communities of learning through organisation-wide processes;
4. Confront barriers in the school’s culture and structures;
5. Translate ideas into sustainable systems of action; and
6. Nurture a culture of success (pp. 4-5).

While not all teacher leaders demonstrate all six elements at any one time, this research has concluded that teacher leaders will exhibit aspects of the six elements at some stage in their work.

In summary, a distillation of the key concepts advanced by Crowther et al. (2002), Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) and Lambert (2003), suggest a number of key words/phrases that can frame the investigation of teacher leadership behaviour:

- principled action;
- shape meaning for students and adults;
- enhanced quality of community life;
- lead within and beyond the classroom;
- contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders;
- influence others to improve practice;
- focus on improving teaching;
- team building; and
- initiate change.

2.6.2 The purpose of teacher leadership

This review of the literature also found multiple purposes in respect to teacher leadership. For example Conley (1993), summing up the motivations for advocating teacher leadership, included a concern for the application of democratic principles of participation in the workplace, enhancing teacher work satisfaction, increasing teacher professionalism, stimulating organisational change, achieving efficiency and effectiveness, and revitalising teachers through collegial interaction. More recently, “the concept of teacher leadership has become increasingly embedded in the language and practice of educational improvement” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 255).

Here, the emphasis is on “the values of teachers who enhance student outcomes... and ...the power of teaching to create new meaning for the people in schools and communities” (Crowther et al., 2002, p. 10).

Consistently, it is recognised that when passionate about the profession, teacher leaders enjoy the opportunity to work closely with colleagues and discuss classroom activities and curriculum initiatives (Gonzales & Lambert, 2001). Classroom-based teacher leaders see leadership not distinct from teaching, but as part of the cycle and personal evolution towards providing more meaningful learning experiences for students (Gonzales & Lambert, 2001). Effective classroom teachers sense the positive changes they make in the intellectual, socio-emotional, physical, and ethical lives of their students (Bowman, 2004). Commitment to students and a vision of better practice drives teachers to take risks and challenge the status quo (Rinn, 2003). Engaging in practice and a workload beyond that asked of them to benefit their students, underscores the moral core and deep sense of responsibility motivating teacher leaders (Beauchum & Denith, 2004).

To support these claims in the literature, Australian research has identified “the value of teacher(s) [leaders] who enhance student outcomes... and ...the power of teaching to create new meaning for the people in schools and communities” (Crowther et al., 2002, p. 10). “There is growing evidence that for sustained, embedded school improvement, a broad base of active support for change needs to be established” (MacNeill & Cavanagh, 2006, p. 46). In adopting whole school strategies to support change, principals must recruit or call upon change-adept teachers, or those already demonstrating appropriate skills and knowledge. These teacher leaders come in all shapes and sizes, and they manifest a range of personality types and styles of organisation and management (Crowther, 2004).

Thus, the literature suggests that teacher leaders should be encouraged to “assert themselves more frequently and positively to take more of an active role in the daily work of schools. They must be willing to take risks, make assertions, and more soundly value their intuitive notions about teaching and children to impact a wider arena in schools” (Beauchum & Dentith, 2004, p. 284). As an OECD (2002) study *Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers Project* argues, “...conferring professional autonomy to teachers will enhance the attractiveness of the profession as a career choice and will improve the quality of the classroom teaching practice” (p. 8). In this way, teacher leadership not only supports school improvement, but also enhances teacher wellbeing and job satisfaction.

Given the consistency of these claims, it is interesting to note that researchers drawing on research in New Zealand and England have found that “these forms of [teacher] leadership are new forms of managerialism that deliver organisational efficiencies and effectiveness” (Fitzgerald & Gunter, 2006, p. 45). Moreover, they argue that such leadership restricts teacher agency and serves to distract attention away from teaching and learning (Gunter & Fitzgerald, 2007). Appreciating this situation, these researchers raise a critical question – ‘if the purpose and commitment is to enhance and improve outcomes, how might students and their learning, as well as teachers and leaders, be re-positioned and organised to enable learning to be central to all activities?’ In raising this question, Fitzgerald and Gunter are not alone. Starratt (2003) also recognised the monopolisation of leadership for organisational ends, and called for a shift in priority of leadership roles to leadership of learning. In addition, Robinson (2006) calls for “putting back education into educational leadership” (p. 62) and Thompson & Gunter (2006) challenge school authority figures to reconceptualise teacher leadership around the leading of learning to support improved outcomes for both teachers and students.

2.6.3 The emotion of teacher leadership

It seems that scholars have only recently acknowledged the emotional dimension of teaching. As Hargreaves (2000) noted at the turn of the new century, “It is as if teachers think and act; but never really feel” (p. 559). However, within a few years, some were arguing that teachers need to feel a part of, if not in control of, the school improvement process for it to be really effective (Crowther et al., 2002; Eisner, 2000). At the same time, there were claims that teachers tend to have very strong, personal views on how they think they should work (Van Veen & Slegers, 2006). Consequently, “Although educational innovations carry both implicit and explicit assumptions about how teachers should work, these assumptions need not be in keeping with the views of the teachers themselves, and therefore, can invoke strong emotional reactions” (p. 90). Good teaching is said to be charged with positive emotion; good teachers are “emotional, passionate beings who fill their work and their classes with pleasure, creativity, challenge and joy...(they are)...passionate about ideas, learning and their relationships with students... Teachers make heavy emotional investments in these relationships. Their sense of success and satisfaction depends on it” (Hargreaves, 2000, pp. 559-560).

Supporting this point, a study into the emotions of teaching and educational change conducted in Ontario, Canada by Hargreaves (2000), determined that the emotional goals and bonds that teachers had for their students underpinned everything they did; including how they taught, how they planned, and the structures in which they preferred to teach. “The psychic/emotional rewards of teaching fundamentally affected what teachers did as they adjusted their teaching to what they learned about individual students, through conferencing, peer evaluation and other kinds of personal interaction” (p. 563). Later this claim was supported by the findings of a

Dutch study of six secondary school teachers (Van Veen & Slegers, 2006) that also explored how teachers perceive their work, including the emotions they feel within the context of mandated educational change.

Thus, contemporary educational literature argues that engaging teacher leadership behaviour positively impacts on their emotions, as it makes teachers feel good about their practice. The literature argues that “Teacher leaders experience a greater sense of self worth and personal power gained from professional experience, practice and feedback (Rinn, 2003, pp. 39-40). Furthermore, scholars highlight the importance of teacher morale (Hargreaves, 2000; Little, 1995); self efficacy (Beauchum & Dentith, 2004; Rinn, 2003); positive mind set (Little, 1995; Rinn, 2003); self worth (Hargreaves, 2000; Mulford, 2003); love of teaching (Mulford, 2003) and professional autonomy (Hargreaves, 2000) to the emotional lives of teachers.

Despite these claims, there appears to be very little research conducted into the actual feelings of teacher leaders as they go about their daily duties. The exception here is a unique study conducted by Bishay (1996) who investigated teacher motivation and job satisfaction by gathering data from the participants at random times during the day. In particular, participants were asked to complete a survey stating what they were doing, who they were with and how they were feeling as they participated in their regular duties. Subsequent data analysis revealed that “teachers, above all, love to teach” (p 149). Moreover, participants revealed feeling greater satisfaction and better about themselves when teaching, as opposed to performing other duties. Participants also rated their moods as most helpful, most involved, and most stimulated while teaching, as opposed to any other duty.

Further, Australian research (Cranston, 2006; Cranston, Tromans, & Reugebrink, 2004) has also found that teachers in formal, middle-level leadership positions (eg. Deputy Principal, Dean of Study and so on) were “struggling with what could be termed a reconceptualisation of their positions”. In particular, “the struggle grew, in part, from a reflection on what they were doing on a day to day basis in their roles, and what they would prefer to be doing, within the context of a changing principalship, school community and personal expectations and parameters” (Cranston, 2006, p. 91). Participants in these research studies felt “swamped by operational matters” (p. 104) and, consequently, felt that “their personal contribution to the leadership capacity of their schools is not being fully realised” (p. 91). Further research is recommended to help these middle leaders move from “being ‘locked in the middle’ to ‘leading from the middle’, so they develop into genuine leadership players in their schools” (p. 104).

Given the limits of educational research in the area, it is useful to consider the findings of substantive research conducted by Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 2003) into the emotional connection between work satisfaction and self-efficacy. Following numerous studies over many years, Csikszentmihalyi (2003) has concluded:

...in whatever context people feel a deep sense of enjoyment, they describe that experience in very similar terms. Regardless of age, gender, or education, they report the same mental state. What they are actually doing at the time is wildly different – they may be meditating, running a race, playing chess, or performing surgery – but what they feel at that moment is remarkably similar (p. 39).

Continuing this thought, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) labelled this common experience or feeling, “flow” (p. 4), which he defines as “the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the

experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it” (p. 4). This phenomenon, appropriately, is called “flow” because “so many people have used the analogy of being carried away by an outside force, of moving effortlessly with a current of energy, at the moment of highest enjoyment” (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003, p. 39).

Drawing on research, Csikszentmihalyi (2003) argues that this experience of optimal fulfilment and engagement requires eight conditions:

- Goals are clear;
- Feedback is immediate;
- A balance between opportunity and capacity;
- Concentration deepens;
- The present is what matters;
- Control is no problem;
- The sense of time is altered; and
- The loss of ego (pp. 42-56).

Furthermore, every flow activity, regardless of what it was:

...provided a sense of discovery, a creative feeling of transporting the person to a new reality. It pushed the person to higher levels of performance, and led to previously undreamed of states of consciousness. In short, it transformed the self by making it more complex (p. 74).

Figure 2.3 illustrates the growth of complexity through flow. The flow experience occurs when both skills and challenges are high. A typical activity starts at A, with low challenges and skills. If one perseveres, the skills will increase, but not the challenge, and the activity becomes boring (B). At this point, one will have to increase the challenges to return to flow (C). This cycle

is repeated at higher levels of complexity through D and E. In a good flow activity, these cycles can continue almost indefinitely. Once a skill is mastered, greater challenge is sought to maintain the flow experience.

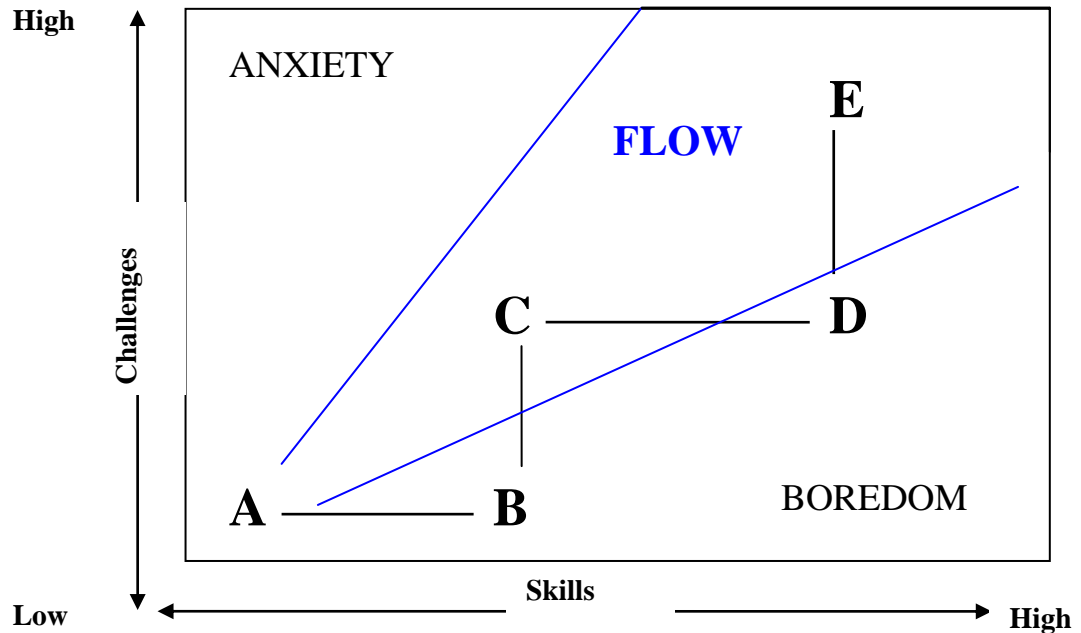


Figure 2.3: Growth of complexity through Flow.

[Source: Figure 1 in Csikszentmihalyi (2003), p. 67]

2.6.4 Factors that support and inhibit teacher leadership

Finally, given the support for teacher leadership in the literature, it is pertinent to consider what other factors support or inhibit teacher leaders. While it is recognised that there are many factors that support or hinder the success of teacher leaders, writers tend to highlight the importance of professional development, time to lead and the relationship with the principal and colleagues.

Professional Development

Within the literature, it is argued that schools that are supportive of teacher leadership encourage teacher leaders to be actively engaged in a range of professional development activities. The research shows that the most effective teacher leaders continuously improve their teaching skills, are involved in school decision making, and are involved in the professional development of others (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). Where a culture of teachers as learners is created, and administrators “support professional development activities consistently and make them part of the regular, ongoing work of teachers” (Steel & Craig, 2006, p. 679), then teacher leadership is enhanced. Thus, teacher leaders need opportunities for continuous professional development in order to develop their role (Harris & Muijs, 2003; Muijs & Harris, 2007). However, such professional development needs to focus “not only on developing teachers’ skills and knowledge, but also on aspects specific to their leadership role” (Harris & Muijs, 2003, p. 17). Skills such as leading workshops, collaborative work, mentoring, teaching adults and action research should be incorporated into professional development programmes to help teachers adapt to their new leadership roles (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001).

Such professional development activities may be formal - workshops, conferences, study groups, visiting other schools, or informal - visiting each other’s classrooms, reading a book related to areas of professional interest, studying and planning with teachers (Ackerman, Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996). However, a combination of formal and informal professional development not only enables teachers to learn collaboratively with colleagues and administrators, but also from each other. Moreover, collaborative action research, participating in decision-making, co-planning, mentoring of new teachers, teaching and learning from student work,

leadership team development and reciprocal team coaching (Lambert, 1998), provide multiple learning opportunities for teacher leaders embedded in authentic daily tasks. This multifaceted approach to professional development is present in schools that demonstrate strong teacher leadership.

Time

Beyond the need for professional development, the literature also identifies the importance of providing time for the development of teacher leadership (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Muijs & Harris, 2007). It is argued that timetable constraints often make it difficult for teacher leaders to find adequate time during regular school hours to take on the extra leadership tasks often associated with teacher leadership. In particular, time to plan together, write curriculum together, talk to each other generally about teaching, and work on problems or new initiatives in the school, are seen as essential for teacher leadership to be most effective (Beauchum & Dentith, 2004). It is also considered important to give teacher leaders time to “sort through their own beliefs, examine new ideas, and determine the gaps between the two” (Ackerman et al., 1996, p. 10). It has been suggested that longer teaching blocks would reduce teacher workload and free up time for greater planning and learning (Darling-Hammond, 1998). Katzenmeyer & Moller (2001) also suggest that “snatching time from a traditional school-day model is only a stopgap for...time-intensive functions... (such as)...professional development, for teacher leaders to engage in collaborative relationships, for extensive planning for high level learning and for performing leadership responsibilities” (p. 108). However, the real issue with time seems to be that “too often, decisions on how time is used in schools are made without involving teachers” (p. 115). Teacher leadership requires a more devolved approach to time management and necessitates shared decision-making processes (Muijs & Harris, 2007; Pellicer & Anderson, 1995). In itself, a time consuming activity.

Relationship with principal

From the literature, it seems that professionally enriching relationships between teachers and administration are very important in the development of teacher leaders. “It is recognised that the nature of leadership is such that it exists because of the principle of reciprocity that underwrites the relationship between leaders and followers” (MacNeill & Cavanagh, 2006, p. 48). Furthermore, “teachers who are treated with respect and offered the chance to examine their own values and beliefs rise to the occasion and lead positive change in their work with colleagues” (Ackerman et al., 1996, p. 10). Thus, engagement and empowerment of teachers is critical to the success of change-implementation processes in schools (MacNeill & Cavanagh, 2006). The resulting positive mind set enables teacher leaders to take charge of change, share ideas, facilitate working relationships, generate enthusiasm for, and satisfaction with work, and experiment with instructional methods (Rinn, 2003). This provides wonderful motivation for many teachers who have a strong sense of their own personal and professional purpose, and feel compelled to change the world for the better (Beachum & Dentith, 2004). In short, when teachers feel their ideas are heard and respected, mutual respect develops between teachers and administrators. These supportive relationships lead to a feeling of “trust and caring for others, along with a strong sense of self-efficacy and high regard for the mission of the school” (Beachum & Dentith, 2004, p. 280).

It is easy to imagine how some principals may feel threatened by the very notion of teacher leadership. Yet if the culture of teaching is to change from one of isolation and professional limitations to one of collaboration and empowerment, it is clear that administrators must change how they view and interact with teachers (Steel & Craig, 2006). Ash and Persall (2000) argue that heads will need to become leaders of leaders, striving to develop a

relationship of trust with staff, and encouraging leadership and autonomy throughout the school. Showing trust and confidence in a teacher's professional judgement is vital for enhancing teacher leadership (Steel & Craig, 2006).

The importance of this relationship is underlined in a comprehensive study involving 28 participants across six schools, where it was noted that teacher leadership often involved the mutual influence between teacher leaders and principals (Anderson, 2004). An earlier study of effective middle school administrators, by Whitaker (1995), determined that principals identified key teacher leaders and involved them in the decision-making process. They also used them in an informal manner. In fact, Whitaker (1995) concluded, "the principal must be able to identify key teacher leaders and use these individuals in the schools change process...Less effective principals in the study were unable to recognize their informal teacher leaders" (p. 77). Listening and valuing the contributions made by teacher leaders can validate teachers in a powerful way and provide them with important professional sustenance (Steel & Craig, 2006). It is anticipated that a supportive principal-teacher relationship will enable a strong, school-wide approach to teaching and learning to develop, which further encourages in-class teacher leadership (Muijs & Harris, 2007). By leading from the centre of the school rather than the top, the principal's power/authority is shared among the teacher leaders (Seashore-Louis, Kruse, & Marks (1996). This may involve providing important feedback to teachers about their teaching practice, encouraging professional dialogue, creating more effective systems and structures for professional collaboration by consciously breaking down the isolation of teachers, and working alongside teachers in their daily activities with students (Steel & Craig, 2006).

This strong relationship between principal and teacher is deemed to be the essence of parallel leadership or 'parallelism' (Crowther et al., 2002): "a process whereby teacher leaders and their principal engage in collective action to build school capacity. Parallel leadership embodies mutual respect, shared purpose, and allowance for individual expression" (p. 38). Teachers and their principals are encouraged to work together closely on improving their schools, and parallel leadership involves principals supporting the work of their teachers. In short, Crowther et al. (2002) outline five important aspects of the principal's role in promoting successful teacher leadership reform in Australian schools: visioning; identity generation (creation of cultural meaning); alignment of organisational elements; distribution of power and leadership (across the school); and external alliances and networking (pp. 50-51).

Relationships with colleagues

The literature also suggests that unless teacher leaders have the support of their colleagues, their effectiveness as leaders is significantly undermined. Hargreaves (1994) suggests that "teacher cultures and the relationships between teachers and their colleagues, are among the most significant aspects of teachers' work" (p. 165). Yet, Katzenmeyer & Moller (2001) suggest that teachers taking on leadership roles can sometimes be ostracised by their colleagues. Nevertheless, teacher leadership is unlikely to flourish in an environment where teachers are isolated and autonomous in the security of their own classroom, and have little connection and interaction with their colleagues (Muijs & Harris, 2003). The idea of educational sub-cultures within the school is deemed to be counter-productive to any conceptualisation of teacher leadership that embodies characteristics of "shared pedagogical practice and building a sense of community within supportive organisational structures and practices" (Youitt, 2004, p. 33). Professional conversations enable colleagues to learn from each other, build

new strategies and widen their repertoire of skills (Lieberman, 2005). Significantly, close friendship, respect for one another and a love of teaching will lead to mutual support, friendship and guidance through the complexities of teaching.

This overview of the factors that both enable and inhibit teacher leadership suggest that:

Leadership, ...does not happen in a vacuum; rather, it is an aspect, or by-product, of what happens while engaging in something else; it is never a discrete activity. Carving out spaces within schools is therefore important so that change has the opportunity and “elbow room” in which to occur. Purposeful spaces include time, physical spaces, people, opportunities for debate, intellectual and professional growth, and space for experimentation and reflection. Leadership in this context occurs as [leaders] ...support colleagues to change not only their pedagogical practices, but also their attitudes, beliefs and values about learning and learners (Gunter & Fitzgerald, 2007, p. 3).

In summary, the literature reveals a wide range of understandings about teacher leadership. Traditionalists associate teacher leadership with those in formal, positional roles, while a more sophisticated understanding is emerging that regards teacher leadership more as a set of behaviours, practices and relationships that can be widely distributed across the school and into the classroom. The literature describes five domains of teacher leadership behaviour: operating politically; nurturing relationships; professional development; supporting colleagues; and leading change. In addition, the literature found multiple purposes for teacher leadership: making a difference for students, enhancing teacher professionalism and work satisfaction, educational improvement and stimulating change. However, the emotional dimension of teacher leadership has attracted little attention in the literature, despite claims that engaging in teacher leadership behaviour

makes teachers feel good about their practice (Rinn, 2003), as they approximate the feeling of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). Finally, the literature suggests that the presence of factors such as professional development, time, and positive relationships with principal and colleagues enables teacher leadership, while an absence of these factors inhibits teacher leadership.

2.7 Conclusion and Research Questions

Following this review of the literature, it is appropriate to conclude that significant socio-cultural change in the latter half of the twentieth century has brought about corresponding educational change. This change has evolved through a series of distinct phases over five decades, culminating in the realisation that educational change is a dynamic, complex process that relies on meaning-making and capacity-building within, and developing strong relationships beyond the organisation. This process requires greater professionalism in education. The diverse nature of teaching necessitates a review of the profession: teachers ought to be regarded as autonomous, activist professionals, encouraged to exercise professional judgement in order to function effectively in an emerging adhocracy of postindustrial society. Such a society requires a new paradigm of leadership advocating a more relational approach, based on influence rather than positional authority. Whilst there have been many developments in postindustrial leadership outlined in the literature, a common perspective involves the need to distribute leadership more widely throughout the school and into the hands of teachers.

However, this review of the literature also confirmed the problematic nature of teacher leadership. The literature contains many perceptions about teacher leadership (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Researchers make varied

claims about the roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders, and there is debate about the differences between formal and informal teacher leadership (Rinn, 2003). Recent assessments of teacher leadership suggest a more fluid, less formal approach that engages many teachers rather than the chosen few (Muijs & Harris, 2003, 2007). In contrast, policy-makers now advance teacher leaders as “middle managers”, serving to reinforce the hierarchical norms and practices (Gunter & Fitzgerald, 2007. p. 3). All the while “definitions [of teacher leadership] are slippery, particularly as labels used to describe the work, authority and position of these teachers are not uniform” (p. 5).

Thus, this review of the literature highlights the lack of a clear conceptualisation of teacher leadership. Recognising the challenge posed by this lack of conceptual clarity, this research study focused on finding answers to one major research question:

How do teachers, who are recognised as teacher leaders in South-East Queensland Anglican schools, conceptualise teacher leadership?

In selecting this research question, the researcher was influenced by the seminal work of Fullan (1991) on educational change. Here, Fullan identifies the importance of finding meaning in respect to educational change as well as developing theories around “organised commonsense” (p. xii). In short, we have to know what change looks like from the point of the key stakeholders in a change context “if we are to understand the actions and reactions of individuals...” (p. xi). If we accept Fullan’s (1991) advice, it would be important to develop a more informed and sophisticated understanding of teacher leadership from the perspective of the major stakeholders:, the teachers themselves.

Beyond clarifying the research question, this review of the literature also helped the researcher to identify a number of research sub-questions:

Behaviour of teacher leaders – What do they do?

Purpose of teacher leadership – Why do teachers strive for this?

Feelings of teacher leaders – How do they feel about what they do?

Support for teacher leaders – What do they need?

Firstly, this review of the literature allowed a distillation of the key concepts that can frame the investigation of teacher leadership behaviour. These concepts ranged from taking principled action, to shaping meaning for students and adults through to focusing on teaching, team building and initiating change (Crowther et. al, 2002, Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001 and Lambert, 2003). This range of activities identified in the literature confirmed that there was a lack of clarity in respect to the concept of teacher leadership. To address this lack of clarity, this research study focused on the behaviour of teacher leaders and asked the sub-research question – What do they do?

Secondly, this review of the literature highlighted the need for organisational change within education that will bring about subsequent evolution in educational leadership. As leadership in schools evolves, there has been a resulting redistribution of power and authority across the organisation, and teachers assume a wide range of formal and informal leadership roles and responsibilities within and beyond the classroom (Gunter & Fitzgerald, 2007; Muijs & Harris, 2007; Rinn, 2003). As a relatively recent phenomenon, the concept of teacher leadership has involved a change of practice for many teachers. To comprehend the philosophy behind adopting changed practice, it is important to seek insight into the purpose of teacher leadership – Why do teachers strive for this?

Thirdly, this review of the literature suggested that teacher leadership provides new and exciting opportunities for teachers. However, research into middle leadership in schools suggests that work satisfaction is diminished as teachers in formal leadership roles are “swamped by operational matters” (Cranston, 2006, p. 104) and perceive that “their potential contribution to the leadership capacity of their schools is not being fully realised” (p. 91). This finding is problematic given that studies of teacher satisfaction consistently identify the importance of intrinsic rewards (Mulford, 2003). Moreover, research by Csikszentmihalyi (2003) has alerted us to the psychological conditions that support optimum satisfaction and engagement at work. As this area of teachers’ feelings regarding both formal and informal teacher leadership appears to represent a lacuna in the literature, it is pertinent to investigate the feelings of teacher leaders – How do they feel about what they do?

Finally, this review of the literature identifies a number of factors that enable and inhibit the effective implementation of teacher leadership in schools. “Leading from the classroom not only empowers teachers by improving professional knowledge and growth opportunities, but brings others along as their circle of influence expands” (Rinn, 2003, p. 30). The literature also makes it clear that environmental, cultural and political factors play a role in the success of teacher leadership in schools. It is recognised that “[teacher] leadership...does not happen in a vacuum” (Gunter & Fitzgerald, 2007, p. 3) and that professional development and time as well as relationships with the principal and colleagues all support teacher leadership (Muijs & Harris, 2007). To glean greater clarity regarding factors that support or inhibit teacher leadership another area to explore in this study is support for teacher leaders – What do they need?

In the course of this research study, these research sub-questions were used to guide data collection and analysis. In particular, the research question and sub-questions led the researcher to situate the study within the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism. This theoretical framework is deemed appropriate for studies involving the influence of social interactions on social structures and the individual's self-identity (Gall et al., 2007). Since the purpose of this study is to develop a more informed and sophisticated understanding of teacher leadership from the perspective of the teachers themselves, symbolic interactionism is "deemed appropriate". The chapter that follows outlines this theoretical framework in more detail.

Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework: Symbolic Interactionism

3.1 Introduction

This research study was situated within the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism. A theoretical framework provides a structure in which to conduct and analyse research. It links the theory and the practical aspects of the research. Therefore, it must reflect the focus of the study and the specific research questions. As outlined in Chapter Two, this research examines teacher leadership in South-East Queensland Anglican Schools and asks one major research question with four research sub-questions:

Research question:

How do teachers, who are recognised as teacher leaders in South-East Queensland Anglican schools, conceptualise teacher leadership?

Behaviour of teacher leaders – What do they do?

Purpose of teacher leadership – Why do teachers strive for this?

Feelings of teacher leaders – How do they feel about what they do?

Support for teacher leaders – What do they need?

Given this research question and sub-questions, as well as the commitment to understanding teacher leadership from the teacher's perspective, this research study was situated within a theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism is claimed to be appropriate for

studies involving the influence of social interactions on social structures and the individual's self-identity (Gall et al., 2007). Moreover, the literature notes that a symbolic interactionist perspective has been effectively applied to research in respect to meaning-making and identity-formation in educational institutions (Kinney, Brown Rosier, & Harger, 2003). Given the strength of this claim and associated research activity, it was thought appropriate that symbolic interactionism inform the design of a research study that sought to investigate the concept of teacher leadership.

Consequently, this chapter explores the dominant schools of thought in respect to symbolic interactionism and identifies the "root images" (Blumer, 1998, p. 6) associated with a contemporary understanding of symbolic interactionism as a perspective. This chapter also discusses a contemporary criticism of situating social research within this theoretical framework, and outlines the place of emotion in symbolic interactionism. In chapter four, this research study explores symbolic interactionism as method. This elaboration of symbolic interactionism as perspective and method is consistent with the view that symbolic interactionism begins with a "view of the human being and of the society human beings form, then moves to methodological matters" (Stryker, 2002, p. 90).

3.2 The Dominant Schools of Symbolic Interactionism

While symbolic interactionism can provide a theoretical framework for this study, the understanding of symbolic interactionism is diverse to say the least. With suggested origins in evolutionism, German idealism, Scottish moralism, pragmatism, and functional psychology, symbolic interactionism has evolved in different ways with different emphases (Reynolds, 1993). The theory is usually traced back to the work of George Herbert Mead (1863-1931), yet detailing the major varieties of symbolic interactionism developed since Mead is no easy matter. While there have been up to 15 varieties of contemporary symbolic interactionism promoted, Reynolds (1993) identifies

four dominant “schools” of thought: the Chicago School, the Iowa School, the dramaturgical genre, and ethnomethodology.

The founding members of the Chicago school of symbolic interactionism were influenced by the guiding philosophy of pragmatism, a perspective that emphasised human agency, consciousness, meaning and process (Musolf, 2003). Building on Mead’s early work, Herbert Blumer first coined the term symbolic interactionism, and is considered the major figure associated with the Chicago school, having spent most of his career at the University of Chicago (Stryker, 2002). This school of symbolic interactionism is based on the following assumptions and tenets:

- Emphasis on the social development of self, mind, and consciousness;
- That self and society are inextricable;
- The importance of defining the situation or, more generally, minded activity;
- The centrality of meaning to human interaction;
- The argument that stimuli surrounding self are symbolic to humans;
- The necessity of understanding the subjectivity of the actor;
- The focus on indeterminacy, contingency, and emergence in human behaviour; and favouring of qualitative over quantitative research, especially development of participant observation (Musolf, 2003, p. 103).

Thus, the Chicago school employs research techniques that probe the inner world of actors in order to understand their social world and their behaviour. This takes into account “human agency, process, interpretation, minded activity, role taking, social construction, meaning, situations and context” (Musolf, 2003, p. 113).

Developing this initial understanding of symbolic interactionism, the Iowa School of symbolic interactionism, led by Manford Kuhn, focused on the concepts of self and role-taking, and “expressed an interest in developing generalisations tested by empirical research” (Stryker, 2002, p.100) as opposed to the conjectural and deductive orientation of the Chicago School. Later, the dramaturgical genre of symbolic interactionism, inspired by the work of Erving Goffman, viewed the study of social interaction as “something like a staged drama or ritual” (Charon, 2004, p. 175). Dramaturgists such as Goffman, believe that “human beings, by virtue of their capacity for symbolic expressiveness, negotiate the meanings of their lives in social situations with others who are doing the same thing” (Edgley, 2003). Finally, an ethnomethodological perspective on symbolic interactionism, offered by Garfinkel, positions social organisation as an emergent achievement that results from the concerted efforts of societal members acting within local situations (Maynard & Clayman, 2003). While other schools of symbolic interactionism assume that the world is essentially orderly, ethnomethodologists believe that social order is illusory. It simply appears orderly, but must be constructed in the minds of social actors who somehow organise a series of interactions and experiences presented by society into coherent patterns (Poore, 2000).

As the brief summary of the four schools above indicates, there is no single symbolic interactionist orthodoxy. As Plummer (1996) argues:

...if the world is as the interactionists depict it, then we can assume that (1) there is no one fixed meaning of symbolic interactionism; (2) that “accounts” of its nature and origins will change over time, and indeed be open to renegotiation; and (3) that what it “means” will indeed depend upon the definitions of the significant others whose interaction

constitutes its meaning. Thus, the very origins and history of the theory are themselves a contested domain (p. 225).

In line with this thinking, contemporary accounts of symbolic interactionism acknowledge the different schools of thought in respect to this theoretical framework. However, whilst difference is acknowledged, an analysis of recent work also reveals commonalities across the different schools of thought. These commonalities or premises, identified below, can be considered as “root images” (Blumer, 1998, p. 6) of symbolic interactionism.

3.3 Root images

3.3.1 The symbolic nature of reality

Contemporary symbolic interactionism accepts that beyond a ‘real’ reality that is apprehendable, there is an abstract reality of “social objects” (Charon, 2004, pp. 45-47). This abstract reality of social objects is, in turn, defined by human beings through social interaction. “Objects may exist in a physical form, but for human beings, they are pointed out, isolated, catalogued, interpreted and given meaning through social interaction” (p. 45). Thus social objects are not just “things, bundles of stimuli that exist independently” (Stryker, 2002, p. 116). Rather, social objects come into existence in the course of human action; “social objects are the creations of social acts which involve coordinated activity of more than one actor”. Thus, human beings come to “understand and use their environment [comprised of social objects]; they come to understand their environment through interaction with others and with self; and the environment is always changing for them as their goals change” (Charon, 2004, p. 59).

Within this symbolic interactionist perspective, symbols represent a class of social objects used intentionally to communicate or represent something in

reality (Stryker, 2002, p. 37). Symbols include language and other “gestures” (pp. 36-37) and almost all acts around others contain a symbolic element. However, “Words are the most important symbols, making human thinking possible” (Charon, 2004, p. 59). Moreover, words as symbols are significant due to their impact on behaviour. “The symbols [words] they [individuals and groups] attach to the environment have meaning, are cues to behaviour, and organize behaviour” (Stryker, 2002, p. 56). Yet again, symbols, including words, are understood as being “social, meaningful and significant” (Charon, 2004, p. 48). They are social because they are defined in the context of social interaction, where they are created and agreed upon by people. Symbols are also “meaningful... the user understands what they represent” and they constitute something meaningful. Yet again, they are “significant” because they are used by people “for the purpose of giving a meaning that he or she believes will make sense to the other” (p. 49). Thus, “Symbols focus attention upon salient elements in an interactive situation and permit preliminary organization of behaviour appropriate to it” (Stryker, 2002, p. 56). “We pull things out of our world, define them, and give them meaning according to the use they have for us at the time, and we act” (Charon, 2004, p. 97).

3.3.2 The social sources of humanness

Symbolic interactionists believe that the very essence of being human depends upon four interdependent socially-created characteristics: use of symbol; possession of a self; engaging in ongoing mind action; and taking the role of the other. The links between taking the role of the other, the self, symbols and mind are complex. “It is really impossible to separate these four processes: they arise together, they depend on one another, and they influence one another” (Charon, 2004, p. 107).

Within symbolic interactionism, symbols are deemed to be the building blocks of human society. Symbols enable us to name objects and situations that

confront us and then take useful, adaptive action in or towards them. Our symbols name a complex social and physical world, one that is as much abstract and therefore 'unseen' as it is material. Moreover, they expand the framework of space and time within which humans live, enabling us to remember the past and anticipate the future, and to respond to real or imagined events at a considerable distance as well as those close at hand. Symbols also increase both the capacity and necessity for social cooperation. In the course of human evolution, they fostered more precise communication and at the same time sped us on a course in which the social world became the necessary source of both individual learning and the satisfaction of individual needs. Most dramatically of all, symbols give rise to the consciousness of self by making it possible for human beings to become objects of their own experiences and actions (Hewitt, 2003, pp. 257-258).

The symbolic interactionist perspective emphasises the use of symbols and relates it to all that is human. Complex human society relies on symbolic communication. In fact "our existence as a species depends on our ability to organise our responses to the environment using symbols" (Hewitt, 2003, p. 42). "Each individual learns how to act in society through symbols and thus becomes part of society through symbols" (Charon, 2004, p. 62). Symbolic communication is the basis for human cooperation. In fact, acting together, "human beings...must inform one another about what is being done, how to solve problems together, how to change what they are doing or whether to continue what they are doing. We correct one another, encourage one another, and direct one another, and we are able to work together" (p. 63). In short, it is "the capacity for symbolic communication that endows human beings with their distinctively human capabilities" (Hewitt, 2002, p. 257).

Along with the notion that symbols are central to what it means to be human, symbolic interactionists also highlight the importance of the possession of the self as a source of humanness. For the symbolic interactionist, the self is a

“multilayered phenomenon and comes in many forms”, including “the phenomenological or conscious self”, the “interactional self”, “linguistic self”, the “material self”, and the “ideological or cultural self” (Denzin, 1992, p. 26). In addition, this self is yet another social object produced by the actor’s own action in the context of social interaction (Charon, 2004, p. 72). The individual acts towards others as well as towards him/herself. In short, “One’s self is the way one describes to himself his [sic] relationships to other in a social process” (Stryker, 2002, p. 59). It follows that humans have many selves that reflect the many groups that respond to the person. Consequently, “if social relationships are complex, there must be a parallel complexity in the self” (Stryker, 2002, p. 59). As a social object, the self “constantly changes for the actor because it continues to be defined and redefined in social interaction” (Charon, 2004, p. 72). Moreover, core dynamic of self is reflexivity or cognitive processes. “Reflexivity informs role-taking another’s perspective, which is critical for communication based on significant symbols” (Weigert & Gecas, 2003, p. 277).

Extending this understanding of symbol and the self, symbolic interactionism also identifies humanness with ongoing mind action. Here, symbolic interactionists argue that “humans are able to turn back on their environment [of social interaction] and not simply respond to it once we give them symbols and self” (Charon, 2004, p. 94). This ability to act independently of the environment of social interaction, is achieved through “mind action” (p. 94) or a certain kind of covert action engaged in by the actor. “Active symbolic interaction means that the human manipulates symbols covertly: we think; we engage in minded behaviour; we literally hold conversations with ourselves - we constantly talk to ourselves and we often answer to ourselves” (p. 95). Through mind action, humans are able to approach objects in our environment according to what we plan to do with them in the future. The “Mind makes it possible to control and organize action and do considerably more than respond to the environment” (Meltzer, 1972, p. 20). Mind action gives humans control over their own overt action, thereby enabling an active

role in relation to environment. “Mind action takes place around problems in situations: where our goals are not immediately met, we need to figure out what to do. Where action is blocked we have a problem and we must engage in mind activity” (Charon, 2004, p. 103). The ability to problem solve like this sees humans go beyond a state of trial and error and habitual response. This mind action is a continuous process: we engage in mind action when we are alone or with others, as we constantly engage in conversation with self.

Finally, within symbolic interactionism, humanness is linked with “the self-control of behaviour” (Franks, 2003, p. 788) through the activities of “tak[ing] on the perspective of the other” (Charon, 2004, p. 70). Engaging in mind action enables humans to take the role of others by using symbol and imagination to put oneself in another’s place, and to view the world as others do (Charon, 2004; Hewitt, 2003; Stryker, 2002). Such role taking involves symbolic communication with “reference groups” of significant others that include dialogue, co-operative problem-solving and the achievement of mutual goals. Over time, such interaction results in the identification of shared cultural perspectives as well as self-development, the internalization of society’s rules and perspectives or the “generalized other” (Charon, 2004, p. 76). As a consequence of role taking, individuals are able to “sustain, modify or redirect their own behaviour” (Stryker, 2002, p. 62). “Taking the role of the other is a quality of the human being that accompanies symbols, self, and mind in making up the core of what it means to be human...We take on the perspective of significant others, generalised other, and others in social situations in which we are acting...Taking the role of the other is an active process where the actor is able to take control of his or her situation, allowing more intelligent control of one’s own actions in relation to others” (Charon, 2004, p. 115).

3.3.3 Society as symbolic interaction

Society is viewed by symbolic interactionists as a series of interrelated groups, all made up of individuals who interact (Charon, 2004). These multiple groups are made up of individuals whose actions are interdependent, intertwined and interrelated as a set of 'Russian dolls'. "Society, however, is more than just individual action; society is symbolic interaction" (p. 158). Symbolic interactionism portrays a vibrant relationship between society and the individual. This relationship is dynamic, not static, with complexity of society being reflected by complexities in the self (Stryker, 2002). In other words, society is described as an ongoing process, or "a becoming rather than a being" (Shibutani, 1961, p. 174). This society is "lived in the here and now, in the face-to-face and mediated interactions that connect persons to one another" (Denzin, 1992, p. 22). Consequently, symbolic interactionists reject totalizing, grand sociological theories to explain society, and favour "writing local narratives about how people do things together" (p. 23). These local narratives reflect a society described as "individuals interacting over time; acting with one another in mind, adjusting their acts to one another as they go along, symbolically communicating and interpreting one another's acts" (Charon, 2004, p. 160).

According to this view, society involves individuals engaging in a series of "social acts" (Hewitt, 2003, p. 54) in an attempt to cooperatively solve problems, despite their individual goals or interests.

A new social act begins when something interferes with an ongoing individual or social act...Several individuals cooperate to achieve a definition of the situation and thus an agreement on what social act is called for...Individuals act cooperatively to achieve a social object - that is, each contributes individual acts that are coordinated in such a way

that they move jointly towards the social object...The act is complete when its goal is reached, which requires the explicit or tacit acknowledgement of all participants that this has been done. (p. 54)

Thus, society consists of interdependent social activity between actors. “When they interact cooperatively, a society is formed” (Charon, 2004, p. 161). Cooperation means “that people communicate and take one another’s role on an ongoing basis; they regard one another as important in their actions; they generally agree on what is important in their environment; and develop common or complementary goals” (p. 162). If any one of these elements is missing the interaction is not fully cooperative and society ceases to exist. In short, interaction without cooperation is not society.

While symbolic interaction and cooperation are important qualities of society, a third quality is culture. Over time, cooperative symbolic interactionism and meaning-making creates culture (Charon, 2004). According to Denzin (1992):

Culture refers to the taken-for-granted and problematic web of significance and meaning that human beings produce and act on when they do things together. These meanings are shaped and molded [sic] by the larger culture and meaning-making institutions of society-at-large (pp. 73-74).

Once developed, this culture represents the consensus, the shared perspective of a society or “the generalised other” (Charon, 2004, p. 76) that acts as the conscience of the group by providing guidelines that individuals are expected to follow in social interaction. It is really “that aspect of culture we use to control our actions. It is our moral guide, our basis for control in relation to others, a recognition that the rules we follow must not simply be

our own or the rules of other individuals, but the rules of a ‘whole’ ...society” (Charon, 2004, p. 165). Thus, culture as “the generalized other is the moral system that the individual takes on as his or her own” (p. 165). Within this perspective, when individuals abide by shared cultural norms, society works. However, an individual may belong to many groups which may have few if any members in common. “Whether similar or different, however, the norms affecting interaction within a given group may either support and reinforce, or contradict and conflict with the norms within another group; and a person may serve to introduce the conflicting sets of norms to both groups” (Stryker, 2002, p. 73). Here, there is potential to raise conflicting ideas within and between individuals and groups in society.

3.3.4 The constructive, emergent nature of human conduct

Contemporary symbolic interactionism presents “an important and unique perspective that regards the human being as active in the environment; an organism that interacts with others and with self; a dynamic being; a being that defines immediate situations according to perspectives developed and altered in ongoing social interactions” (Charon, 2004, p. 41). Humans voluntarily interact with the self, others and social objects in society. Symbolic interactionists pragmatically see human beings as doers rather than simply persons, actors as well as reactors (Stryker, 2002). Humans actively perceive, define and manipulate their environment:

In order to act the individual has to identify what he (or she) wants, establish an objective or goal, map out a prospective line of behaviour, note and interpret the actions of others, size up his (or her) situation, check himself (or herself) at this or that point, figure out what to do at other points, and frequently spur himself (or herself) on in the face of

dragging dispositions or discouraging settings (Blumer, 1966, pp. 536-537).

This perspective suggests that any given act is caused by the individual's decision-making at that point in time. Decisions are not predetermined, as "action becomes a complex interplay of both overt and covert activity" (Charon, 2004, p. 137) within an environment of social interaction. A continual series of acts leads to a '*stream of action*' (Charon, 2004, p. 116). The direction of this stream constantly changes as humans act, react and interact with people and their environment along the way. Decisions are made according to how the individual has defined the situation. The individual's definition of the situation is influenced by interaction with self (thinking) and interaction with others (Charon, 2004), and determines the direction of the individual's behaviour. Figure 3.1 illustrates this perspective. It is from this symbolic perspective that we come to understand self and society.

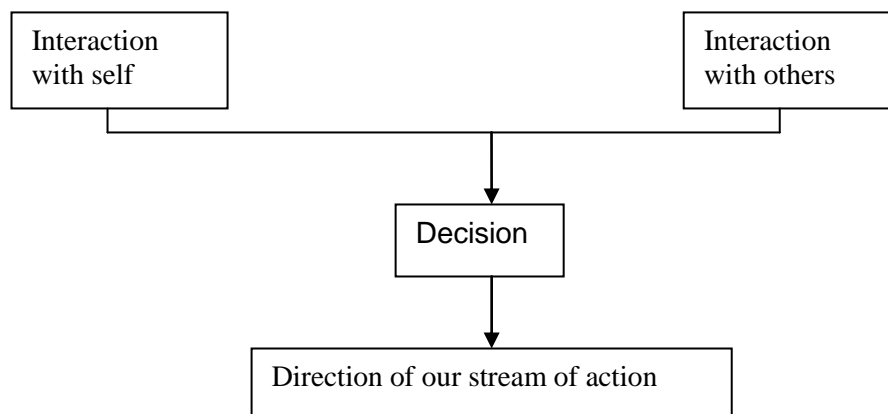


Figure 3.1 Action stream

[Source: Figure 9.1, p. 118 in Charon, J. M. (2004) Symbolic Interactionism, Prentice Hall

"Defining a situation involves a process of naming others and naming oneself... the former leads directly to the concept of role" (Stryker, 2002, p. 57).

3.3.5 Role making and role taking

While conventional role theory portrays the concept of 'status' or 'position' to refer to various parts of organised social groups, Stryker (2002) suggests that:

...symbolic interactionism uses 'position', in a more general sense, to refer to any socially recognised category of actors. In this usage, positions are symbols for the kinds of persons it is possible to be in society... Like other symbolic categories, positions serve to cue behaviour and so act as predictors of the behaviour of the persons who are placed into a category... Attaching a positional label to a person leads expected behaviours from ...and towards that person premised on expectations. The term "role" is used for these expectations which are attached to positions (p. 57).

In other words, "roles provide us with an organizing framework that we can use to *make* a performance that will meet the needs of a particular situation. Each performance of a role has to be orientated to the particular demands of the situation and to the social acts that are being constructed there" (Hewitt, 2003, p. 69).

Thus defined, the complex nature of society ensures that individuals are categorised in terms of multiple roles, some of which may provide conflicting behaviour cues. This understanding of role behaviour introduces new concepts of "role identity", "identity salience" and "commitment" (Stryker, 2002, pp. 60-62). Role identity refers to role expectations of self and others in structured role relationships. Identity salience refers to the most prominent role in a hierarchy of multiple role identities. Commitment refers to the degree

of congruence between an individual's perspective of their role identity and the role expectations of others, along with the importance of the individual's relationship with those others. In short, the structure of self-concept is "a hierarchical organization of role-identities based on differential salience of identities and the individual's situational commitment to these identities" (Weigert & Gecas, 2003, p. 274).

In addition, symbolic interactionism presents a particular view of "role conflict" (Stryker, 2002, p. 73) and "role strain" (p. 76). However, individuals, as members of society, generally occupy many roles and are confronted by multiple role expectations that will inevitably conflict with those held by others. "A social structure that consists of partially independent, partially overlapping networks of interaction is fertile soil for the production of role conflict...Role conflict exists where there are contradictory expectations that attach to some positions in a social relationship" (p. 73). Role conflict experienced by an individual becomes role strain in the larger social structure surrounding the individual. Within society, role strain occurs because "there is a continual problem of maintaining the continuity of social roles that underlies the stability of social structure...(since)...not all persons accept the norms embodied in roles or even presumably central societal values; the degree to which persons are emotionally committed to norms and values is variable; social class and other structural variations in society introduce variations in attachment to norms and values" (p. 76).

Developing this thought further, contemporary symbolic interactionists advance role-making and role taking processes that highlight the interactive, dynamic relationship between self and society, recognising complexities in both society and self.

Symbolic interactionists speak of role-making, rather than role playing or role enactment, in order to stress two important aspects of the [role-making] process. First, behaviour 'in role' is not a matter of routine enactment of lines of a script, where each action is well known in advance and where there is little latitude in what we can say or do. .. Second, role-making is a self-conscious activity. In order to make an adequate performance – one that others can interpret as appropriate that will be acceptable to the one making it – there must be a consciousness of self. The person must be aware of his or her role performance in the making so that it can be adjusted to suit personal goals, the demands of the situation, and the expectations of others (Hewitt, 2003, p. 69).

Within this view, this role-making process involves a reciprocal relationship between society, self and interaction as illustrated in Figure 3.2.

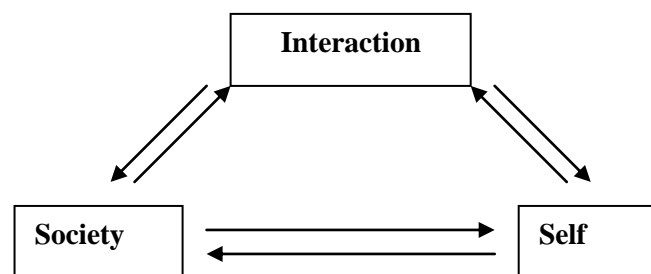


Figure 3.2: Contemporary symbolic interactionist relationships between self and society [Source: from p. 80 Stryker, S, (2002). Symbolic interactionism: The Blackburn Press]

Here, role identity is constructed using a cognitive process within the context of social interaction. This role-making process involves the self 'in society' being self-reflective and interactive with both significant others, as well as the generalised other. Moreover, in the course of this reflection/interaction the self will engage role-making and role taking processes. As Hewitt (2003) explains:

Role-making is the process wherein the person constructs activity in a situation so that it fits the definition of the situation, is consonant with the person's own role and meshes with the activity of others.

Role taking is the process wherein the person imaginatively occupies the role of another and looks at self and the situation from that vantage point in order to engage in role-making (p. 68).

The recognition of the importance of reflection and interaction in the processes of role-making and role taking raises questions in respect to the social structures that enable or inhibit such reflection/interaction. In this instance, social structure refers to the "patterned regularities that characterise most human interaction" (Stryker, 2002, p. 65). Thus, "if the social person is shaped by interaction, it is social structure that shapes the possibilities for interaction and so, ultimately, the person. Conversely, if the social person creatively alters patterns of interaction, those altered patterns can ultimately change social structure" (p. 66). Given this argument, symbolic interactionists, in role conflict situations, focus on the social structures that enable or inhibit social interaction and the role-making process. The presence of role conflict and role strain suggests the need to situate the role-making process within the larger context of social structures that serve to shape meanings in everyday life.

In conclusion, these root images provide a contemporary framework of study and analysis for symbolic interactionism. Viewed collectively, these root images represent the way in which symbolic interactionism views human society and conduct.

3.4 Contemporary Criticism of Symbolic Interactionism

Over time, symbolic interactionism has had its critics (Meltzer, 1972; Collins, 1975; Denzin, 1979; Huber 1973). More recently the missing role of emotions in symbolic interactionism has been the critical focus (Franks, 2003). The traditional Blumer/Mead symbolic interactionist approach appears to focus on the cognitive aspects of self rather than the emotional aspects. According to Stryker (2002), “in the very real sense, he [Mead] modelled life on the scientific method” and saw cognitive pursuits such as “self-consciousness and reflexivity as the essence of the human condition” (p. 152). Similarly, Blumer’s pragmatic approach seeks ready-made or predictable solutions to problematic situations by assuming that emotions are merely “social objects used by the actor” (Charon, 2004, p. 135) in problem solving. Thus, within this traditional view, “the self of the symbolic interactionist has largely been conceptualised in cognitive rather than affective terms; and the framework’s concern with significant symbols, meaning, role taking, communication, and related concepts simply serves to accentuate the point” (Stryker, 2002, p. 153).

A contemporary critique of symbolic interactionism suggests that in its emphasis on meaning and on the import of reflexive thought in behaviour, symbolic interactionism overlooks the pervasive importance of the emotions and of the unconscious in human behaviour (Stryker, 2002). Drawing on recent research in respect to emotions in social contexts, contemporary symbolic interactionists accept that emotions “set the agenda for thought” (Franks, 2003, p. 790), that emotions act as “the eye through which we see” (p. 803) reality, and that emotions “are critical to normal decision-making instead of being opposed to it” (p. 790). Consequently, contemporary theorists recommend that “we explore in more detail why attention to the emotional process is critical for symbolic interactionism” (p. 787). Here, “emotion, seen as *shaped* by society and also as a more active *enabler* of

society, is presented to show how symbolic interactionism can go beyond unidirectional causal models in forging a balanced dialectical view of the social process” (p. 789).

A number of supportive arguments are advanced acknowledging emotions in symbolic interactionism. Firstly, drawing on the “dramaturgical genre” (Charon, 2004, p. 175) of symbolic interactionism, it is argued that emotions provide the “efficacy of discourse” required in cognition, social interaction and social action (Franks, 2003, p. 788). In short, words by themselves are said to have limited appeal. However, emotions serve to empower words with dramatic qualities that, in turn, motivate cognition, facilitate social interaction and guide social action (Frijda, Manstead & Bem, 2000). Secondly, consideration of emotions is deemed to be critical to the symbolic interactionist appreciation of the self and role identity. This claim is in line with research that has found that a consideration of emotions is critical to the symbolic interactionist theory of “self-control of behaviour” (Franks, 2003, p. 788) and its understanding of role taking activity within the context of social interaction (Damascio, 1994). “Role taking emotions of embarrassment, shame, and guilt are painful ones that spontaneously and authentically give us a self-interested investment in avoiding deviant behaviour that would evoke them” (Franks, 2003, p. 788). Finally, it is argued that understanding emotions is crucial to understanding the construction of social structures through social interaction. While role taking emotions such as empathy and sympathy may produce “structural solidarity”, deficits of these emotions may create “structures of inequality” (p. 789).

Thus, in identifying the importance and relevance of emotions to symbolic interactionism, contemporary theorists argue that social life creates an array of feelings and emotions that play an important role in shaping behaviour, self and society (Hewitt, 2003). It is clear that “whatever the specific situation or social context, the experiencing, display and regulation of emotions are a

key aspect of social life. People are guided in their actions not merely by cognition that focuses on definitions of situations and on role-making and role taking, but also by affective responses to situations, others, and themselves” (Hewitt, 2003, p. 172). Human beings respond to their environment “because of an internal response, but they also feel those emotional responses” (Charon, 2004, p. 135). Emotions are therefore a part of every individual and social act. Emotions that arise in the course of an act provide the motivation to continue in those acts (Hewitt, 2003).

Extending this thought, contemporary symbolic interactionists explore the issue of personal emotional management by taking a “cybernetic approach to the sociology of emotions” (Franks, 2003, p. 794). Here, it is acknowledged that the “micro level feelings of individuals radiate ‘upwards’ to confirm, support, and continually recreate present social structures” (p. 794). Whilst, giving equal emphasis to “the ‘downward’ shaping of the individual’s emotions by culture, structure, and social interactions” (p. 794). In short, the upward direction of personal emotions is cybernetically directed by downward forces. Explaining this further, Hewitt (2003) notes that “all individual experiences occur in the context of culturally pre-established meanings, and those meanings are subject to social interpretation. We must, therefore, ask what labels culture makes available for such sensations, and how social interaction makes use of these labels to influence further sensations themselves and the meanings attributed to them” (p. 170). This further suggests that “emotions are embodied, self-feelings of people learned from culture” (Power, 1984, p. 215); learned through interactions with others.

Finally, contemporary symbolic interactionists have moved to a consideration of the place of emotions in the workplace. In particular, researchers (Schwalbe et al., 2000) note the bias against emotions within large-scale organisations and the support for the norm of rational efficiency and the principle of objectivity in decision-making (Franks, 2003, p. 798).

Preoccupied with profit, these organisations establish benchmarks to do with using minimum inputs, time management and innovative production processes, as opposed to emotional management. Significantly, this position seems contrary to research (eg. Damascio, 1994; Gibson, 1997) that suggests some level of emotion is necessary for rational decision-making; rational, efficient organisations produce heightened emotionality even as they present emotion as an aberration. “Any workplace must deal with loyalty and disenchantment, stirrings about status and power, and anxieties about keeping control and being controlled, pride defensives, fear of change, and the comforts of the familiar” (Franks, 2003, p. 799). Moreover, this research has found that failure to acknowledge and manage emotions at work will threaten individual role-identity and the sustainability of organisational structures as evidenced in the symbolic interactionist understanding of “role conflict” and “role strain” (Stryker, 2002, pp. 73, 76).

Thus, a contemporary perspective of symbolic interactionism highlights the integral role of emotion. That human beings act towards things based on the meanings those things have for them, suggests that emotions shape those meanings. Human interaction and interpretation of symbols requires not only a cognitive understanding but an emotional one. Symbolic interactionism tells us that humans act and react with each other, responding to stimuli, symbols and communication (Stryker, 2003). Consequently, within this theoretical perspective it is impossible for humans to interact devoid of emotion. To summarise the significance of emotions in symbolic interactionism, Hewitt (2003) reminds us of three important facts: emotions naturally arise in our efforts to complete individual and social acts; our experience of emotions is an experience of self; and emotions are a regular part of the role-making process (p. 74).

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter provides an account of symbolic interactionism as a perspective. In doing so it outlines the four dominant schools of symbolic interactionism and details the “root images” (Blumer, 1998, p. 6) common to the four schools: the symbolic nature of reality; the social sources of humanness; society as symbolic interaction; the constructive, emergent nature of human conduct; role-making and role taking processes. Collectively, these images provide a summary of a symbolic interactionist view of human society and conduct, as well as understanding of role negotiation that is of particular interest to this research study. Finally, this chapter also notes the concerns of balancing the cognitive aspects of symbolic interactionism with a study of emotions.

This account highlights the strength and richness of a symbolic interactionist perspective as a framework for this study, and affirms the methodological choice to situate this research study within this theoretical framework. Besides affirming the research focus and research questions, this account of symbolic interactionism also encouraged the researcher, in the later stages of the study, to use this theoretical perspective as an interpretive lens to assign the “general theoretical significance” of the research findings. In particular, the root images of symbolic interactionism identified above facilitated this interpretive process. To complement this chapter’s account of symbolic interactionism as a perspective, the following chapter provides an account of symbolic interactionism as a method before outlining the design of this study.

Chapter 4 Design of the Research

4.1 Introduction

The research design outlines the approach taken in the research study to help you get from 'here' to 'there' (Yin, 1994). It is like a map to help the researcher navigate the research journey. This map illustrates how the researcher situates the study within a specific theoretical framework. It identifies a research methodology and methods appropriate to the theoretical framework.

As noted in Chapter Three, this research study is situated within a theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism, which focuses on interaction with human beings as interpretive, proactive and rational problem solvers. Symbolic interactionism “adds to our understanding of the sociology of knowledge. It describes the social nature of reality, how our group life or our society creates our definition of reality, internal or external. It tells us of the power available to those who control symbols, perspectives, and definitions” (Charon, 2001, p. 228). It provides the theoretical perspective for this research because its focus is on “how people define their world and how that definition shapes their action” (p. 229). For these reasons, symbolic interactionism provides the ideal perspective from which to conduct this study into the pragmatic issue of teacher leadership.

Charon's (2004, pp. 193-196) principles of investigation⁶ have enabled the researcher to adopt a two-stage research design featuring exploration and

⁶Charon's principles of investigation include understanding better what actors believe about their world, how they define reality, think, solve problems, role take, apply their past and look to the future in situations.

inspection phases. This chapter outlines the method of collecting data directly from the participants via 'Experience Sampling Method' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), the follow up focus group interviews, and the approach taken to data analysis. This chapter also provides details regarding participant selection, the role of the researcher, and the commitment to ensure appropriate rigour and ethics in the study design.

4.2 Symbolic Interactionism as Method

Symbolic interactionism as method provides an interpretivist/constructivist persuasion within social research. Blumer (1969) was the first "to say something about the methodological consequences of the way in which Symbolic Interactionism looks upon the large, or so-called molar parts, or aspects of human society" (p.57). Thus, Symbolic interactionism, formulated by Blumer (1969), and heavily influenced by George Herbert Mead, is the process of interaction in the formation of meanings for individuals. It explores how people make sense of their world in a dynamic process of social interaction, and offers a pragmatic approach to social inquiry. Symbolic interactionism is an interpretivist perspective (Blumer, 1969), and as such, must emphasise some aspects of reality at the expense of others (Charon, 2001). It is a perspective in social psychology that focuses on the nature of social interaction: the dynamic and social activities taking place among actors. "Individuals interact; societies are made up of interacting individuals...Interaction means that the acts of each individual are built up over time, depending in part on what others do in the situation in relation to them" (Charon, 2001, p. 27). "Symbolic interactionism describes the actor as a being who interacts, thinks, defines, applies his or her past, and makes decisions in the present based on factors in the immediate situation" (p. 28). Social interaction is almost always central to what we do.

Symbolic interactionists see meaning as emergent (Charon, 2001). Meaning arises and is transformed as people define and act in social situations.

Meaning is created by experience. Meaning-making depends on the ability people have to interpret symbols which have shared meanings or understandings in society. Such symbols can include words, gestures, body language, routines and rituals. "With words as tools, the human is able to construct new ideas, new syntheses, new strategies" (Charon, 2001, p. 204); there is no end to their creativity.

Expecting symbolic interactionism to explain everything is erroneous, but, according to Charon (2001), "it is correct to say that symbolic interactionism is an exciting and useful perspective for understanding human social life" (p. 203). This study, examining the role of teacher leadership, involves gathering data from within the classroom during the teaching/learning process. Anyone who has recently stepped into a secondary classroom will appreciate what interesting layers of human social life they can represent. Some students are clearly at school for the social interaction more than anything else.

There are certain principles of investigation that symbolic interactionists follow, that reinforce the link with this research and constructivist theory:

1. *The central principle of symbolic interactionism is that we can understand what is going on only if we understand what the actors themselves believe about their world. Consequently the researcher must "interact with the actors, observe and partake in their activities, conduct formal interviews, and try to reconstruct their reality" (Charon, 2001, p. 206).*
2. *Symbolic interactionists believe that it is important to gather data through observing people in real situations. This research is conducted in the 'real world' of the teacher leader and adopts careful,*

critical, systematic and objective approaches, in order to be accurate and consider the perspective of the actors.

3. *Symbolic interactionists are critical of traditional social science, its use of scientific methodology for the study of human beings and its definition of “important causal variables”.* This research assists the researcher to “better understand how humans think, solve problems, role take, apply their past and look to the future in situations” (Charon, 2001, p. 208).
4. *The symbolic interactionist regards a careful description of human interaction to be a central goal of social science.* This research will provide opportunity to examine and describe human interaction in the day to day activity of a school classroom.
(Charon, 2001, pp. 206-208).

Constructivism is an “epistemological concept that draws from a variety of fields, including philosophy, psychology, and science” (Walker & Lambert, 1995, p. 1). The constructivist research orientation examines how leaders and others in the organisation create shared understandings about their roles and participation within the school (Heck & Hallinger, 1999).

This study is situated in constructivism that offers a distinctive research paradigm with its own ontological, epistemological and methodological claims (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). From an ontological perspective, “constructivism’s relativism...assumes multiple, apprehendable and sometimes conflicting social realities that are the products of human intellects, but that may change as their constructors become more informed and sophisticated” (p. 111). From an epistemological perspective it accepts a “transactional/subjectivist assumption that sees knowledge as created in interaction between the investigator and the respondents” (p. 111). Moreover, constructivism relies on a “hermeneutic/dialectical methodology” (p. 112) aimed at understanding and reconstruction of previously held problematic constructions.

In accepting these ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions, constructivism has set itself apart from other research paradigms (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Constructivism rejects the dominant “positivism position of naïve realism, assuming an objective reality upon which inquiry can converge” and its “dualist, objectivist assumption” that enables the researcher to determine “how things really are (and) how things really work” (p. 111). Constructivism also rejects postpositivism’s critical realism and its “modified dualist/objectivist assumption that it is possible to approximate (but never really know) reality” (p. 111).

By setting itself apart from these research paradigms, constructivism has been subjected to strong anti-constructivist criticism. In particular, this criticism has clustered around three issues: the problem of quality or goodness criteria; the lack of critical purchase; and the problem of authority (Schwandt, 1994). In short, critics point to the absence of conventional benchmarks of scientific rigour such as internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity. Critics also note the propensity for description over critical prescription for privileging the views of actors and for vesting authority and control in researcher and interpreter.

In addition to this anti-constructivist criticism, constructivism itself comes in ‘many flavours’ and is said to be in “blooming, buzzing confusion” (Phillips, 2000, p. viii). Within the pro-constructivist camp there are a number of polarised positions (Phillips, 2000; Schwandt, 2000; Woolfolk, 1998). Each of these offers a different view on the origin of human knowledge and reality. An initial point of difference occurs over whether knowledge and reality are constructed by individuals or acquired from society. Then there are also different understandings of the constraints or influences affecting knowledge and reality construction. Are the principal influences ‘ideal’ (eg cultural or

linguistic norms) or 'realist' (genetically determined brain structures or power structures)?

Faced with anti-constructivist criticism as well as polarised positions within constructivism, scholars such as Schwandt (1994) and Burbules (2000) have advocated reframing the debate away from the potentially divisive ontological and epistemological concerns and moving to a more pragmatic future:

To be sure, the future of interpretivist and constructivist persuasions rests on the acceptance of the implications of dissolving long-standing dichotomies such as subject/object, knower/known, fact/value. It rests with individuals being comfortable with blurring the lines between the science and the art of interpretation, the social scientific and literary account...We can reject dichotomous thinking on pragmatic grounds: such distinctions are simply not very useful anymore. (Schwandt, 1994, p. 132).

Extending this thought, Burbules (2000) advances a pragmatic approach to constructivism that gives priority in research to 'doing' rather than 'knowing'. It emphasises research through social interactions, leading to inter-subjective agreements. Positive interpersonal relationships and communication assist in informing the research. Individuals' interpretations, perceptions, meanings and understandings are considered valuable research material, and help to construct meaning and knowledge about the research problem. Pluralistic views are seen to benefit inquiry by providing opportunities for rigorous questioning and testing. Finally, problem-based inquiry sheds light on the practices and procedures by which constructions come to be created, adjudicated and commonly shared. In short, pragmatic constructivism explores problematic human activity by interpreting individual actions and

making meaning from them in order to construct knowledge about the phenomenon under investigation.

This understanding of pragmatic constructivism provides an appropriate epistemology to guide this study. As discussed in chapters 1 and 2, the concept of teacher leadership has emerged as a significant issue in education. However, to date there is limited knowledge about this phenomenon. A research study that allows problem-based enquiry holds the possibility of contributing to a more informed and sophisticated construction of this problematic human activity.

To understand reality from the perspective of teacher leaders, in accordance with Blumer (as cited in Charon, 2001), the research must adopt two modes of inquiry: exploration and inspection. The purpose of the exploration is to become acquainted with some aspect of 'social life' and develop some focus of interest. Data gathered in the course of the research enables ideas, concepts, beliefs, understandings and meanings to be modified and adjusted. Inspection then, looks at some specific elements and describes the situation in relation to those elements (Charon, 2001, p. 208). This procedure of inspection must be "flexible, imaginative, creative, unroutinized" (Stryker, 1981, p. 10).

In summary, symbolic interactionism "adds to our understanding of the sociology of knowledge; it describes the social nature of reality, and how our group life or our society creates our definition of reality, internal or external. It tells us of the power available to those who control symbols, perspectives, and definitions" (Charon, 2001, p. 228). It provides the theoretical perspective for this research because its focus is on "how people define their world and how that definition shapes their action" (p. 229). For these reasons, symbolic

interactionism provides the ideal perspective from which to conduct this study into the pragmatic issue of teacher leadership.

Symbolic interactionism, as a theoretical framework, does not specify methods for data collection and analysis, as those adopted need to respond best to the context and purpose of the study. This study employs qualitative research to help understand and explain the meaning of the phenomenon of teacher leadership with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible, while obtaining an understanding from the participants' perspective (Merriam, 1998).

4.3 Research Methods

In line with the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism, the design of this study involved two stages of research: an 'exploration' stage and an 'inspection' stage (Blumer, 1969; Charon, 2001). The exploration stage is designed to gain an understanding about 'what's going on around here', by describing in detail what is happening in the social situation and hence becoming more acquainted with the situation under review. The inspection stage is the second step and involves "isolating important elements within the situation and describing the situation in relation to those elements" (Charon, 2001, p. 208). The inspection procedure should be flexible, creative and imaginative. The exploration stage of this study gathered a broad range of data through experience sampling method, while the inspection stage gathered data through the use of focus groups. Following is a detailed discussion of the data gathering methods employed in this study.

4.3.1 Experience sampling method

Stage One - Exploration

Stage one of the data collection involved the use of "Experience Sampling Method" (Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 1981). This refers to a technique of

gathering data that is designed to allow people to document their thoughts, feelings and actions within the context of everyday life. Experience Sampling Method makes use of an electronic device to page the subject several times a day. In response to this signal, participants chart the course and experiences by completing a short survey of their current activities, thought companions and feelings. “Experience Sampling Method thus provides a more richly detailed picture of the day-to-day lives and emotions of participants than conventional surveys” (Bishay, 1996, p. 147).

In this study, Experience Sampling Method was employed to gather data from 16 teachers across three South-East Queensland Anglican schools. “The Experience Sampling Method offered a sustained method for capturing not only an individual’s activities over an extended period of time, but also that individual’s reactions to, and beliefs about, those activities” (Forgasz & Leder, 2003, p. 2). Employing Experience Sampling Method to collect data allowed the researcher to utilise modern technology to gain real insight into the “motivations, attitudes and beliefs associated with an individual’s behaviours, through extensive monitoring of activities over an extended period of time” (p. 3). In this research study, mobile telephone technology was used. Each participant was sent five short message service (SMS) messages a day for seven consecutive days. While the messages were sent at different times across the week, each message generally fell within a two-hour block.

Table 4.1 – Times of SMS messages

Day 1	8.30am	12.00pm	2.00pm	6.00pm	8.00pm
Day 2	9.00am	11.00am	1.30pm	4.00pm	7.00pm
Day 3	7.45am	10.30am	2.30pm	4.30pm	8.30pm
Day 4	7.30am	10.00am	3.00pm	5.00pm	9.30pm

Day 5	8.00am	11.30am	1.00pm	4.15pm	7.30pm
Day 6	9.30am	12.15pm	2.30pm	4.00pm	6.30pm
Day 7	10.30am	12.30pm	2.45pm	5.15pm	7.45pm

The researcher registered the mobile telephone numbers of each participant, with a communications company. At the times specified in Table 4.1, the researcher sent an email to the communications company. The technology enabled a text message to be sent simultaneously to the mobile phones of all 16 participants via a single email message. The researcher's own mobile telephone number was also registered and included in the bulk text mail to verify that each message was sent and received. A typical SMS text message read as follows: "Good morning all, could you please complete the next form now?" or "Last message of the day to be completed now please. Have a good sleep. See you in the morning". Upon receipt of each SMS message, participants were able to choose whether it was convenient for them to complete the Experience Sampling Form (Appendix 1). Participants were asked to complete the form within 30 minutes of receiving the SMS message, in order to convey more accurate information about their immediate practice and how they were feeling about it.

The participants were supplied with 35 Experience Sampling Forms on which they were to answer three questions each time they received a message:

1. What are you doing? How would you rate the challenge of the activity?
2. Why are you doing it? How important is it to you?
3. How are you feeling about what you are doing? Give a rating out of ten to describe your feelings.

The participants were able to complete the Experience Sampling Form anonymously, recording their answers and feelings as they conducted different activities associated with their teaching and leadership.

In order to make sense of the data, the researcher coded each Experience Sampling Form in the following way: The sixteen participants were labelled A-P; each data sheet was labelled according to the day, the message number for that day, and the question number.

For example K751 = Participant K, day 7, message number 5, question 1

K752 = Participant K, day 7, message number 5, question 2

K753 = Participant K, day 7, message number 5, question 3.

Each Experience Sampling Form contained three questions with three codes as above (one for each question). This method of coding enabled the data for each question to be extracted and grouped into similar categories, including source, without having to cut the data sheets to separate the three questions. In this way, the researcher was also able to maintain the connection between the three questions for each participant for each Experience Sampling Form completed.

Participants were asked to write a comment for each Experience Sampling Form and rate their feelings on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 = *Terrible, I wish I was doing something else*, and 10 = *Fantastic, there is nothing I would rather be doing*. There was no indication about what each number along this continuum meant, but rather participants were free to interpret their feelings and assign a rating in whatever way best suited them.

The researcher believed that asking teachers to record what they were doing, and how they felt about it at the time of actually doing it, would provide some very honest, rich data that may provide some initial understandings of teacher leadership, and may foreshadow some wider issues to be addressed during the second stage of the data collection.

4.3.2 Focus group interviews

Stage Two – Inspection

The researcher employed focus group interviews as a research tool, as interviewing is probably the most common form of data gathering in qualitative studies in education (Merriam, 1998). An interview gives the researcher an opportunity to engage in verbal interchange with a subject or group of subjects, in order to discover the beliefs, opinions and feelings regarding a range of issues of the phenomenon under study. Interviewing helps the researcher understand how people interpret the world around them. Most commonly, interviews follow a personal encounter, with one person eliciting information from others (Merriam, 1998). The primary purpose of interviews as a data gathering exercise is to find out “what is in and on someone else’s mind” (Patton, 1990, p. 278). This is not something that can be observed, and hence the researcher must ask questions to understand the perspective of the subjects.

Focus group interviews are a recognised qualitative research method, which encourage group interactions while collecting quality data and gaining an insight into the participants’ perceptions, attitudes, feelings and ideas (Wilson, 1997). Not only do they provide significant data in a short period of time, but research literature notes that focus group interviews are particularly well suited to “uncovering the complexity of layers that shape thinking...(and reflect)...life experiences” (Madriz, 2003, p. 383). The interaction between the participants is particularly useful for providing a method of articulating rich

data that reflects the different beliefs and experiences. The rich data emerges from the ways that the participants take account of each other, symbolically communicate, take one another's role and "interpret one another's acts" (Charon, 2001, p. 153). Through use of focus group interviews, the synergy of the group was able to add depth and insight to the research questions (Anderson, 1990).

Three different focus groups (one from each school) met with the researcher to discuss the research questions in a non-threatening environment. Groups A and C contained five teachers while Group B contained six teachers (See Table 4.3). This inspection stage of the data collection gave the opportunity to introduce a fourth question – What support do in-class teacher leaders need? - What enables or inhibits your work as teacher leaders? While the three focus groups covered similar questions, the direction of the discussion was determined largely by the response of the participants.

The focus group interviews took place at a time that suited each group of teachers. School C interview was the first to be conducted during the school day, followed by School A after school, one week later. The final interview for School B was conducted during lunch time when all staff were available, one week later. The order of the school interviews explains the coding for the staff (School C – Participants A-E; School A – Participants F-J; School B – Participants K-P). Each focus group interview was conducted in a quiet room located in the administration building of each school. Permission was sought from each participant at the outset to have the interviews digitally recorded. This allowed the researcher to focus on the process and dynamics of the interview while accurately recording the raw data. Consistent with the literature, focus group interviews were digitally recorded to capture the potentially rich data, transcribed to facilitate data analysis and checked with the participants for accuracy. This process ensured that the participants and the researcher were satisfied that the transcription was an accurate

representation of the discussion from each interview. Apart from the odd comment like “Gee I never realised that I do not complete my sentences” (Participant D), the feedback was all reassuringly positive and confirmed the accuracy of the transcriptions and intention of comment.

The key to effective focus group data collection, of course, is the quality of the questions. In this study, focus group interviews used sequenced, open-ended questions, each with its own purpose. While not prescriptive, questions followed this general pattern:

- What do you see as Teacher Leadership? What activities and practices are involved?
- Why do you do these things?
- How do you feel about doing these things?
- Do you feel that you have a real choice about doing these things?
- Why do you keep doing it?
- What support do you need as a teacher leader?
- What support do you receive from colleagues and administration in your teacher leadership?
- What inhibits your teacher leadership? What are the impediments and obstacles to becoming a teacher leader?
- How have you overcome these impediments?
- Do you feel that leadership responsibilities overall add to or detract from a teaching career?

Analysis of data followed as soon as possible after the focus group sessions concluded.

4.4 Participants

The boundaries of this study are three Anglican schools from South-East Queensland. The researcher made an appointment, through the Principal of

each school, to speak to the staff at a full staff meeting about the proposed study. This brief introduction to the study outlined the proposal and purpose of the study and interested teachers were invited to make direct contact with the researcher or to approach the Principal. The researcher followed up with the Principal of each school to gather names of those who had expressed interest. The selection of participants for this research study is non-probabilistic, purposeful sampling (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). Careful, rather than random, selection of participants enabled the researcher to match criteria central to the purpose of the study, and hence make the research meaningful.

The following criteria were used to select the participants:

- View classroom teaching as their primary, full time responsibility.
- Recognised as teacher leaders in their school communities.
- Available for interaction with the researcher.
- Consent to interviews and possible observation on site.
- Have a genuine desire to engage in leadership activities within their school.

Five teachers from each school were selected (with a sixth enthusiastic teacher added in School B). This size sample ensured an “adequate number of participants” (Merriam, 1998, p. 64) were engaged to explore the research problem from a variety of perspectives. Participants were selected as follows:

- Teachers asked to nominate their peers (or themselves).
- Department heads asked to nominate teachers.
- Principal to nominate teachers.

Each nominator was asked to nominate up to three teacher leaders. Patton (1990) refers to this as chain or network sampling. Nominations were

collated, and the five teachers who received the most endorsements from each school were selected. This procedure ensured that the most suitable persons were identified through multiple independent, but informed sources. The most endorsed teachers were formally invited to participate in this study (Appendix 2). The participants, their schools, assigned codes and current roles are shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Participants from each school and their roles

School A			School B			School C		
Name	Code	Role	Name	Code	Role	Name	Code	Role
Paula	F	Teacher	Martin	K	Coordinator	Sharon	A	Teacher
Vicki	G	Coordinator	James	L	Teacher	Leanne	B	Coordinator
Wayne	H	Teacher	Karen	M	Teacher	Amy	C	Teacher
Sue	I	Teacher	Tom	N	Coordinator	Kathy	D	Coordinator
Geoff	J	Teacher	Joshua	O	Coordinator	Colin	E	Teacher
			Heidi	P	Teacher			

The gender balance within schools may reflect the fact that the three schools represented: one male only school (B), one female only school (C) and one coeducational school (A). However, overall gender balance was quite even with a male:female ratio of 7:9. The participants ranged from inexperienced (1-5 years) to very experienced (15+ years) (See Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 – Details of participants

Name	Gender	Teaching experience	Code	School
Sharon	Female	5-10 years	A	C
Leanne	Female	15+ years	B	C
Amy	Female	10-15 years	C	C
Kathy	Female	15+ years	D	C
Colin	Male	1-5 years	E	C

Paula	Female	1-5 years	F	A
Vicki	Female	15+ years	G	A
Wayne	Male	15+ years	H	A
Sue	Female	5-10 years	I	A
Geoff	Male	1-5 years	J	A
Martin	Male	15+ years	K	B
James	Male	15+ years	L	B
Karen	Female	10-15 years	M	B
Tom	Male	15+ years	N	B
Joshua	Male	15+ years	O	B
Heidi	Female	15+ years	P	B

4.5 The Researcher

The literature describes the qualitative researcher as being interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed about their world through their experiences (Merriam, 1998, p. 6). As the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, the qualitative researcher must be responsive to the context; must adapt techniques to the circumstances; consider the total context; expand what is known about the situation through sensitivity to non-verbal aspects; process data immediately; clarify and summarize as the study evolves and explore anomalous responses (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). The qualitative researcher is limited by the fallibility of being human and must be careful to avoid making mistakes, missing opportunities or allowing personal biases to interfere with the study. To avoid these pitfalls the qualitative researcher must be able to tolerate ambiguity, be a sensitive observer and analyst, and a good communicator able to empathise, establish rapport, ask good questions and listen intently (Merriam, 1998, p. 23).

As noted in Chapter One, the researcher is the Foundation Principal of a South-East Queensland Anglican school, having held this position since 1996. While the researcher enjoys a professional and personal relationship with the principals of each of the three schools involved in this study, there is no such relationship between the researcher and the participants. While the researcher was familiar with the professional standing of some of the participants prior to this study, their selection as participants was voluntary and determined solely within each school. Seventy-five percent of participants were unknown to the researcher upon commencement of this study. During the course of this study, mutual trust and rapport between researcher and participants was established.

4.6 Data Collection, Analysis and Interpretation Procedures

A greater understanding of the research problem under investigation is realised by analysing and making sense of the data collected (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). However, the collection, analysis and interpretation of qualitative data is a complicated process. The most efficient way to analyse data is to do so as they are being collected. This ensures that the data collected are increasingly relevant, and support the aims and purposes of the study. A number of authors suggest useful guidelines to make sense of the data (Huberman & Miles, 1984; Merriam, 1998; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). A description of the elements of the study design is provided in Table 4.4:

Table 4.4 Overview of data collection and analysis methods

RESEARCH STAGE	RESEARCH STEP	RESEARCH METHOD	DESCRIPTION
Exploration	Step 1	Experience Sampling Method	16 teachers from three schools each complete 35 Experience Sampling Forms over a seven day period
	Step 2	Data analysis	Experience Sampling Forms are sorted, coded and categorised, (1 st order interpretation)

	Step 3	Data analysis	Key themes of teachers' work, motivation and feelings identified (2 nd order interpretation)
Inspection	Step 4	Focus group interviews	Conduct focus interviews at three schools. School C – 5 teachers, School A – 5 teachers, School B – 6 teachers
	Step 5	Data analysis	Transcribe interviews and check with participants for accuracy
	Step 6	Data analysis	Code data, identify themes
	Step 7	Data interpretation	Assign general theoretical significance to findings (3 rd order interpretation)

This research study generated a significant amount of data via experience sampling forms (exploration stage), and the focus group interview tape recordings (inspection stage). The research is better understood by analysing and making sense of the data collected. It was important, therefore, that the data collected related to the study, so that what became important to analyse emerged from the data itself, out of a process of inductive reasoning (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Creating meaning and forming conclusions about data collected, requires an appropriate method of analysis. Analysing the data is like a staged distillation process. A large amount of data is collected, coded and collated. Like a large filtering system, the raw data are crystallized into mini themes, which are then condensed into larger key themes. These themes are then used to answer the research questions and prepare the conclusion for the study. Figure 4.1 describes the data analysis process.

The researcher adopted a three-step iterative process to analyse and interpret the data (Neuman, 2006, p. 160). The first order interpretation involved learning about the research problem from the meaning revealed by the participants. This led to grouping and categorising their replies to the questions on the Experience Sampling Forms. The second order

interpretation involved the researcher generating themes and exploring these further through the focus group interviews for further distillation and fine-tuning of the data. Finally, the third order interpretation involved assigning general theoretical significance to the research findings.

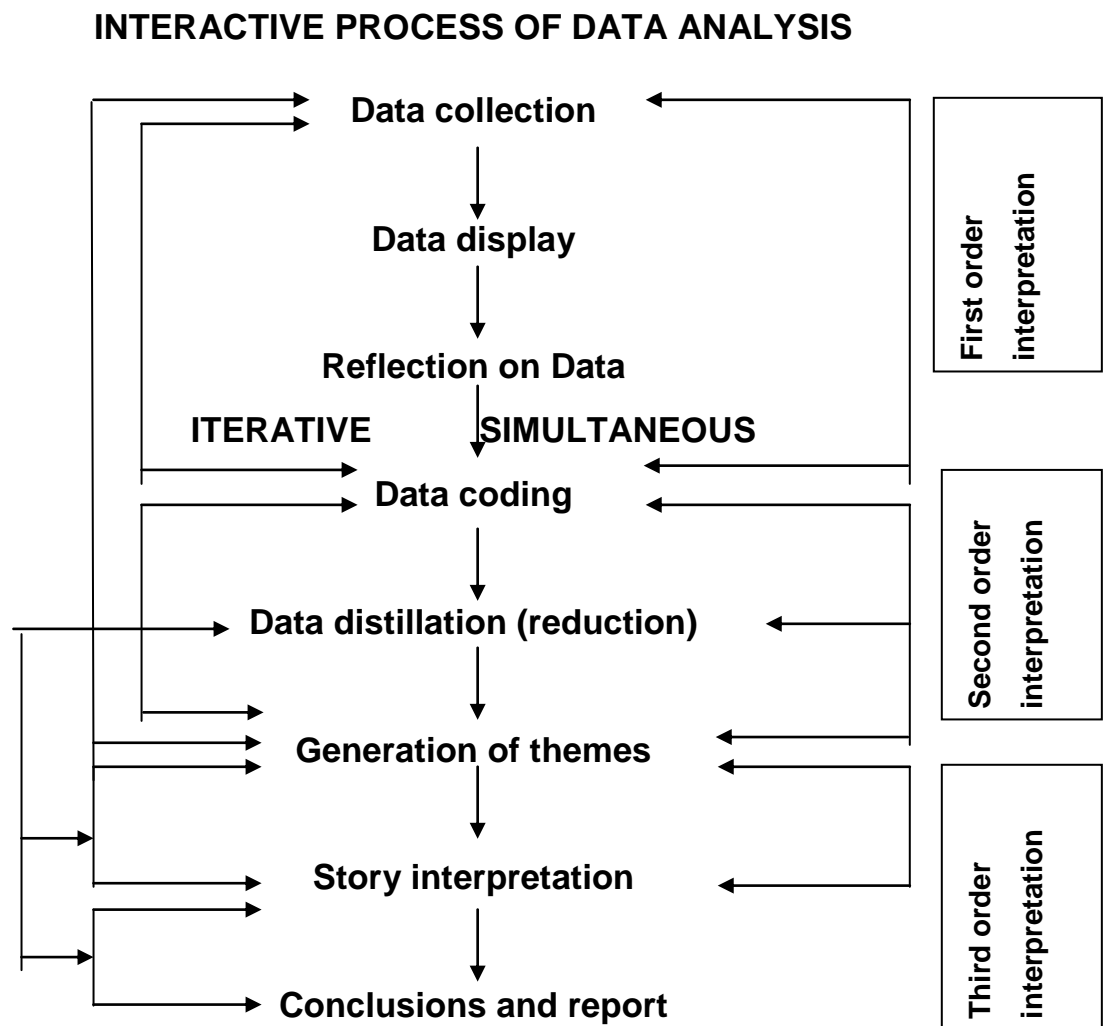


Figure 4.1 Data analysis process

Having gained extensive data from the Experience Sampling Forms during the exploration stage of the research, the follow up focus group interviews assisted the researcher in developing subthemes and themes. The transcriptions of the focus group interviews were read several times to

provide the researcher with greater understanding of what themes were first identified in the Experience Sampling Forms. Table 4.5 provides an example of the emergence of one such theme.

Table 4.5 Sample of coding procedure

Text	Sub-theme	Theme
<p>“I think you earn a position as some sort of mentor rather than a leader, I think, by what you do. So if I can write curriculum units or if I can give a demonstration lesson or whatever, that’s what I can do. It doesn’t mean that I’m a leader, it just means that I can contribute at that level” (Participant D)</p>	Assisting colleagues	Leading beyond the classroom
<p>“I see it [teacher leadership] as a teacher making himself or herself available to other teachers to assist in any way” (Participant B)</p>		
<p>“I am quite heavily involved in the staff association. Ensuring that staff have a life outside of school I think is very important to their teaching” (Participant J)</p>	Staff related activities	
<p>“The extra curricular activities that we do. That’s part of the leadership role” (Participant N)</p>	Extracurricular activities	
<p>“I find a lot of kids outside my classroom come to me, so that’s where I find I’m a leader in that area” (Participant F)</p>	Interviewing	

With almost 550 Experience Sampling Forms, analysing the data was a complex process. In order to make sense of the data, the researcher gathered similar responses for each of the questions and categorised them conceptually in a first order data analysis. By extracting common themes

from the focus group transcripts in the second order interpretation, the researcher was able to gain a greater understanding about what participants saw as constituting teacher leadership. Other themes were developed in the same way. Taking advice from Anfara, Brown and Mangione (2002), the researcher provides an example of the progressive interpretation of the data in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Progressive interpretation of the data

Research Sub Question 1: Behaviour of teacher leaders -What do they do?

1st order interpretation		2nd order interpretation	3rd order interpretation
Experience Sampling Method		Focus Group interview	Assertions informed by General theoretical significance
Specific activities	Subthemes	Themes	Assertions
Classroom teaching Supervision Extra tuition Lesson preparation Marking Correction Planning Reporting Syllabus writing Desk administration Class administration Sport training Self study Professional development Cocurricular activities Meeting with colleagues Talking to students/parents Travel to and from, excursion activities	Teaching, instruction Preparation, correction, reporting Administration, routine matters Leisure activities Extra curricular activities Home duties Staff related matters Interviewing Excursions Unwell	Leading beyond the classroom Improving educational practice and student outcomes	Teacher leadership is a complex phenomenon Harris, (2004a); Crowther et al., (2002); Lambert, (2003); Katzenmeyer & Moller, (2001)

4.7 Rigour

There is continuing debate and conflict across all paradigms regarding exactly what validity is and “what constitutes rigorous research” (Lincoln & Guba 2000, p. 178). There is no single ‘correct’ interpretation of data in qualitative research (Wolcott, 1990). In qualitative research, rigour is about ensuring that raw data are collected and processed credibly (Lincoln, 2001, p. 25), and “what you say you have observed is, in fact, what really happened” (Shank, 2002, p. 92). Lincoln & Guba (2000) recommend that qualitative research focus on building relationships with participants, taking stances and enabling and promoting justice, and that work should be judged accordingly. It is the “researcher’s presence, the nature of the interaction between researcher and participants, the triangulation of data, the interpretation of perceptions, and the rich, thick descriptions” (Merriam 1998, p. 150), that gives qualitative research its rigour. In short, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are appropriate criteria for assessing qualitative research quality and rigour (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002, p. 30).

Within qualitative research, constructivist research paradigm links the notion of rigour of the research method with issues of trustworthiness and authenticity. “Findings must relate to some reality (authenticity) and how to construct their world (trustworthiness) such that a reader would be confident in acting on the conclusions, implications and recommendations they yield” (Toma, 2006, p. 410). Symbolic interactionism as the theoretical framework provides additional comfort regarding the trustworthiness of the research as it aims to develop an understanding of the individual within a social setting, making no claim to sweeping generalisations of the research findings (Charon, 2001).

Along with trustworthiness, rigour in research is also achieved by addressing concerns in the literature regarding authenticity (Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

Authenticity is demonstrated where the findings are reflected by the research data. One concern expressed about symbolic interactionism as a theoretical framework is “the credibility of what is seen as subjective research techniques” (Sturman, 1997, p. 64). The concept of triangulation is important in achieving credibility. “Triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data or methods of data collection” (Creswell, 2002, p. 280). Apart from triangulation of data, the researcher may include member checks (checking data and initial interpretations with the participants); participatory modes of research (involving participants in all phases of research); and declaring the researcher’s bias from the outset (assumptions, worldview, theoretical orientation) (Merriam, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). By gathering data from multiple sources, the researcher is able to minimise any bias from one particular data source. Research authenticity also requires the avoidance of researcher bias. Without drawing on different data sources, it can be difficult to know how much of what the researcher sees is the product of an earnest, but unconscious, wish to see it so (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Within this research study, the researcher employed the following strategies to ensure appropriate levels of trustworthiness and authenticity:

1. Member checks- participants were provided with transcripts of the focus group interviews and the researchers’ initial interpretations, for verification. Participants were also contacted via telephone and email to follow up the interviews and to gain further clarification.
2. Peer examination – the researcher discussed the findings with colleagues during the interpretation of data.
3. Clarification of researcher bias – the position of the researcher was declared and discussed in Section 4.5 and in Chapter One.
4. Methodological triangulation – the researcher gathered data through Experience Sampling Method and focus group interviews.

5. Data triangulation - sixteen participants from three schools were involved in the study. Each participant completed 35 Experience Sampling Method data sheets during a week-long investigation. A focus group interview took place in each of the three schools where participants were engaged in conversation to provide the researcher with greater understanding of the raw Experience Sampling Method data. Every participant's opinion was sought, obtained and verified through the transcripts of the interviews.
6. Theory triangulation – through the literature, theories of educational leadership and teacher leadership were examined in reference to the data. A range of assertions were identified and tested out in interpreting the data and building theory.
7. Thick description – the researcher attempted to describe teacher leadership from the perspective of the teachers themselves in sufficiently rich detail so readers could follow the research study and draw their own conclusions.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

Although there are differing perspectives on the matter, educational research must ultimately follow a set of ethical principles. Ethics is the cornerstone of research. All symbolic interactionist research is concerned with producing valid and trustworthy knowledge in an ethical manner (Merriam, 1998). With this in mind, this research study was guided by ethical principles that contributed to the trustworthiness of the data (Silverman, 2001).

The nature of this study required an emphasis on a respectful relationship between the researcher and participants (Lincoln & Guba, 2000), that involved mutual trust and support. The participants were selected on a voluntary basis and most were previously unknown to the researcher. Throughout the study, the researcher treated the participants with respect

and honesty. Hence, the approach to ethics underlying this research study adopted key ethical issues of respect for participants, researcher-participant relationships and the professional standards relating to data collection, storage and dissemination of findings (Merriam, 1998).

The nature of the data collection during this study involved a degree of focus on the personal as well as professional lives of the participants. They completed data sheets five times a day for seven days between the hours of 7.30am and 9.30pm. On occasions during this time, they were not at school, but involved in personal and family matters. The research process ensured that there was no risk of embarrassment, loss of standing, employment or self esteem (Stake, 2000). The researcher was ever mindful of the need to morally and ethically care for and respect the participants' privacy and well being. The participants were advised verbally and on their informed consent form (Appendix 3), that they could withdraw from the study at any time without explanation, and with their confidentiality respected. Further, each of the participants and schools involved in the study were given pseudonyms and codes to protect their identity.

It was important during the focus group interviews that the researcher remembered that he was a guest in the three schools involved in the study. As such, good manners and strict adherence to a code of ethics (Stake, 1994) were essential. In addition, it was important to conduct the focus group interviews in an appropriate manner that ensured that all participants' viewpoints were not only heard, but also captured fully and accurately. This involved the researcher encouraging all participants to participate actively in the discussion, recording the conversation and accurately transcribing the recording. All participants were given the opportunity to critically review the transcripts of the focus group interviews to ensure accurate representation, and the opportunity to shape the final results of the study consistent with their experience. The researcher also needed to put his own viewpoints to one

side and fully engage with those of the participants. This was particularly important given the possible claim that the researcher may have had a vested interest in the results of the study, or may have revealed the confidential thoughts of participants to the principals of the schools, who were professional colleagues and friends of the researcher.

The ethical integrity of the study was further ensured by storing the raw and coded data in a locked filing cabinet which was inaccessible to all others. This study was conducted under the guidelines of the Australian Catholic University Research Projects Ethics Committee. (See Appendix 4 for the required ethics approval). Further, approval was sought and given by the Executive Director of the Anglican Schools Commission and the principals and Chairs of Council from each participating school. Moreover, permission was gained to allow participants to keep their mobile telephones switched on during the course of the study. In short, every safeguard was adopted to ensure the integrity and trustworthiness of this research study.

4.9 Limitations and Delimitations

While the significance of this research study was noted in Chapter One, it is acknowledged that the study is limited in scope, focusing only on three South-East Queensland Anglican schools. Moreover, this research study has focused on only 16 participants to provide a more informed and sophisticated understanding about teacher leadership from the perspective of the classroom teacher. The findings of this study relate specifically to the three schools involved in the study and cannot make any claim regarding the remaining Anglican schools in South-East Queensland. Patton (1990) reminds us that qualitative research provides perspective rather than truth, hence the external validity of this research is dependent on its “reader or user generalisability” (Merriam, 1998, p. 211), or “case-to-case transfer” (Firestone, 1993, p. 16), where the reader determines the applicability of one case to another. In this study, the reader may be more interested in

generalizing than the researcher, and the rich, thick description (Merriam, 1998, p. 211) provided in this study may serve this purpose.

Further, this research acknowledges the inherent limitations of both the constructivist research paradigm and the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). This study aims to develop a more informed and sophisticated understanding of teacher leadership from the perspective of the classroom teacher, making no claims to objective knowledge, verified hypotheses and established facts typically found in a positivist research paradigm. Similarly, there is no empirical analysis or proven conclusion, as the focus of the research study is the perspective of the participant teacher leaders. On the contrary, the research has generated rich descriptions from the perspective of the participants, interpreted and presented as their reality. Other teachers and the administrators from the schools in this study may well have provided a different perspective, yet their opinions were not sought, and are not relevant to this research narrative. Reliance upon a limited data source required awareness to ensure that the study gathered and generated trustworthy data.

As outlined in Chapter One, the impetus for this research study arose from a pragmatic concern for teacher leadership. The focus emerged from the researcher's professional interest in teacher leadership within an Anglican school. This choice of research topic potentially reflects the researcher's bias and self-interest and may provide a further limitation on this research study. However, despite acknowledging the limitations of this study, it will nevertheless make an important contribution to the existing understanding of teacher leadership, given its emphasis on the perspective of the classroom teacher.

4.10 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to gain a more informed and sophisticated understanding of teacher leadership in South-East Queensland Anglican schools, particularly from the classroom teachers' perspective. This chapter provides an overview of the design of this study as well as justifying the various methodological choices. Firstly, symbolic interactionism was outlined as a research method as it "adds to our understanding of the sociology of knowledge" (Charon, 2001, p. 228). Further, it provides a theoretical perspective for this research because its focus is on "how people define their world and how that definition shapes their action" (Charon, 2001, p. 229). Secondly, it has detailed the two-stage research design of exploration and inspection, involving qualitative research methods. Thirdly, it outlined how the data were collected, organised and analysed using a three-step iterative approach to analysis and interpretation that moved from the meaning attributed by participants in the study, through identification of themes, and finally to the assignment of theoretical significance to the research findings. Fourthly, it outlined the process for selecting participants and the role of the researcher. Finally, this chapter considered the issue of rigour and the various ethical considerations as well as the limitations and delimitations within this study. The following chapter presents and analyses the data gathered by this research.

Chapter 5 Presentation and Analysis of Data

5.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to present and analyse the data gathered by the various research methods identified in Chapter Four. In line with a symbolic interactionist approach to research, this research study involved a two-stage research design of “exploration” and “inspection” (Charon, 2001, p. 208). Within this research study, the exploration stage involved the researcher in collating the data and identifying specific issues for further investigation. Here, the researcher engaged a “first-order interpretation” (Neuman, 2006, p. 160) of the data with the intention of learning more about the research problem from the meaning ascribed by the participants in this research study. A second stage, the inspection stage, focused on the specific issues identified in the exploration stage and involved the researcher in identifying key coded elements and, eventually, themes within the data. This inspection stage required a “second-order interpretation” of the data, as the researcher looked for underlying coherence or sense of meaning in the focus group interview data. Table 4.4 (p. 101) outlined the steps involved in both exploration and inspection stages of this research study.

Within this chapter, the data are presented and analysed around the research question and research sub-questions.

Research question:

How do teachers, who are recognised as teacher leaders in South-East Queensland Anglican schools, conceptualise teacher leadership?

Research sub-questions:

Behaviour of teacher leaders -What do they do?

Purpose of teacher leadership -Why do teachers strive for this?

Feelings of teacher leaders -How do they feel about what they do?

Support for teacher leaders -What do they need?

5.2 Conceptualising Teacher Leadership?

In response to the overall research question, it should be noted that throughout this research study, the participants struggled to conceptualise teacher leadership. Their understanding of teacher leadership was very narrow and led the researcher to consider a theme emerging from the first and second-order interpretations of the data: namely, teacher leaders work in formal out-of class roles.

5.2.1 Theme 1: Teacher leaders work in formal, out-of-class roles

Despite being nominated as teacher leaders by their colleagues and the school administration, the participants in this research study simply did not see themselves as leaders:

I don't see myself as a leader. I don't see myself doing anything extraordinary (Participant C).

Yeah, I was thinking about this as we were doing it, and I thought, I don't know why I am involved because I'm not really a leader (Participant A).

Such comments did not reflect false modesty, rather this lack of recognition of their role as teacher leaders seemed to be due to their paradigm of

leadership, which reflected a very narrow view of hierarchical leadership. As one participant commented – *My vision of leadership is the team captain with a ‘follow me boys’ sort of attitude, and I don’t see myself in that role (Participant H)*. For the participants in this research study, leadership was the prerogative of those with formal leadership roles and not of those primarily in the classroom:

It comes back to your definition of leadership too, because you may have someone who is in the classroom, who may be extremely effective but never considered by anyone else to be a leader, because people don’t see what’s in the classroom. It may be that their position is leadership in the classroom not leadership in the school (Participant B).

However, in the course of this research study, and in particular during the focus group interviews, participants came to appreciate the leadership they offered as teachers:

We think we can add value to the experience of students (Participant C).

At the same time, they recognised that teacher leadership was about inspiring others and creating energy to move forward:

You aim to inspire at the teacher level (Participant E).

I think It’s about inspiring other people to give their best as well (Participant C).

I think it’s about inspiration (Participant E).

It’s about creating energy to move a group forward (Participant I).

Teacher leadership was also linked to collegial relationships:

When you say teacher leadership, I don't have the image of one teacher leading other teachers, but I see it as a teacher making herself or himself available to other teachers to assist in any way (Participant B).

Moreover, this teacher leadership was described as “servant leadership” rather than a traditional model. One participant described assisting each other as *-more like that servant leadership model that the school would like the kids to take on board (Participant A)*, and she was quick to add *- I never feel like it's a hierarchical thing*. Within the focus group interview, this comment attracted a unanimous *No!* (Participants A, B, C, D, E).

Yet again, a leader does not need to be the person out the front getting everyone to follow them, but rather:

You are in the midst of it - creating energy - and you are actually the one who says 'ok, let's make some energy for this task, or whatever we are doing, and that's what makes the motion happen. It's not you leading them forward but you energizing them to take them forward, and encourage them (Participant I).

In short, the participants, in this research study, struggled to recognise themselves as teacher leaders due to their paradigm of leadership that linked teacher leadership with formal positions outside the classroom. In spite of this narrow understanding of teacher leadership, they recognised that teachers could be persons of influence. For these participants, teacher leadership was associated with collegial relationships and service, though not widely recognised as such. These findings were confirmed as the researcher posed the four research sub-questions and sought more information about what these teacher leaders do, why they do it, how they feel about what they do, and what support they need.

5.3 Behaviour of Teacher Leaders - What do they do?

This question was designed to collect data in respect to the behaviours of these teacher leaders. In the exploration stage of the study, the Experience Sampling Method identified a wide variety of participant activity during the period of monitoring. The preliminary first-order interpretation of the Experience Sampling Forms enabled the collation of these activities into ten different categories. Table 5.1 displays examples of the specific activities and the overarching categories.

Table 5.1 Categories for teacher activities

Examples of Specific Activity	Category
Classroom teaching, supervision, extra tuition	Teaching/Instruction
Lesson preparation, marking, correction, planning, reporting, syllabus writing	Preparation/Correction/Reporting
Desk administration, travel, class administration, assembly	Administration/Routine matters
TV, outing, exercise, reading	Leisure activities
Sport training, self study, professional development, cocurricular activities – fundraising, debating etc	Extra curricular activities
Meal preparation, eating, cleaning, shopping, resting, preparation with children, gardening, medical	Home duties
Social activities, meetings with colleagues	Staff related activities
Talking to students, talking to parents	Interviewing
Travel to and from excursion activities with students	Excursions
Sick, in bed during day, at doctor	Unwell

This first-order interpretation of the data revealed ten distinct categories of participant activity. Clearly, 'home duties' and 'leisure activities', could be eliminated from further investigation, as they were not related to work at school. This elimination left eight work-related activities, examples of which are included below.

Teaching/Instruction

The majority of responses described participants involved in teaching duties. For example: *Teaching Mathematics to a Year 10 class (N111)*; *Helping a Year 12 Chemistry class do a prac on reaction rates (M121)*; *Working with students as they complete current assessment tasks (F121)*; *Teaching Year 7 English using multiple intelligences and Bloom's taxonomy in a reading activity (B321)*.

Preparation/Correction/Reporting

Most described preparing for upcoming classes such as - *Reading over Chemistry notes for tomorrow's Science lesson (F521)*; *Creating powerpoint presentations for Monday's Ancient History class (C641)*. Some described typical correction work such as -*Marking book reviews (J751)*; *Marking work handed in last week (B641)*. There was some activity describing reporting - *Reviewing student self-reporting comments for entry onto their reports (B631)*.

Administration/Routine Matters

There were a range of administration activities that were either something out of the ordinary, such as - *Ringing travel agent in Sydney to organise a*

History tour to Europe (O141); or the more mundane, routine activities that are typical of a teacher's work - House administration, chasing up absences (N711); Photocopying (L421); Clearing my emails and working on debating society awards (K421); Making reminder labels to go in student diaries to remind them about the Year 8 Service (I711); Checking uniforms and diaries (A111).

Extra Curricular Activities

These activities revolved around sport - *Rugby training (M241); Coaching my Year 8 netball team (F531); Working in the tuckshop to help out on rugby day (M521)*. Some were engaged in study - *Starting to write up my assignment after collating the data yesterday (E611)*. Others attended professional development activities - *Listening to a speaker at the inservice day (I421)*.

Staff-Related Activities

These activities described participants working together - *Liaising with a colleague about our work programme (J721); Meeting with English teachers about novel assessment items (G241); Talking with the Head of Business Department (E231)*, or social occasions - *Talking to other staff about social issues (A411)*.

Interviewing

Participants reported occasions where they had cause to speak to students - *Interviewing a Year 10 boy who was dropped off at the bus stop but did not appear at school (N211); Interviewing a student during lunch (L131); Having a discussion with a student (behaviour problem) outside my room as my students continue with their work (G331)*, or parents - *Meeting a parent about a child's progress (J211)*.

Excursions

Some participants were busy taking students on an excursion - *Tour of Parliament House with Year 7 students (B221); Sitting on bus returning from Brisbane (B231); Just arriving at school after excursion (D331); Listening to 'Tim' give a tour of Parliament House in Brisbane (D321).*

Unwell

Some participants even managed to complete the experience sampling forms while they were ill at home -*Making some hot tea with lemon and brandy (K751); Ill in bed (K711); Filling in this form. I am sick today so spending the day in bed (C511); Picking up some medicine I left at work yesterday (E541).*

To gain further insight into the work of teacher leaders, it is also appropriate to consider the proportion of time that participants spent on each of these work-related activities. Table 5.2 displays the proportion of time spent in each of these areas during this study.

Table 5.2 Proportion of time spent in each activity category

Category	Time Proportion
Teaching/Instruction	15%
Preparation/Correction/Reporting	14%
Administration/Routine matters	12%
Leisure activities	18.7%
Extra curricular activities	10%
Home duties	19.6%
Staff related activities	6%

Interviewing	2.4%
Excursions	0.7%
Unwell	1.6%

Approximately 60% of all activities recorded during the study were schoolwork related, yet less than 35% of messages were sent during what might be called 'regular' school hours (8.30am-3.30pm). Participants are engaged in their work (as teachers and leaders) well beyond 'regular' school hours. The type of activities occupying the participants outside regular school hours included:

- *Driving home from debating after adjudicating and coaching responsibilities (8.30pm Wednesday B251)*
- *Organising fundraising events and raffles and sending stationery donated to Africa (5.00pm Wednesday A241)*
- *Working in the tuck shop to help out on rugby days (12.30pm Saturday M521)*
- *At school Chapel at the service of Institution of Prefects (7.45pm Sunday L651)*
- *Taking team photos for school magazine (4.23pm Wednesday H241)*
- *At rugby – hydrating players, first aid, strapping etc (2.30pm Saturday M531)*
- *Writing an article for the MYSA newsletter on Middle Schooling transitions for teachers (10.33am Sunday G611)*
- *Previewing video for Year 9 History – The Last Emperor (2.48pm Sunday O631)*
- *Making up answer sheets for Year 11 Chemistry revision sheets (10.30pm Thursday L351)*
- *Preparing materials for a Mathematics lesson (7.45am Friday J411)*
- *Preparing work for upcoming week (4.05pm Saturday F541)*

- *Reading over Chemistry notes for tomorrow's Science lesson (8.50pm Wednesday F251)*
- *Preparing lessons for tomorrow and watching an Ancient History programme on TV (7.45pm Sunday C651)*
- *Marking papers (8.10pm Monday O751)*
- *Sitting in bed marking Science assignments (9.50pm Wednesday L251)*

This snapshot highlights the variety of activities undertaken beyond regular school hours and the days and times when they were conducted.

By responding to the SMS messages and completing Experience Sampling Forms during the exploration stage, participants provided a picture of their work at school. This data collection method enabled the researcher to be an absent observer of the teachers' daily activity, and revealed they spent a significant amount of time out of school hours engaged in teaching/leading activities. In addition, the researcher identified eight categories of work related activity. This first-order interpretation caused the researcher to wonder whether these activities represented teacher leader behaviour. This issue was investigated further during the inspection stage focus group interviews that followed. Subsequently, a second-order interpretation of the data from the first research sub-question revealed two interrelated themes: leading beyond the classroom, and leading within the collegial team.

5.3.1 Theme 2: Leading beyond the classroom

Within the three focus group interviews, participants provided a number of examples in respect to teacher leaders leading beyond the classroom. These examples highlighted the teacher leaders' commitment to support for each other and mentoring their colleagues. Some described the importance of social support:

I am quite heavily involved in the staff association. Ensuring that staff have a life outside of school I think is very important to their teaching. I like to lighten the load on teachers on a Friday afternoon [Friday drinks]. Let them have a bit of a wind down. So they are free to 'let it all hang out' for a change (Participant J).

Moreover, the idea of sharing resources was common amongst the participants, where some spoke of *using each other's materials, recycling resources from each other (Participant J)*. This sharing of resources also involved working together with colleagues:

From the English department's point of view, if we're stuck on something then you go to the other English teachers of Year 11, and you work together to put together some lesson plan or overcome a hurdle or obstacle in your own understanding, so that when you go into the classroom you can actually deliver appropriate material (Participant A).

Others saw leading beyond the classroom in terms of mentoring their colleagues, students and parents:

I guess leadership involves mentoring, and not only students, but also fellow colleagues and in some regard mentoring parents as well, and offering them guidance (Participant G).

It's more guidance than anything. That's a big part of it (Participant F).

One participant described her leadership in terms of a reciprocal arrangement of mutual support and assistance. It seems that there is a fine line between leading and being led:

Part of leadership is being confident in being able to say to someone else 'that's OK, I can help you with that', because every time I have needed assistance with something, there has always been someone there who has been able to say 'don't worry about that, we can do it this way'. Now I have the confidence to say to someone else 'that's ok, you know we can do this to ease the load on you'. So, it's reciprocal, almost like mentoring so that when someone is in a flap I have the confidence to say, 'I'll handle that for you' because someone else has done that for me (Participant I).

This view was supported by another who suggested that:

There is so much support [for each other] that if you are having one of those low moments or low times, someone else just picks up the bundle for you (Participant G).

Even where there were formal leaders appointed there was clearly a lot of informal leadership occurring:

In the LOTE department, we have a very capable head of department, but we just bounce ideas off each other. Whether you're the French teacher, German teacher, Chinese teacher or Japanese teacher, we professionally seek each other's advice and we're all leaders in that we help each other out when we can (Participant E).

Just because you have a badge that says Head of Faculty, if a teacher knows that you are an ineffective head of faculty then they won't go to you. They will find the person that they really see as a leader, and that's the person who makes themselves available regardless of the hierarchy, regardless of anything else. That's who is the leader (Participant D).

Some saw their teacher leadership as more practical, through involvement in the extra activities that occurred beyond the classroom:

I think the sport that we... it doesn't have to be sport, I suppose mine is sport,...but the extra cocurricular activities that we do. That's part of that leadership role (Participant N).

We've got a strong services programme in this place too (Participant M).

That's not just armed services...that's community services and other things like that (Participant K).

First of all, in order to be a service supporter you've got to have some form of background, some form of knowledge of what you're doing. Not only that, but I believe that you've also got to have a principle of service, so that you can go out there and assist the boys to do an activity which is completely different from what they are experiencing here (Participant L).

In short, in terms of what teacher leaders do, participants demonstrated a commitment to leading beyond the classroom.

5.3.2 Theme 3: Leading within the collegial team

Within the three focus group interviews, participants provided a number of examples in respect of teacher leaders working in teams. Here, participants believed that individual teachers had something to contribute to improving educational practice through their leadership:

There are different aspects that each teacher brings with them, whether they are a beginning teacher, or a teacher that might have a particular role within the year level, there's a sense of an energy around that person, creating some kind of forward motion (Participant I).

However, this was not an individualistic understanding of teacher leadership as it was clearly understood that the team was more productive:

Every single teacher in my close teaching team is so odd. We fit together so well, and for some reason as a whole, we are able to imagine wonderful things. There's a strength that there is no way you could achieve on your own (Participant G).

In contributing to the team and working with colleagues, there was a sense that leadership involves teachers sharing their specific areas of expertise:

If you have technology available to you, then you act in some kind of leadership role to encourage or show others how they might be able to incorporate that kind of stuff into their classroom (Participant B).

I think leadership occurs when the person uses their skills to great effect. They are naturally good at a particular thing. Some people might be particularly good at organising work sheets, some might be particularly good at putting together oral skills or listening skills or reading skills. So, you locate those people who are 'leaders' in that area to help you (Participant E).

Participants highlighted a strong culture of cooperation and collaboration:

You work together to put together some lesson plan or overcome some hurdle or obstacle in your understanding, so that when you go into the classroom you can deliver appropriate material (Participant D).

Some see that they can contribute to other teachers as well as students (Participant C).

It was also noted that even young, inexperienced teachers could demonstrate leadership capabilities within the collegial team:

I often listen to the younger teachers because you get it right (Participant H).

That's right, you add so much to the mix. Young staff coming in with bright eyes and bushy tails and all their enthusiasm and a new perspective. I don't think you can measure the merit in needing that mix in a staff room. So don't ever underestimate the contributions you make in support, even if just in a jovial nature, by who you are and the things you contribute (Participant F).

In summary, by employing the first and second-order interpretation of the data to examine the first research sub-question, the researcher was able to generate two themes describing teacher leader behaviour: leading beyond the classroom, and leading within the collegial team.

5.4 Purpose of Teacher Leadership – Why do teachers strive for this?

This research sub-question attempted to gain some understanding of the purpose of teacher leadership. At times during the exploration stage of the study, it was difficult to classify the participants' responses on the Experience Sampling forms, and the researcher had to exercise some judgement in categorising the data. However, it was not difficult to eliminate the responses that had no bearing on the study or the work of the participants. Responses such as What are you doing? –“*cooking dinner*”; Why are you doing it? – “*I need to eat*”, How are you feeling about what you are doing? – “*Great I am starving!*” are understandable at the end of a long day, but are irrelevant to this study, and were eliminated. Moreover, the preliminary first-order interpretation of the Experience Sampling forms enabled the grouping of responses into seven broad categories:

1. To assist students
2. To assist colleagues
3. To assist parents
4. Personal satisfaction
5. Routine
6. Professional development
7. It's my job

In addition, there was some potential overlap, and the researcher made a judgement as to the main purpose. For example, *"I like to revisit my notes so that I am totally confident that everything will run smoothly in a lesson"* (Participant F252). This response could fit into any one or a combination of categories 1, 4, 5, or 6. At all times, the context of the comments was considered, although it was difficult to be precise in interpreting the motivation behind the comment. Examples of the responses from participants that fell into these categories are outlined below.

Assist students

Some participants were keen to monitor students for whom they felt responsible. Responses such as *-To review a student under my care (L722); Kids forget things so I like to make their life easier (I712) and I want to assist students who have difficulty meeting deadlines (N712)*, reflect the participants desire to assist students. Here, there was concern for student learning with particular emphasis on assisting students with learning difficulties. Responses such as *- To help the boy get on track [with his learning] (L132); I have a couple of children with processing difficulties, so I would like to modify some work for them (J632); To assist struggling students (H622)* - reflect this concern and emphasis. In addition, some participants were just keen to provide additional opportunities for their students - *To provide an enthusiastic student with an opportunity to experience an extended period of time in Japan (E312); To help revision for Year 12*

(M232); Encourage students prior to test (L332); and [I] Want the children to take pride in their school (J322).

Assist colleagues

Here, responses suggested that these teacher leaders were keen to assist their colleagues by sharing their expertise. Typical of this concern, participants identified - *Preparation for implementing a leadership programme into the school. To brief staff in the programme and have them accept that they are part of the plan (N122); The staff need to be able to write web pages for various activities (D142); Important to provide my colleague with feedback (I242); To make the assessment more valid – professional sharing (G242); What we do is awesome and I want to share my teaching skills with clergy who don't teach (I232); To enable the other teacher to feel confident with the planned content for the rest of the semester (A142); and To help him [student teacher] become a good teacher (O322).*

Assist parents

Whilst there were fewer responses in respect to assisting parents, some participants did express a desire to keep parents informed about their child and their learning - *To keep the parent informed (O132); I feel the parent needs to know that the child is not performing at the required level (J212); To provide feedback to parents about how their child is progressing (J242).* Others recognised the important role played by parents - *I want to acknowledge the time and effort made by these supportive parents (O212),* while some wanted to be available for parents during times of need - *To assist the family [attended funeral of a parent] (N732).*

Personal satisfaction

Participants reported satisfaction through having fun with colleagues - *Fun to have raffle prizes and booby prizes at Friday morning tea (M422); To socialise with fellow teachers (L752); I'm on the staff association and I enjoy these types of things (planning function) (J422); It's great to get together informally with some of my colleagues (I452); Stress relief and a few good laughs (G452)*. Others highlighted personal choice issues - *Need a break and some caffeine (O222); To keep fit and because I love the way it makes me feel (F242); Because I enjoy doing it (J322)*. Moreover, some participants gained satisfaction through their interaction with students - *Commitment. Boys need someone there to organise them (L512); Enjoy the sport and the rapport with the students (H432); I love being involved with my students in all aspects (F212)*.

Routine

Adhering to routine was widely reported as the reason why participants did things. This included regular activities with students - *House keeping, part of the routine. Kids need routine (J712); This is a morning routine- uniform and diary check (A112)*, with colleagues - *Meeting – usual agenda items (L742); To ensure that teachers are sharing ideas and focused on curriculum/pastoral care needs of students (G142)*, and every day events - *To get organised for class (L422); I need to work but I do actually enjoy my job. I like to get here early so I can get my head around my day (C312)*.

Professional development

Participants reported a variety of reasons for their 'behaviour' that are beneficial to their professional development - *For my own professional development, I like writing, to share some ideas and experiences (G612)*.

Typically, participants linked their professional learning with improving classroom practice - *For professional development for RE (K342); To learn more about Ancient China because we study it in Year 9 (G422); and Efficient and effective preparation (N652)*. Interestingly, whilst some participants noted that various activities were sometimes associated with formal study such as a *university course (E752)*, others participants identified a number of informal professional development activities, such as - *Try something new by using technology (I642)*.

My job

The final category for purpose included the obvious statement that participants did things because it was expected of them – it was their job. This expectation is reflected in statements concerning ‘compulsory’ activities including - *Timetabled for that slot (D732); Compulsory (staff briefing) – way to find out what is going on (C412); Part of my load (D712); to assist their school - To help formulate school policy (O742); To achieve consistency across the year level through moderating work samples (J122); To meet IB protocols within the school (A232); to fulfil expectations - Staff absence means we all pick up extra duties (P732); To keep the Queensland Studies Authority happy! (N342); To facilitate report writing by adding to my assessment records (B642); To share expertise with a colleague (G112); To explicitly teach skills – part of English programme (B712)*.

In summarising the participant response pattern from the Experience Sampling forms, the first-order data interpretation reveals the amount of time apportioned by participants for the stated purpose of their teacher leadership activity (see Table 5.3).

Table 5.3 Time proportion of teacher leadership purpose

Category	Time proportion
Assist students	27%
Assist colleagues	6%
Assist parents	3%
Personal satisfaction	15%
Routine	19%
Professional development	6%
My job	24%

This spread of responses suggests that there was no common conceptualisation regarding the purpose for teacher leadership activities among the participants. This first-order interpretation of the data caused the researcher to wonder whether this issue would be clarified during the inspection stage focus group interviews that followed. Subsequently, a second-order interpretation from the second research sub-question revealed two themes for the purpose of teacher leadership: to improve educational practice and student outcomes, and achieve a sense of personal satisfaction.

5.4.1 Theme 4: To improve educational practice and student outcomes

Within the three focus group interviews, participants provided a number of examples in respect of teacher leaders improving educational practice and student outcomes. These examples demonstrated participants' commitment to their practice through enhancing learning, adding value and working with students. During the focus group interviews, some younger participants expressed their belief that their leadership was student focused:

I think I would make my comments more with respect to leading children because I don't have the teaching experience necessary to think I am qualified to make comments about other leadership (Participant J).

I agree. My comments [about leadership] would be more focused on the children (Participant F).

We do it for the kids (Participant M).

This is what we want to do (Participant K).

These participants expressed a commitment to the pastoral care and support of their students, and spoke about their desire to provide additional help beyond what may be expected of a teacher:

I find that within my classroom I am a real support system for a lot of my kids with personal issues...whether it's something that they can't tell their parents, or they don't feel comfortable telling their parents, even lifestyle and health issues and things like that (Participant F).

Further, their leadership role was expressed by providing opportunities for their students:

The majority of staff, they walk into this place and see what tempo there is and they fall into line. They see that we are producing young men who are destined to take a big part of society, and work at it and develop it (Participant L).

The boys see you doing things after school. They know we don't get paid mega bucks extra to do that. We just turn up because they're there and the boys need a bit of guidance with footy or chess or drama or whatever (Participant K).

This also meant mentoring the students at times:

We've got experiences that we can help them with, mentor, delegate, support (Participant O).

The more experienced participants were clearer about why they supported students so fully:

You try to find the good in everyone. It's our nature. Whether there is some kid out there that you really, really can't see...you still try to find something about them that is really positive. It can be difficult but...(Participant H).

It's totally endemic in teaching. We are in the people business (Participant H).

Your heart is in looking after these young people (Participant G).

Sometimes I think, I could probably get to know that kid, even if he has funny looking hair and he really should pull his pants up (Participant I).

Significantly, participants viewed their role as a vocation primarily concerned with motivating and inspiring students by providing opportunities and experiences:

I want to enhance the learning experience for students (Participant B).

I think a lot of us are in it because we think we can add value to the experience of students (Participant D).

In students and teachers, I think it's about inspiring other people to give their best as well (Participant A).

I think most people [teachers] have that idea that they can actually contribute to the experiences kids have (Participant E).

With a view to improving educational practice, these teachers were also prepared to make themselves available to colleagues:

I see it [leadership] as a teacher making herself or himself available to other teachers to assist in any way (Participant B).

I think a lot of us see that we can contribute to other teachers as well as to students (Participant E).

I can use technology and encourage others to use it in their classroom, but I don't see it as 'I know best and I'm going to show you how' (Participant A).

5.4.2 Theme 5: To gain a sense of personal satisfaction

These teacher leaders were also unanimous in believing that their commitment to teacher leadership contributed to their personal satisfaction at work. There was an overwhelmingly strong message from participants that they did what they did due to the satisfaction it brought them; *It makes you feel good (Participants G, I, H, F, J)*. As the following responses suggest, there is definitely an intrinsic motivation here:

It's just the right thing to do (Participant J).

Intrinsically optimistic (Participant I).

Intrinsically motivated to facilitate and mentor (Participant G).

When asked specifically why participants engaged in teacher leadership activities, participants simply made comments like:

Well I like doing it actually (Participant N).

There's a lot of satisfaction in it (Participant O).

When the researcher clarified this with a question to one focus group, “So you do it for the satisfaction?”, the unanimous response was *Absolutely!* (Participants, K, L, M, N, O, P).

Participants even suggested that their work was good for their ego:

Yes it's almost egotistical sometimes (Participant L).

Yeah it is (Participants N, O).

Some expressed their satisfaction as a reward or passion they have for teaching:

For me I think the crux in teaching is the passion (Participant A).

The reward for me is in seeing those girls do really, really well in something that I helped them with that I'm really passionate about (Participant E).

One participant enjoyed his work so much he claimed he *wouldn't do any other job for quids (Participant K).*

In short, participants in this study were very keen to make it known that not only were they motivated by a desire to improve educational practice and students outcomes, but also they gained personal satisfaction from their teacher leadership. Whilst participants in the focus group interviews expressed a real sense of personal satisfaction, there was not a lengthy conversation surrounding this point. The point was made convincingly and the conversation moved on.

In summary, by employing the first and second-order interpretation of the data to examine the second research sub-question, the researcher was able to generate two themes for the purpose of teacher leadership: to improve educational practice and student outcomes, and to gain a sense of personal satisfaction.

5.5 Feelings of Teacher Leaders – How do they feel about what they do?

This third research sub-question was designed to gain some insight into the feelings of teacher leaders. Participants seemed to have difficulty expressing how they were feeling as they completed the Experience Sampling Forms during the exploration stage of the study. Here, participants were required to make a statement about how they were feeling about what they were doing, as well as rating the activity on a scale of 1-10, where 1 = *Terrible, I wish I was doing something else*, and 10 = *Fantastic, there is nothing I would rather be doing*. The first-order interpretation of the data revealed wide variation in the participants' responses. For example, Participant F (F123) provided a feelings rating of 6.5 along with a '*very positive*' comment, while Participant M (M713) gave a higher feelings rating of 7 to a comment about being '*a bit annoyed*'. Therefore, converting a qualitative feeling into a quantitative rating made it no less difficult to compare and contrast the participants with any certainty.

As with the previous questions, non-work related activities were eliminated. Consequently, the 'leisure activities' and 'home duties' categories had previously been eliminated from further consideration and the 'unwell' category was also not considered for this question, as clearly participants' feelings when they were unwell could cloud the way they felt about the engaged activity. Eliminating these categories enabled the calculation of an

average feelings rating for the remaining work related tasks. Table 5.4 illustrates the average feelings ratings for each of the 16 participants.

Table 5.4 – Average feelings ratings for participants

Participant	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
Average Feelings (1-10)	6.4	6.6	7.8	7.9	6.7	6.3	7	6.4	5.8	7.2	7	7	7.5	6.2	7	6.9

While the ‘average feelings ratings’ vary between participants, the accompanying Experience Sampling text responses to this question suggested participants enjoyed their work. Some participants reported feeling very good about their actual teaching with comments such as *-Great. I love teaching science, letting children find things out for themselves – 8 (J233)⁷; Rewarding. My approach to this class and subject is completely different to that presented in the book. This class is rewarding -9 (N113); Good- I really enjoy the hands-on pracs with students- great practice for Uni and fun for the students -8 (M123) and Great lesson! – 9 (M333)*. Some clearly enjoyed the interaction with their colleagues *-Very positive. Enjoy working as a larger teaching team – 10 (G113)*. Others reported their enjoyment of interacting with students, reflected by comments such as *- I love interacting with the students on a more informal level – relaxes me too. – 10 (I233); Very positive as it seems the students are producing good work and are well on track – 6.5 (F123); Great – Year 11 group work is going very well. They have taken their responsibility very seriously – 9 (D723); Good- I love this class! -9 (C423); Great- warm and happy! This is the true reward for teachers, these boys want to learn -10 (O443)*. Moreover, some participants simply reported a positive general feeling about what they were doing *- It’s a lot of fun and*

⁷ Code 8 (J223) Means Participant J has recorded a feelings rating of 8 out of 10 for their activity on day 2, message 2. The third digit 3 refers to this being the third question asked on the Experience Sampling Form, and appears as the third digit in all such responses.

unusual. I love it! – 9 (I733); Happy because so far they are great -8 (J733); Fantastic, energized, happy -10 (G323) and Energized – 9 (D233).

However, there were times when participants were not feeling quite so positive. Some participants reported feeling frustrated with their students with comment such as - *Frustrated- they (students) were being very recalcitrant – 4 (K333); and Not very positive- despite poor academic results in term one, students are not all that interested - 5 (P723).* Some reports reflected disappointment with their class: *A bit annoyed because the class was supposed to do this in their own time – 2 (I333); I get a little tired of these kids because I only teach them once a week and can't train them to my standard of behaviour – 5 (I723); I really do not enjoy teaching students this young – 3 (A723).* Comments about the frustrations involving limited time were common - *A little stressed- as time is short and this is important – 6 (O123); Not too bad- bit annoyed I've missed a free lesson- there always seems so much to do- 7 (M713); Fairly average and tired. I have not stopped since 6.50am this morning when I arrived at work. I won't be sorry when this lesson is over - 5 (A733) and Very overwhelmed by what I have to do and slightly annoyed that it is taking so much of my time - 2 (A323).* Finally, some expressed a general overall annoyance when things were not going well- *I feel frustrated because my creativity isn't flowing – 5 (I623),* perhaps best summed up as *-Pain in the neck - 2 (H123).*

By responding to the SMS messages and completing the Experience Sampling Forms during the exploration stage of the research study, participants provided a picture of how they felt about their work. Generally, the participants' responses could be classified as either positive or negative. These specific comments gave the 'feelings rating' greater meaning despite the personal outlook of the individual participant. The rating proved to be an unreliable indicator as, for example, Participant M713 equated a 'bit annoyed' comment with a feelings rating of 7, while participant I333 used the same 'bit

annoyed' comment alongside a feelings rating of 2. Clearly, it was difficult to equate a quantitative rating with a qualitative comment, indicating the difficulty in analysing the data collected using mixed methods. However, the first-order interpretation of the data did suggest that there is no clear consistency in how teacher leaders feel about what they do. This issue was investigated further during the inspection stage focus group interviews that followed. Subsequently, a second-order interpretation of the data revealed that teacher leaders are positive about their work.

5.5.1 Theme 6: Teacher leaders feel positive about their work

In the three focus group interviews, participants provided a number of examples in respect to how teacher leaders feel about their work. These examples highlighted teacher leaders' positive feelings of satisfaction, enjoyment, pride in their work and mutual respect. Participants spoke about the satisfaction they gained from working with their students:

You get a lot of satisfaction from the students (Participant H).

I find it really satisfying to work with these motivated students (Participant F).

A lot of us get satisfaction out of seeing the boys come in at Year 8 and go out of the school in Year 12 (Participant L).

Some come back as teachers, and I taught them when they were in Year 11 and 12. You see them coming back and it is egotistical in a sense, but I am more satisfied to see them really (Participant N).

I get great satisfaction from the positive relationships I have developed with students (Participant A).

There was also a strong sense of pride in the profession:

It's totally endemic in teaching (Participant H).

I take pride in my work (Participant E).

The reward for me is seeing those girls do really well in something that I helped them with (Participant E).

Pride in oneself:

You feel as if you've done the right thing (Participant L).

It's the right thing to do (Participant J).

Pride in seeing former students do well:

You get kids coming back and they're now teachers (Participant M).

It also seems that these positive feelings stem from positive collegial relationships within the school. Participants discussed *mutual admiration (Participant F)* during the focus group interviews, while others openly stated their admiration for others:

I often listen to younger teachers because they get it right (Participant H).

I have the greatest admiration for them...(Participant K, L, P).

I admire the way Karen gets out and works with the boys on the rugby field (Participant O).

There was a strong feeling of mutual respect between colleagues, and participants who spoke of:

...reciprocal respect and admiration (Participant A).

I guess it is professional respect. We work together well and know that each is able to make a useful contribution (Participant C).

I feel respected by my colleagues when we work together for the benefit of our students (Participant P).

It is nice to have colleagues recognising your ability and treating you respectfully (Participant M).

I like to feel admired by my colleagues when I can provide them with some assistance (Participant A).

It is easy to help out and nice to get the admiration of students and peers, when really it is no big deal (Participant D).

In short, the following comments sum up the general positive feelings of participants:

I feel good about what I do (Participant A).

It just makes me feel good, that's why I do it (Participants D, G, I, F).

In summary, by employing the first and second-order interpretation of the data to examine the third research sub-question, the researcher was able to generate a theme for the feelings of teacher leaders: Teacher leaders feel positive about their work.

5.6 Support for Teacher Leaders- What do they need?

This fourth research sub-question was designed to gain an understanding about the support required for teacher leadership. It was not included as part of the Experience Sampling Method data gathering of the exploration stage of the research study because it was recognised that participants could not

readily respond to this question. Experience Sampling Forms were completed quickly, within 30 minutes of receiving each SMS message. This gave no real opportunity for the participants to reflect on the factors that were enabling or inhibiting the activity at the time. The support needed and the factors enabling or inhibiting their work was better articulated upon reflection in the inspection stage focus group interviews. A second-order interpretation of the data revealed two themes: supportive collegial relationships enable teacher leadership, and limited time, irrelevant professional development and a lack of practical administrative support inhibit teacher leadership.

5.6.1 Theme 7: Supportive collegial relationships enable teacher leadership

Within the three focus group interviews, participants provided a number of examples in respect to the factors that enabled their teacher leadership. The examples highlighted the importance of collegial support and positive relationships in enabling teacher leadership.

Participants spoke warmly about the support they received from their teaching colleagues:

We are lucky to have teaching teams in the Middle school (Participant G).

Collegial support. That's one of the strengths of this school (Participant P).

Colleagues offer wonderful support (Participant K).

We have a good relationship amongst the staff- mutually supportive (Participant E),

Others described support for teacher leadership from the middle management within the school's hierarchy:

Very approachable Heads of Faculty make a big difference (Participant A)

I like the support of my teaching colleagues and the hierarchy above obviously (Participant J).

Some senior teachers looked beyond their school for curriculum support:

I get support from external networks as well, particularly the District Panel Chair (Participant H).

Others reported support through *relationships that develop with students (Participant M), you develop a great rapport with the girls (Participant A)*, while others felt supported by student results - *I think the results you get helps to sustain you (Participant L).*

An enthusiastic participant was very positive about receiving support from all sources:

The support particularly, emotional support, I think is brilliant from above, from the same level and from below, even support from the kids. (Participant G).

This comment probably best summarises the real level of support felt by participants:

Our ability to establish relationships. Whether it's with our students or whether it's the banter around the staffroom, but the relationships I think are so important, and I think if you have got an open relationship

then you are able to say to someone, 'why don't you try this' or 'do you think this might help your teaching practice further?' without intimidating them or them seeing it as you coming down on them. I think that is so important to be seen more as the colleague rather than as a head of faculty (Participant D).

In short, support for teacher leadership came from positive relationships and support from colleagues and students.

5.6.2 Theme 8: Limited time, irrelevant professional development and a lack of practical administrative support inhibit teacher leadership

Within the three focus group interviews, participants provided a number of examples in respect to the factors that inhibit their teacher leadership. These examples highlighted limited time, irrelevant professional development and a lack of administrative support.

The participants were unanimous in identifying a lack of time as the major inhibiting factor for teacher leadership:

Time (Participants A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P).

I am not always supported time wise (Participant G).

Some took this concern a little further:

That is such a hazard in this profession, to just spend all of your time, because you never 'complete the painting'. I think teachers are super critical- one of the most critical groups of people in the world, because you are never fully satisfied (Participant J).

I think the thing that does fall down, and I think we'll admit it, is our own time. Our own time just gets negated basically (Participant O).

Time and resources are a big problem (Participant N).

The very busy life of participants also seemed to have an impact on their work as teacher leaders:

Emotional energy. Yes I am tired by the end of the week, really tired (Participant F).

This place is pretty consuming (Participant H).

At the moment, everything we do is more or less half baked in a lot of ways because we're all jumping from one to the other (Participant M).

For some this issue of time was of their own doing:

Impediments in our own mind. Not being able to say 'No' and taking on too much (Participant K).

For me the biggest problem that I face in my teaching is 'the guilts' and thinking that I didn't get that perfect, so I think I'm a bad teacher or I've failed in some way because I didn't get it perfect (Participant I).

However, for others expectations of their role were problematic:

In Housemaster positions our workload is far too much for what we are expected to do properly (Participant N).

Consequently, when participants were asked to take on some leadership role there were concerns:

You're drawn further away from class, and you're added more and more garbage responsibility, you're not given any extra benefits for it, in fact you're losing more (Participant C).

Beyond the lack of time, there was also a great deal of frustration expressed about the type of professional development being undertaken in the schools:

PD that annoys me is when it's really specific to a group in the school and it's important that they do it, but not important that I do it, yet we all have to sit through it (Participant A).

It appears that imposed formal school professional development that does not meet the needs of the participants is regarded as irrelevant and a frustrating waste of time for the participants:

While administration has certain needs to meet in terms of the legal field, why has that become our problem and our time that is to be used, when we still have to go and find that time somewhere else to do what we need to do to deliver in the classroom?(Participant C).

Instead, these teacher leaders wanted to use professional development time for curriculum planning with colleagues:

Imagine having a staff day, where we had 8 hours to actually work to the end point which is delivering curriculum in the classroom, not whether or not you understand this or that policy (Participant A).

Moreover, participants highlighted the value of informal professional development through collegiality that was largely instigated by the teachers themselves:

Where resources are limited you support and rely on each other as colleagues (Participant J).

Here, there were numerous examples of such teacher initiated professional development. For example, participants identified “assisting each other through *running computer inservices for colleagues (Participant D); team teaching (participant G); sharing resources with colleagues (Participant I); preparing leadership lectures for staff (Participant N); professional sharing with English teachers (Participant B)*”. These types of professional development were deemed to be relevant and rewarding for the participants.

Finally, the lack of administrative support was said to inhibit teacher leadership:

Admin support, it really depends on what you’re asking for (Participant P).

Lack of support staff. See we don’t have teacher aides here (Participant N).

Communication is a really big problem (Participant M).

I think they (Admin) lose touch with the reality of the classroom (Participant C),

In a similar vein, participants also highlighted some practical issues that inhibited teacher leadership, such as:

Access to resources (Participant B).

Proximity of staff rooms [which] has been a really big problem (Participant D).

Problems getting all staff to faculty meetings due to overlap (Participant D).

Locating people who have the skills that you want (Participant A).

In summary, by employing the first and second-order interpretation of the data to examine the fourth research sub-question, the researcher was able to generate two themes for the factors that enable and inhibit teacher leadership: supportive collegial relationships enable teacher leadership, and limited time, irrelevant professional development and a lack of practical administrative support inhibit teacher leadership.

5.7 Conclusion

This presentation and analysis of the data represents the conclusions drawn at the end of the first and second-order interpretations of the data. Through a first-order interpretation of the data collected during the exploration stage, the researcher gained greater understanding about the research problem from the meanings ascribed by the participants of this research study. A second-order interpretation, during the inspection stage, enabled the researcher to focus on specific areas identified in the exploration stage, and to suggest emergent themes in respect to the research question and sub-questions.

Overall, this analysis and interpretation of the data, found that the participants in this research study struggled to recognise themselves as teacher leaders, due to their paradigm of leadership that associated leadership with formal, out-of-class positions. At the same time, they recognised that teachers could be persons of influence in respect to improving educational practice and student outcomes. Through this influencing role, these teachers gained a sense of personal satisfaction and consequently, they seemed more positive than negative about their work. They favoured working in collegial teams and looked for more time, relevant professional development and administrative support for their work. The themes generated in response to the research question and sub-questions are identified in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 Themes generated from research question and sub-questions

Research question/ sub-questions	Themes
Conceptualisation of teacher leadership?	1. Teacher leaders work in formal, out-of-class roles
Behaviour of teacher leaders – What do they do?	2. Leading beyond the classroom 3. Leading within the collegial team
Purpose of teacher leadership - Why do teachers strive for this?	4. To improve educational practice and student outcomes 5. To gain a sense of personal satisfaction
Feelings of teacher leaders – How do they feel about what they do?	6. Teacher leaders feel positive about their work
Support for teacher leaders – What do they need?	7. Supportive collegial relationships enable teacher leadership 8. Limited time, irrelevant professional development and the lack of practical administrative support inhibit teacher leadership

The following chapter explores the outcomes of a third-order data interpretation that enabled the researcher to relate these themes of the research study, outlined above, to the literature and to assign theoretical significance to them.

Chapter 6: Discussion of Findings

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings of the research study, following a third-order interpretation of the data. In the previous chapter, the first and second-order data interpretations generated themes in response to the research question and sub-questions, as summarised in Table 5.5. These themes are: teacher leaders work in formal, out-of-class roles; leading beyond the classroom; leading within the collegial team; improving educational practice and student outcomes; sense of personal satisfaction; teacher leaders feel positive about their work; supportive collegial relationships enable teacher leadership; and, limited time, irrelevant professional development and a lack of practical administrative support inhibit teacher leadership.

By following the three stage iterative approach outlined in section 4.6, this chapter builds upon these themes by employing a third-order interpretation of the research findings to assign theoretical significance and make a number of assertions about teacher leadership. This third-order interpretation is informed by contemporary teacher leadership theory (Chapter 2) and the root images of symbolic interactionism as a perspective (Chapter 3). This third-order interpretation of the research findings attributes theoretical significance to the data, and enables the researcher to proffer a number of assertions in response to the research question: How do teachers, who are recognised as teacher leaders in South-East Queensland Anglican schools, conceptualise teacher leadership?

Following a third-order interpretation of the research findings, the following assertions were identified:

1. The broad understanding of teacher leadership is unrecognised in the field of education;
2. Teacher leadership is a complex phenomenon;
3. Teacher leadership is principled action in support of learning;
4. There is untapped potential for teacher leaders to act as change agents in school revitalisation;
5. Collegial relationships, the provision of time, relevant professional development and administrative support enable teacher leadership; and,
6. There is a need for a role-making process to support teacher leadership.

Building on Table 5.6, Table 6.1 illustrates the relationship between the research question, sub-questions, the themes and the assertions of this research study.

Table 6.1 Assertion development

Research question/sub-questions	Themes	Assertions
Conceptualisation of teacher leadership?	1. Teacher leaders work in formal, out-of-class roles	1. The broad understanding of teacher leadership is unrecognised in the field of education
Behaviour of teacher leaders – What do they do?	2. Leading beyond the classroom 3. Leading within the collegial team	2. Teacher leadership is a complex phenomenon.
Purpose of teacher leadership - Why do teachers strive for this?	4. To improve educational practice and student outcomes 5. To gain a sense of personal satisfaction	3. Teacher leadership is principled action in support of learning.
Feelings of teacher leaders – How do they feel about what they do?	6. Teacher leaders feel positive about their work	4. There is untapped potential for teacher leaders to act as change agents in school revitalisation

<p>Support for teacher leaders –</p> <p>What do they need?</p>	<p>7. Supportive collegial relationships enable teacher leadership</p> <p>8. Limited time, irrelevant professional development and a lack of practical administrative support inhibit teacher leadership</p>	<p>5. Collegial relationships, the provision of time, relevant professional development and administrative support enable teacher leadership</p> <p>6. There is a need for a role-making process to support teacher leadership</p>
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An explanation of how these assertions emerged following the third order interpretation of data is provided in the sections that follow.

6.2 Assertion 1: The broad understanding of teacher leadership is unrecognised in the field of education

This assertion emerged from a third-order interpretation of the data and extends upon the theme that teacher leaders work in formal, out-of-class roles. This research study found that a broad understanding of teacher leadership is unrecognised in the field of education. As discussed in Chapter 5, the participants in this research study did not see themselves as leaders:

I don't see myself as a leader. I don't see myself as doing anything extraordinary (Participant C).

Within the literature, this reluctance of teachers to be called leaders is explained in a number of ways. For example, there are claims that conditions within their schools made leadership impossible (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). Alternatively, some teachers believe they lacked the expertise to become teacher leaders (Muijs & Harris, 2007), and some are concerned about breaching egalitarian norms of school culture which see all teachers as equal (Childs-Bowen, Moller, & Scrivner, 2004). Yet again, some teachers do not consider themselves to be leaders if they are not involved in whole school decision-making (Dawson Gonzales, 2004). This is consistent with their narrow understanding of the teacher leader as a formal, out-of-class role.

However, within this research study, the teachers' reticence regarding teacher leadership possibly points to deeper structural issues in respect to the school as organisation. Responding to the "information-rich and complex environment of the twenty-first century" (Shriberg et al., 2002 p.212), theorists (e.g. Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Senge, Scharmer, Janorski, & Flowers, 2005, Wheatley, 2005) argue against old bureaucratic structures and hierarchical leadership in which "objectivity, control and linear causality reign supreme". At the same time, they advocate a new "adhocracy" (Shriberg et al., 2002, p. 212) characterised by horizontal power relationships and fluid, participative roles and structures. However, research by Smylie (1997) and Katzenmeyer & Moller, (2001) has found that teacher leadership is mostly associated with positional or formal leadership roles, and the old paradigm of hierarchical leadership continues to dominate. It is hardly surprising that teachers do not see themselves as leaders given that teachers are conditioned to be followers, not leaders (Ackerman et al., 1996).

Comments made by participants in this research study suggest that the old paradigm of hierarchical leadership continues to dominate. For one participant:

It comes back to your definition of leadership too, because yo may have someone who is in the classroom, who may be extremely effective but never considered by anyone else to be a leader, because people don't see what's in the classroom. It may be that their position is leadership in the classroom, not leadership in the school (Participant B).

Another stated:

My vision of leadership is the team captain with a 'follow me boys' sort of attitude, and I don't see myself in that role (Participant H).

Such comments imply that the Anglican schools in South-East Queensland have yet to make the transition from old bureaucratic structures and hierarchical leadership, to a new adhocracy characterised by horizontal power relationships and fluid, participative roles and structures. Certainly, 'formal' teacher leadership is recognised through the current Anglican Schools Industrial Agreement that associates teacher leadership with Heads of Department, Coordinators, Pastoral Leaders and others in formal leadership roles.

This association of teacher leadership with formal leadership positions was obvious during the selection process for this research study, when teacher leaders in both formal leadership positions as well as classroom teachers were nominated as participants. As discussed in Chapter 4, non-probabilistic, purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990, p. 182) was employed in the selection of participants in this research study. To make the research meaningful, this methodology is designed to enable careful, non-random, selection of participants to match criteria central to the purposes of the study. While the criteria for selecting participants included 'view classroom teaching as their primary, fulltime responsibility', Table 4.2 indicates that at least one participant from each school has a formal leadership role. In fact there were six in total. While the dominant role of these coordinators may well be classroom teaching, their nominators seem to have adopted a traditional perspective that having a formal leadership role while teaching made the nominee a teacher leader.

Consequently, it seems that in both policy and practice in South-East Queensland Anglican schools, teacher leadership is linked to teachers in formal, out-of-class leadership positions, and informal, in-class teacher leadership is unrecognised. This finding suggests that the participants in this research study, as well as school authorities more generally, do not fully

appreciate emergent theories of leadership that encourage a new adhocracy. This finding reinforces the dominant understanding uncovered by Smylie (1997) and Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), that school leadership belongs to those who assume formal leadership roles. Emergent theories of leadership (eg. Shriberg et al., 2002) are not widely accepted as bureaucratic structures and hierarchical leadership continues to prevail in schools.

6.3 Assertion 2: Teacher leadership is a complex phenomenon

As discussed in Chapter 5, within this research study, themes of teacher leadership behaviour were identified as leading beyond the classroom and leading within collegial teams. These themes highlighted the complex nature of teacher leadership: participants identified a host of leadership behaviours that were shared by both “in-class” (informal) and “out-of-class” formal teacher leaders (Rinn, 2003, p. 25), and involved interaction with colleagues, students and parents. This complex finding is in line with the wide-ranging definitions and descriptions of teacher leadership found within the literature (Harris, 2004b; Lambert, 2003; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, and Crowther et al., 2002).

Participants had little difficulty identifying teacher leadership opportunities beyond the classroom. Opportunities such as working collaboratively with staff through professional sharing of curriculum material, and planning and training, appear to be the initiative of the participants. Here, teacher leaders served as facilitators - *I'm quite heavily involved in the staff association (Participant J)*; mentors - *I see myself as more of a mentor (Participant H)*; peer coaches and teacher trainers - *If I can offer some assistance with technology, I am very happy to do so (Participant B)*; curriculum advisors - *We professionally seek each other's advice and we're all leaders in that we help each other out when we can (Participant E)*. Such responses are

consonant with the literature that suggests that leading collegial study groups, having colleagues observe lessons, exchanging materials with other teachers and interdisciplinary planning are typical teacher leader behaviour (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Cranston, 2000).

Beyond identifying this behavioral complexity, it is also interesting to note that a formal leadership position is not necessary to influence others - *I like to assist colleagues by sharing teaching resources and ideas that have worked for me (Participant J)*. In a similar vein, one participant suggested that “*we’re all leaders in that we help each other out when we can (Participant E)*”. Another spoke about the importance of “*...young staff coming in with bright ideas and bushy tails and all their enthusiasm and a new perspective*”, in providing positive leadership in the school. She added, “*...don’t ever underestimate the contribution they make (Participant G)*”. They also assumed the lead even though they did not have a formal leadership role:

...You act in some kind of role to encourage or show others..(Participant B).

Teachers will find the person that they really see as leader, and that’s the person who makes themselves available regardless of the hierarchy, regardless of anything else (Participant C).

In a similar vein, participants in this research study were keen to work together in collegial teams as they recognised the benefits and increased productivity of such teams:

Every single teacher in my close teaching team...we fit together so well...There’s a strength that there is no way you could achieve on your own (Participant G)

There are different aspects that each teacher brings with them...there's a sense of energy around that person, creating some kind of forward motion (Participant I)

The support for collegial teams, identified in the research study, is reinforced by the suggestion that “leadership should be concerned with the ways in which leadership can be encouraged to flourish, so that schools become ‘leader-full’ with teachers who have a shared sense of responsibility for the school and the students in it” (Lingard, Hayes, Mills, & Christie, 2003, p. 20). Moreover, leadership is “providing a context where teachers, and others, can take calculated risks to improve the learning of teachers as well as their students” (p. 20). Such comments are in line with contemporary theories of teacher leadership where classroom teachers have been empowered to lead, and authority has been distributed beyond the principal and those in formal administrative positions (Gronn, 2000; Harris, 2004b; Lambert, 2003; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001). For Crowther et al. (2002) teacher leadership requires “parallel leadership” (p. 38), with teachers as leaders responsible for “pedagogical development” and the principal (and other administrative role-holders) responsible for “strategic development” (p. 44). Here, it is argued that teacher leadership is better served, and will become more recognised, by appreciating the interdependent nature of formal and informal roles. Thus, teacher leadership is a complex phenomenon that involves formal and informal teacher leaders demonstrating leadership behaviours. This phenomenon also requires the development of collegial relationships between teacher leaders in both formal and informal roles.

6.4 Assertion 3: Teacher leadership is principled action in support of learning

This assertion emerged following a third-order interpretation of the data and extends upon the 2 themes identified in Chapter 5: improving educational

practice and student outcomes and to gain a sense of personal satisfaction. Within this research study, participants primarily described the purpose of their work in terms of improving educational practice and student outcomes. The activities they described demonstrated participants putting themselves out for others, and taking on more than might be expected of them as classroom teachers. Participants took extra classes *-tutoring rugby tour students at lunch time in work they missed (Participant M)*; or deliberately chose to teach a low level class to assist those students requiring extra help *-teaching low core Mathematics class to give students benefit of my experience (Participant N)* even though this provided greater challenge, or meant giving up some of their own time. These teacher leaders also took responsibility for covering the classes of their absent colleagues *-taking absent colleague's class so students are not disadvantaged (Participant M)* even when a supply teacher had been arranged; or they ensured that students without their regular teacher were not adversely affected *-organising cover lessons for absent colleague to assist students in keeping up to date (Participant L)*.

In addition to working with students, participants also seemed keen to take a proactive, professional approach to enhancing educational practice. They engaged in activities to improve themselves *-completing university assignments (Participant E)*; their colleagues *-organising IT workshop for colleagues (Participant D)*; their students *-Sunday classes for students needing extra help (Participant H)*; their school *-working on leadership issues talk (Participant N)* and their profession *-writing for a professional newsletter (Participant G)*.

It appeared that participants considered themselves to be part of a learning community and they were keen to contribute in whatever way possible *-you just get in and do what needs to be done (Participant N)*. Mitchell & Sackney (2000) have further observed that “in a learning community individuals feel a

deep sense of empowerment and autonomy and a deep sense of commitment to the work of the school” (p. 93). Moreover, “teacher leadership contributes to moving the leadership role from one individual to a community of professionals committed to improved student learning” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 2).

Participants appeared quite blasé about accepting these responsibilities, as if there was no question that they would do so *-it's just the right thing to do (Participant J)*. Others hinted at an attitude that sets them apart as highly principled practitioners *-You know you give your best and others follow your lead (Participant A)*. The motivation for adopting such practice appeared to be to improve things for students:

We do it for the kids (Participant M)

I think most people have the idea that they can actually contribute to the experiences the kids have (Participant D)

You want to add value to the learning experience in the classroom (Participant A)

My big thing is technology and integrating that. If I've seen that it's enhanced the learning experience and I've got feedback from the kids that it's enhanced the learning experience, why wouldn't you want everybody to be doing as much as they can on that line? (Participant B)

It was also understood that social and emotional development of students is an integral and necessary aspect of helping students succeed:

They love the fact that you are taking more concern with them than just what their biology or chemistry score is (Participant M)

I find kids...come to me...whether it's something they don't feel comfortable telling their parents, even lifestyle and health issues (Participant F).

I believe that you've also got to have a principle of service so that you can go out there [community] and assist the boys to do an activity which is completely different from what they are experiencing here [at school] (Participant O)

However, this commitment to learning was not a totally selfless task as participants admitted to gaining a sense of personal satisfaction through such principled actions. When asked specifically why participants engaged in teacher leadership activities, participants simply made comments such as:

Well I like doing it actually (Participant N).

There's a lot of satisfaction in it (Participant O).

Such comments reflect an 'enlightened self' interest, as the ultimate reward was the improvement of educational practice and student outcomes. *The reward for me is in seeing those girls do really, really well in something that I helped them with that I'm really passionate about (Participant E).* Moreover, this teacher leadership was underpinned by a commitment to service, as *"They [students] don't work for us we work with them" (Participant N).*

This is the principled action previously identified in the literature (Crowther et al., 2002; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001 & Lambert, 2003). In describing their teacher leadership behaviours, participants, in this research study, were "convey[ing] convictions about a better world": "striving for authenticity in their teaching, learning and assessment practices", "facilitating communities of learning through organisation-wide processes", and "confronting barriers in the school culture and structures"; all important elements identified by Crowther and his colleagues in their "teacher as leaders framework" (p. 4). For the participants in this research study, teacher leadership can be seen as

a moral obligation (Hipp, 2004) by individuals contributing to an image of teachers as professionals who make a difference (Crowther et al., 2002).

In respect to principled action, this assertion is of interest given that the modernisation of schools and schooling has produced a new climate in which teachers work. Teachers now experience increased hours, class sizes and administrative tasks, greater accountability and more complex mechanisms for reporting teacher and student outcomes (Fitzgerald, Youngs, & Grootenboer, 2003). In this new climate, there is evidence that “[teacher] leadership that is about organisations, structures, accountability and delivering efficiency and effectiveness, is no more than another form of managerialism” (Fitzgerald & Gunter, 2006, p. 46). However, as this study has revealed, teacher leadership is not simply about achieving the managerialist agenda of convenience and efficiency, but has a moral purpose in respect to improving educational practice and student outcomes, as well as providing genuine satisfaction for teacher leaders. Here, teacher leadership involves principled action in support of learning; “the act of influencing and working with others in collaborative and supportive environments...[to] actively lead(ing) learning in productive and pedagogic ways” (p. 46).

6.5 Assertion 4: There is untapped potential for teacher leaders to act as change agents in school revitalisation

This assertion emerged following a third-order interpretation of the data and extends the theme identified in Chapter 5: that teacher leaders feel positive about their work. The findings of this research study suggest that there is untapped potential for teacher leaders within Anglican schools in South-East Queensland to act as change agents in school revitalisation. In 1996, Katzenmeyer and Moller in their seminal publication, *Awakening the sleeping*

giant: leadership development for teachers, claimed that teachers had the potential to exercise new and dynamic leadership in schools, thereby enhancing the possibility of school reform. Since then, researchers have offered a number of case studies that demonstrate the contribution that teacher leaders can make to school revitalisation (Crowther et al., 2002). Within these case studies, teachers “displayed conviction, courage, reasonableness, professional knowledge and a wide range of persuasive and interactive skills” (p. 10). In view of this argument in the literature, the findings of this research study suggest that teacher leaders in these Anglican schools in South-East Queensland are potentially able to make a significant contributions to school revitalisation.

The participants, in this research study, demonstrated high level commitment to their work. This research study monitoring participants for up to 14 hours a day, with an average of 11 hours, provided real insight into the life of the participants. As mentioned in Chapter 5, the teacher leaders in this research study worked long hours that extend beyond the Anglican enterprise bargaining agreement which states that teachers’ work is restricted to an annual quantum of 1230 hours. It is worth noting that these teacher leaders were not coerced to work as they did. They were generally self motivated and very happy to do what they did. Moreover, they were not simply engaged in meaningless activities. Rather, these teacher leaders seem to know what they hope to accomplish and how to go about it (Rinn, 2003).

Thus, this research study demonstrates the potential for teacher leaders to enhance the educational experience of students, and act as change agents in significantly reforming education. In short, teacher leaders are capable of “promoting change, improving practice and student learning outcomes and contributing to knowledge construction, which in turn enhances the status of teachers by formalising the knowledge base of their profession” (Sachs, 2003, p. 153).

The participants in this study revealed some of this potential through the variety of their daily activities, their commitment and dedication to working beyond their contact with students and their obvious passion for what they did. By the end of the first and second-order data interpretation, it was clear that teacher leaders were generally very positive about their work with students and colleagues. This is a little surprising given that teaching is described in the literature as “intensive personal interactions, often in crowded conditions, with large numbers of pupils who are frequently energetic, spontaneous, immature and preoccupied with their own interests” (Nias, 1996, p. 296). However, despite working in “emotional situations” (Jarzabkowski, 2000, p. 31), participants in this research study recorded comments such as “*You wouldn’t do it if you didn’t love it, would you?*” (Participant F) and “*I wouldn’t give it up for quids*” (Participant K). For these participants “teacher leadership is an exhilarating endeavour” (Crowther, 2002, p. 9).

The flow⁸ phenomenon helps to give meaning to such comments that suggest the participants are fully focused on the task, stimulated by the challenge, receiving immediate positive feedback from the students, and feeling very good about what they are doing. They are ‘in the zone’, almost “carried away by an outside force, moving effortlessly with a current of energy, at the moment of highest enjoyment” (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003, p. 39). In short, they are experiencing flow and perhaps one participant’s statement best summarises this situation:

⁸ ‘Flow’ refers to the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990)

Isn't that the essence of teaching? I mean Andy Thomas⁹ has gone into space because it's the ultimate of his profession and they're constantly seeking to go further and further and further. But isn't that the point of our profession, that we seek to give those experiences to more and more kids as they become available? So it's constantly seeking to push the limits of our own profession. We're not astronauts, we're teachers and that's the way we do it. It is sheer enjoyment (Participant C).

Such comments are reassuring for those advocating teacher leadership as the participants display the “energy, confidence and experience” (Crowther et. al, 2002, p. 11) required of teacher leaders. However, the literature warns that such potential for teacher leadership may not be realised if there are less than supportive organisational environments; “our research shows that teacher leadership occurs most readily in supportive organisational environments. But environments that support and nurture teacher leadership are not endemic to many schools” (p. 11). Within this research study, participants bemoaned the lack of time to operate as teacher leaders. They also highlighted workload and some practical inhibitors such as resource and staff access, inappropriate professional development and lack of real understanding from administration. In addition, there were ‘hints’ that these Anglican schools were struggling to make the transition from old bureaucratic structures and hierarchical leadership to a new adhocracy characterised by horizontal power relationships and fluid, participative roles and structures. Thus, despite the positive support for teacher leadership identified in this research study, it is reasonable to assert there remains untapped potential for teacher leadership in Anglican schools in South-East Queensland.

⁹ In May 1996, Andy Thomas became the first Australian Astronaut to travel into space.

6.6 Assertion 5: Collegial relationships, the provision of time, relevant professional development and administrative support enable teacher leadership

This assertion emerged following a third-order interpretation of the data and extends across the two themes identified in Chapter 5: supportive collegial relationships enable teacher leadership, and limited time, irrelevant professional development and lack of administrative support inhibit teacher leadership. Moreover, the research findings remind us that such enabling conditions are influenced by political, social and organisational circumstances, and highlight the role played by school administration in determining these circumstances.

Collegial relationships

In line with claims in the literature (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001), participants in this research study highlighted the importance of teacher leaders maintaining effective collegial relationships while assuming leadership roles. Here, collegial relationships are seen to be critical to building a professional community of leaders within the school:

Our ability to establish relationships: whether it's with our students or whether it's the banter around the staffroom, but the relationships I think are so important, and I think if you have got an open relationship then you are able to say to someone, 'why don't you try this' or 'do you think this might help your teaching practice further?', without intimidating them or them seeing it as you coming down on them. I think that is so important to be seen more as the colleague rather than as a head of faculty (Participant D).

Here, the data also confirmed that "Once a teacher has a passion for a new idea, the concern about peers' opinions is balanced with the possibilities of

connecting with like-minded colleagues who want to make a difference with students” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 80). As one participant explained:

Teachers will find the person they really see as the leader, and that’s the person who makes themselves available regardless of the hierarchy, regardless of anything else (Participant E).

Collegial relationships, however, can be tested at times (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). These teacher leaders were aware that their roles may cause some friction, but they also appreciated that the benefits of enhanced student outcomes and greater collegial sharing far outweigh any potential problems:

I think that teacher leaders see that they can contribute to other teachers as well as students. There comes a point where you have people who perhaps look beyond the classroom and see that they can actually impact upon what is happening...There is that element where you also aim to inspire at the teacher level, and I think that starts to differentiate and create leadership (Participant B).

Time

The literature highlights the pressure of time by suggesting that timetable constraints often make it difficult for teacher leaders to find adequate opportunity during regular school hours to take on the extra leadership tasks. Time to plan together, write curriculum together, talk to each other generally about teaching and work on problems or new initiatives in the school, are seen as essential for teacher leadership to be most effective (Beachum & Dentith, 2004). This lack of time was echoed by the participants who suggested that:

It's rare that time is put aside for faculty staff, and when it is there's this problem of people being in a number of different faculties (Participant D).

There are times when I feel very much like a thin spread of margarine over a very large piece of bread, so to speak (Participant G).

Moreover, due to time restraints, participants were forced to prioritise and compromise their teacher leadership:

Time. You certainly need time. Time is the biggest enemy that we have. It makes you look at priorities. In terms of priorities, when you have priorities, some things have got to miss out that you really want to get to. I feel guilty about that but it's always the way. The only way it can work is if you prioritise (Participant O).

Clearly, the demand for time for teacher leadership creates a strain on the traditional organisation of school operations. New leadership behaviours and new learning require a time commitment (Rinn, 2003). Without this commitment, actions that are rooted in the traditional school context tend to dominate under the pressure of time. The participants' comments confirmed the researcher's perception that time required for informal teacher leadership activities was not being acknowledged or allocated by the administrations of the schools. This made some participants skeptical about their teacher leadership:

If you want to assume leadership, you are taking more work on, and then when you are doing more work, you're always struggling with the time factor. It comes back to you having less time. What you would spend x amount of time on before, that's now x minus whatever, so I

think it could have a negative effect on the main part of your work if you assume more work (Participant E).

Professional development

Within this research study, participants were clearly of a mind that professional development is an important aspect of teacher leadership development. This finding is in accord with claims in the literature (Crowther et al., 2002) that schools that are supportive of teacher leadership encourage teachers to access a range of professional development activities. Consequently, it is argued that classroom teachers require suitable training to become effective teacher leaders. However, within this research study, there was also a great deal of frustration expressed about the type of professional development being undertaken in the schools. It appears that imposed formal, 'one-size fits all' professional development that does not meet the needs of the participants is regarded as irrelevant and a frustrating waste of time for the participants:

While administration has certain needs to meet in terms of the legal field, why has that become our problem and our time that is to be used, when we still have to go and find that time somewhere else to do what we need to do to deliver in the classroom?(Participant C).

However, these teacher leaders were keen to have professional development time allocated to getting together with their colleagues for curriculum planning. Moreover, they highlighted the value of informal professional development that was largely instigated by the teachers themselves: *Where resources are limited you support and rely on each other as colleagues (Participant J)*. This appreciation of informal and collegial professional development is supported in the literature that argued: "Teacher leaders are invariably connected in a multitude of ways with the professional

development of others. By becoming staff developers, coaches, and mentors and by offering technical assistance, teacher leaders share their knowledge with their peers” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 38).

Administrative support

Finally, this research study highlights the importance of practical administrative support for teacher leadership. The participants in this research study identified issues in respect to the lack of support staff (eg teacher aides) and access to resources. In addition, there were concerns regarding poor communication and a feeling that the school’s administration “had lost touch” (Participant C). To address such issues, Crowther and his colleagues (2002) offer suggestions as to how the principal might provide such administrative support. Firstly, to nurture teacher leadership, principals need to be unambiguous about their strategic intent. Secondly, principals need to be active listeners and encourage teachers to generate ideas and follow them through to implementation. Thirdly, empowering teachers requires principals to step back from their own leadership roles and encourage teacher colleagues to step forward. Fourthly, principals are also encouraged to provide opportunities for teachers to find solutions to difficult situations. Finally, it is suggested principals promote teacher leadership by building on achievements to create a culture of success.

Summary

As outlined in the three step iterative process in section 4.6, the third-order interpretation of the research findings has enabled the researcher to generate a number of assertions in response to the research question and sub-questions. In line with the third-order interpretation of the data, these assertions are informed by theoretical developments in educational change, professionalism in education, educational leadership and teacher leadership.

Overall, the findings of the research study confirm that participants in this research study struggled to conceptualise teacher leadership in terms of the broad understanding of teacher leadership that includes not only formal, out-of-class teacher leadership but also informal, in-class teacher leadership. The findings also highlighted the complexity of teacher leadership as participants identified a host of teacher leadership activities that involved interaction with colleagues, students and parents. Further, this research study revealed that participants engaged in principled action were primarily motivated by a concern to improve educational practice and student outcomes. Here, it was also noted that the participants in this research study had the energy, confidence and expertise to engage in school revitalisation. Finally, it was concluded that collegial relationships, professional development opportunities and the provision of time enable teacher leadership.

To widen this discussion, the researcher applied the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism (Chapter 3) to the research findings. This additional step was inspired by the work of Charon (2001) who has applied the symbolic interactionist perspective to a variety of human experiences. As Charon explains, symbolic interactionism:

...is a refreshing view, for it explains human action in a way that most perspectives miss. The perspective describes everyday situations as well as complex social problems...It has been applied to understanding society, education, and communication. It serves an important guide to all of us seeking to understanding ourselves and others, and helps explain how freedom is possible and society is necessary (p. 227).

Following this application of this theoretical perspective, the researcher identified an additional assertion.

6.7 Assertion 6: There is a need for a role-making process to support teacher leadership

In applying symbolic interactionism to the findings of this research study, the researcher applied the “root images” of symbolic interactionism advanced in Blumer’s (1998) seminal work. These root images focus on the symbolic nature of reality, the social sources of humanness, society as symbolic interaction, and the constructive, emergent nature of human conduct. Following the application of these root images, the researcher considered the role-making process advanced by contemporary symbolic interactionists such as Stryker (2002).

The first root image of symbolic interactionism, the symbolic nature of reality, assumes that humans use symbols, such as words, to communicate and understand their environment through interaction with others and themselves (Charon, 2004). From a symbolic interactionist perspective, the lack of a shared symbolic language will result in competing role expectations that, in turn, can lead to “role conflict” where there are “contradictory expectations that attach themselves to some position in a social relationship” (p. 73). This understanding of role conflict was also identified by participants in this research study: *Suddenly there’s a whole lot of other stuff that came with the role that you weren’t told about, and you’re now trying to squash lesson planning in around all this other stuff (Participant C)*. Whilst the symbolic interactionist perspective sees some role conflict as normal in a complex social structure (eg. a school), the intensity of the role conflict will, however, determine the possibility of its resolution (Stryker, 2002). Consequently, we should be concerned when participants in this research study identified that they and their principals held conflicting views about teacher leadership: *Well they’ve got their own agendas (Participant A); I think they lose touch with the reality of the classroom with what they expect (Participant C)*. We

should also be concerned that the withdrawal by some participants from formal teacher leadership is one way to avoid such role conflict: *I will never take one of those positions, because I don't think what you get in return is acceptable* (Participant C). Alternatively, others have found ways to isolate some of the conflicting expectations in time or place: *I am a believer in having a life outside of school. I have proven to myself this year that it makes me a better teacher for it* (Participant A). Such comments highlight the need for principals and teacher leaders to engage in further dialogue, work together in order to understand the role of teacher leaders, and in the course of this process come to a shared symbolic language.

The second root image of symbolic interactionism highlights the social sources of humanness by linking humanness with “taking the role of the other” (Charon, 2004, p. 115) and “mind action” (p. 94). This symbolic interactionist perspective posits that humanness presupposes a complex relationship between the self, society, symbols and mind. This relationship enhances humanness by enabling the self to take the role of the other, and engaging mind action in order to come to appreciate the other’s point of view. However, such activities presuppose a shared symbolic language. Within this research study, participants provided examples of this active process of role taking. For example, some participants described their teacher leadership activity as *learned behaviour from the environment that you’ve been raised in* (Participant J) and professional development as *learning from role models that you know* (Participant F). For these participants, it seems that “taking the role of the other is an active process where the actor is able to take control of his or her situation, allowing more intelligent control of one’s own actions in relation to others” (Charon, 2004, p. 115). However, the symbolic interactionist perspective warns us that without a shared symbolic language, these activities of taking the role of the other and mind action may be less than productive.

The third root image frames society as symbolic interaction involving “individuals interacting over time; acting with one another in mind; adjusting their acts to one another as they go along; symbolically communicating and interpreting one another’s acts” (Charon, 2004, p. 160). In the short term, this cooperative symbolic interaction involves individuals engaging in a series of “social acts” (Hewitt, 2003, p. 54) in an attempt to cooperatively solve problems, despite their individual goals or interests. However, over time, this cooperative symbolic interaction creates a societal culture or the “taken-for-granted and problematic web of significance and meaning that human beings produce and act on when they do things together” (Denzin, 1992, p. 73). During this research study, participants spoke of *mentoring* (Participant G), *facilitating* (Participant F), *energising* (Participant I), *guiding* (Participant H), *supporting* (Participant L), *helping* (Participant N) and leading (Participant D) their colleagues. While their stories reflect the symbolic interactionist view of society as symbolic interaction, they seem to represent individual social acts of teacher leadership, rather than behaviour based on a whole-school consensus. This symbolic interactionist interpretation points to the further need to affirm individual social acts of teacher leadership and provide support for developing a whole-school consensus in respect to this phenomenon. Again, such processes would require a shared symbolic language.

The fourth root image describes constructive, emergent nature of human conduct. Here, symbolic interactionists pragmatically view humans as actively engaged in defining and manipulating their environment (Stryker, 2002). This perspective suggests that action relies on the individual’s decision-making at that point in time. Here, decision-making is in accord with how the individual defines the situation, and “defining a situation involves a process of naming others and naming oneself... the former leads directly to the concept of role” (Stryker, 2002, p. 57). This understanding of the constructive, emergent nature of human conduct is reflected in the data collected during this research study. As proactive teacher leaders: *We professionally seek each other’s advice...we help each other when we can*

(Participant E); I get the students to critique my teaching (Participant B). However, there were also times when their definition of the situation resulted in a more reactive approach: *Sometimes you have to deliver things in a particular way because you are restricted by time (Participant C); When I am really busy, I take time from my family rather than take it from my teaching (Participant D); You set priorities, and some things have to miss out that you really want to get to (Participant O).* Such comments illustrate the conflict and tension surrounding the work of teacher leaders in this study, and how the role is perceived by participants. These findings suggest the need for further support for proactive teacher leadership by providing opportunities for these teacher leaders to define and manipulate their environment. Yet again, these recommendations presuppose a shared symbolic language.

This interpretation reinforces the need for developing a shared symbolic language that enables social communication and social action in respect to the phenomenon of teacher leadership. “Each individual learns how to act in society through symbols and thus becomes part of society through symbols” (Charon, 2004, p. 62). A shared symbolic language would bring clarity to the conceptualisation of teacher leadership in these schools. Moreover, from a pragmatic viewpoint, a shared symbolic language would enable communication and cooperation, and enhance ‘humanness’ by taking the role of the other and engaging in mind action. In short, a shared symbolic language would support the transition to a new adhocracy characterised by horizontal power relationships and fluid, participative roles and structures.

Symbolic interactionism offers a role-making process that clarifies role expectations and, in the course of this activity, develops a shared symbolic language. In short, this role-making process is a cognitive process (Figure, 3.2) that requires a reciprocal relationship between “society”, “self” and “interaction” (Stryker, 2002, p. 80). Role identity is constructed as a consequence of participation in processes of interaction and reflection. Here,

there is interaction with “reference groups” of significant others as well as opportunities to become familiar with the “generalized other” (Charon, 2004, p. 76) representing society’s rules and perspectives. In addition, self-reflection or “mind action” (p. 103) enables the participant to make choices in respect to taking the role of the other, in this case the role of the teacher leader. Within a symbolic interactionist perspective, this role-making process is recommended because it supports the definition and redefinition of the self within a role (eg. teacher leader). Moreover, it serves to develop a shared symbolic language and symbolic communication in support of teacher leadership. It also affirms individual social acts within a role, provides support for developing a cultural consensus in respect to this role, and generally encourages proactivity by clarifying role expectations and reducing role conflict. Thus, symbolic interactionism offers a role-making process as a way of clarifying role development and support for teacher leadership.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter follows a third-order interpretation of the research findings. This final interpretation was designed to identify the theoretical significance of these findings, and was informed by theoretical developments in educational change, professionalism in education, educational leadership and teacher leadership. Following this interpretation, five initial assertions were identified:

- Assertion 1: The broad understanding of teacher leadership is unrecognised in the field of education;
- Assertion 2: Teacher leadership is a complex phenomenon;
- Assertion 3: Teacher leadership is principled action in support of learning;
- Assertion 4: There is untapped potential for teacher leaders to act as change agents in school revitalisation; and

Assertion 5: Collegial relationships, the provision of time, relevant professional development and administrative support enable teacher leadership.

This third-order interpretation was extended as the researcher applied the root images of symbolic interactionism. Consequently, a sixth assertion was identified:

Assertion 6: There is a need for a role-making process to support teacher leadership.

With these assertions in mind, the final chapter of this thesis presents a review and synthesis of this research study, and concludes by offering a number of recommendations for consideration by the Anglican Schools Commission, principals and their communities and aspiring teacher leaders.

Chapter 7 Review and Conclusions

7.1 The Research Problem and Purpose

The impetus for this study was a pragmatic concern for teacher leadership in Anglican schools. As a principal in a South-East Queensland Anglican school, the researcher has long been fascinated by the fact that some teachers naturally assume a leadership role amongst their peers through their regular classroom teaching, while others, allocated positions of responsibility, or formal, out-of-class roles, may not always be as effective in their leadership. Thus, the researcher came to this study intrigued the phenomenon of teacher leadership within Anglican schools in South-East Queensland. An initial exploration of the context of Anglican education in South-East Queensland confirmed that both nationally and within the Anglican system, hierarchical understandings of school leadership were being challenged amidst a growing expectation of teacher leadership. Despite this expectation of teacher leadership, there was little in respect to formal policy and resource support for teacher leadership within South-East Queensland Anglican schools.

An initial review of the literature also revealed an interest in the phenomenon of teacher leadership. Here, it is generally accepted that there are significant challenges confronting schools as they attempt to adequately prepare students for the twenty-first Century (Bottery, 2004). New times call for a new measure of leadership. "Thus a new paradigm of the teaching profession is needed, one that recognises both the capacity of the profession to provide desperately needed school revitalisation, and the striking potential of teachers to provide new forms of leadership in schools and communities" (Crowther et al., 2002, p. 3). However, despite this scholarly interest in the phenomenon of teacher leadership, a review of prior empirical research

identified a narrow focus on formal, administrative teacher leadership roles, and showed little concern for informal, in-class teacher leadership.

Recognising the limits of both theory and practice in respect to the phenomenon of teacher leadership, the purpose of this study was described in terms of gaining a more informed and sophisticated understanding of teacher leadership in South-East Queensland Anglican schools. Teacher leadership from the perspective of classroom teachers was of particular interest. Such an understanding would not only contribute to development of policy and practice in Anglican schools across South-East Queensland, but also contribute to theoretical developments in the field of education.

7.2 The Research Question

The question used to guide this research study arose from a comprehensive literature review with respect to educational change, professionalism in education, and educational leadership. This literature review revealed that significant socio-economic change in recent decades has brought about corresponding educational change (Fullan, 1998; Lieberman, 2005; Miles, 1998). Within this state of flux and transformation, there has been the call for greater professionalism in education (O'Donnell, 2001; Sachs, 2003) combined with a new paradigm of educational leadership (Leithwood et al. 1999; Crowther et al., 2002). Moreover, there has been a new interest in distributing leadership beyond the formal role of the principal and into the hands of teacher leaders (Harris, 2004a; Muijs & Harris, 2003; York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

However, a further review of the literature highlighted the lack of a clear conceptualisation of teacher leadership. Many theorists writing on teacher leadership (Smylie, 1997; Fullan, 1998; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Cranston, 2000) have documented their formal roles as “department heads, leading or

senior teachers, school union representatives, school council members, year level coordinators, and/or members of a range of school-related committees” (Youitt, 2004, p. 36). Meanwhile, less is known about the informal, in-class teacher leader (Rinn, 2003) whose role is implied rather than described within the literature on distributed leadership (Harris, 2004a). In short, while the literature contains “numerous detailed accounts of teachers’ leadership activity” (Harris, 2004a, p. 2), the voice of the classroom teacher in relation to teacher leadership remains silent. Thus, while teacher leadership is an emerging motif in the literature, it continues to be a complex phenomenon that is neither well understood nor consistently implemented in schools.

The challenge posed by this situation led the researcher to identify one major research question:

How do teachers, who are recognised as teacher leaders in South-East Queensland Anglican schools, conceptualise teacher leadership?

To facilitate finding answers to this major research question, the literature review also helped the researcher to identify a number of research sub-questions:

Behaviour of teacher leaders – What do they do?

Purpose of teacher leadership – Why do teachers strive for this?

Feelings of teacher leaders – How do they feel about what they do?

Support for teacher leaders – What do they need?

The first research sub-question seeks to address the lack of clarity surrounding the behaviour of teacher leaders. The second research sub-question seeks to understand the purpose behind the changing practice of

teacher leaders. The third research sub-question seeks to inform a lacuna in the literature regarding teachers' feelings, and the fourth research sub-question seeks to gain greater clarity regarding factors that enhance or inhibit teacher leadership.

7.3 The Theoretical Framework

Given the purpose of this research study, it was deemed appropriate to situate this study within a theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism (Charon, 2004, Stryker, 2002). Symbolic interactionism, as a perspective, can be applied to meaning-making and identity formation in educational institutions (Kinney, Brown Rosier & Harger, 2003). To this end, it relies on a series of "root images" (Blumer, 1998, p. 6): the symbolic nature of reality; the social sources of humanness; society as symbolic interaction; the constructive, emergent nature of human conduct; role-making and role taking processes. Collectively, these images provide a summary of a symbolic interactionist view of human society and conduct, as well as an understanding of role negotiation that is of particular interest to this research study. Further, symbolic interactionism, as a method, provides an interpretivist/constructivist persuasion within social research. It explores how people make sense of their world in a dynamic process of social interaction, and offers a pragmatic approach to social enquiry. Symbolic interactionism also focuses on "how people define their world and how that definition shapes their action" (Charon, 2001, p. 229).

7.4 The Design of the Study

Consistent with the symbolic interactionist theoretical framework, this research study involved two stages of research: an "exploration" stage and an "inspection" stage (Charon, 2001, p. 208). The exploration stage is designed to gain an understanding about 'what's going on around here', by describing in detail what is happening in the social situation and hence, by

becoming more acquainted with the situation under review. The inspection stage is the second step and involves “isolating important elements within the situation and describing the situation in relation to those elements” (Charon, 2001, p. 208).

The data collected during these two stages of exploration and inspection was analysed using in a three-step iterative process of data interpretation outlined by Neuman (2006). In short, the first-order interpretation involves learning about the research problem from the nuances and understanding of the participants. The second-order interpretation involved the researcher generating themes and exploring these further through the focus group interviews for further distillation and fine-tuning of the data. Finally, the third-order interpretation involved assigning general theoretical significance to the research findings.

The research methods employed, outlined in Table 4.4, include Experience Sampling Method and focus group interviews. The exploration stage gathered a broad range of data through the Experience Sampling Method. Here, participants provided the researcher with an insight into the daily work of teacher leaders, through instant descriptions of what they were doing; immediate feedback on why they were doing it and how they felt about what they were doing. The data collation identified teacher leadership activities, and a first-order interpretation raised key concepts and themes associated with this phenomenon. These concepts were then investigated in the inspection stage of the research study that involved focus group interviews. These interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed before a second-order interpretation identified more-refined themes in response to the research question and research sub-questions. A third-order interpretation enabled the researcher to make a series of assertions by assigning general theoretical significance to the research findings.

7.5 Research Question Answered

This research study investigated the issue of teacher leadership in South-East Queensland Anglican Schools in an attempt to develop a more informed and sophisticated understanding of this phenomenon. In particular, this research study sought to examine the conceptualisation from teacher leaders themselves, as previously the voice of teachers in the literature had remained silent. Consequently, this research study addressed the following research question:

How do teachers, who are recognised as teacher leaders in South-East Queensland Anglican schools, conceptualise teacher leadership?

Within this research study, a two-stage research design and a three-step iterative process of interpretation resulted in a 'rich picture' of teacher leadership in Anglican schools in South-East Queensland.

First, this research study found that despite being recognised as teacher leaders within their schools, the participants in the research study struggled to picture themselves in this role. Whilst the literature (Childs-Bowen, et al., 2004; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Muijs & Harris, 2007) suggests a number of explanations for this reticence in respect to teacher leadership, the findings of this research study point to deeper structural issues with regard to the school as organisation. Comments made by participants suggest that Anglican schools in South-East Queensland have yet to make the transition from old bureaucratic structures and hierarchical leadership, to a new adhocracy characterised by horizontal power relationships and fluid, participative roles and structures. Consequently, it follows that teacher leadership is narrowly understood in terms of formal, out-of-class teacher leadership; even the participants in this research study do not see

themselves as leaders. In contrast, the literature offers a broad definition of teacher leadership in terms of both formal, out-of-class teacher leadership and informal, in-class teacher leadership (Rinn, 2003). Here, it is argued that teacher leadership is better served, and will become more recognised, by appreciating the interdependent nature of formal and informal leadership roles. This interpretation of research findings leads to the identification of the first assertion.

ASSERTION 1: The broad understanding of teacher leadership is unrecognised in the field of education.

Secondly, this research study found that teacher leadership in South-East Queensland Anglican schools is a complex phenomenon that involves leading beyond the classroom and leading within collegial teams. Here, participants identified a host of leadership behaviours that were shared by both formal, out-of-class teacher leaders and informal, in-class teacher leaders. In addition, this research study found that a formal leadership position is not necessary to influence others, as these teacher leaders often assumed the lead within a collegial team even though they did not have a formal leadership role. This complex finding is in line with the wide-ranging definitions and descriptions of teacher leadership found within the literature (Crowther et al., 2002; Harris, 2004a, 2004b; Lambert, 2003; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). Moreover, this finding suggests that the participants in this research study would be open to the notion of “parallel leadership” (Crowther et al., 2002, p. 38), with teachers as leaders responsible for “pedagogical development”, and the principal (and other administrative role-holders) responsible for “strategic development” (p. 44). This interpretation of research findings lead to the identification of the second assertion.

ASSERTION 2: Teacher leadership is a complex phenomenon.

Thirdly, this research study found that teacher leaders were motivated by a desire to improve educational practice and student outcomes contributing to personal satisfaction. Here, participants demonstrated a deep sense of commitment to their work, their colleagues and their students and, consequently, they were taking on more than might be expected of them as classroom teachers. Many considered themselves to be part of a learning community and took responsibility for *get[ting] in and do[ing] what needs to be done* (Participant N). This moral purpose and principled action is identified in the literature as a characteristic of teacher leadership (Crowther et al., 2002; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Lambert, 2003). At a time when teachers are now facing increased demands of longer hours, larger classes, more administrative tasks, greater accountability and more complex reporting structures (Fitzgerald et al., 2003), it is reassuring that for the participants in this research study, teacher leadership has a moral purpose requiring principled action. This interpretation of research findings lead to the identification of the third assertion.

ASSERTION 3: Teacher leadership is principled action in support of learning.

Fourthly, this research study found that there was untapped potential for teacher leaders to act as change agents in school revitalisation. Since the mid-1990s, researchers have offered a number of case studies that demonstrate the contribution that teacher leaders can make to school revitalisation (Crowther et. al, 2002; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2003). However, it is argued that “energy, confidence and experience” (Crowther et. al, 2002, p. 11) are required of teacher leaders in the context of school revitalisation. Given this argument, it is interesting to note that this research study found that teacher leaders demonstrate a high level of commitment to their work, with most working long hours that extend beyond the Anglican enterprise bargaining agreement. It was also clear that these teacher leaders were generally very positive about their work, providing examples of what

Csikszentmihalyi (2003) describes as the phenomenon of “flow”: almost “carried away by an outside force, moving effortlessly with a current of energy, at the moment of highest enjoyment” (p. 39). Given these attributes, it seems that teacher leaders in South-East Queensland Anglican schools possess the “energy, confidence and experience” (Crowther et al., 2002, p. 11) in the context of school revitalisation. However, for the full potential of teacher leadership to be realised, both formal and informal teacher leadership would need to be recognised. This interpretation of research findings lead to the identification of the fourth assertion.

ASSERTION 4: There is untapped potential for teacher leaders to act as change agents in school revitalisation.

Fifthly, this research study found that collegial relationships, adequate time, relevant professional development and administrative support enable teacher leadership. In line with the literature (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001), participants in this research study highlighted the importance of teacher leaders maintaining effective collegial relationships with fellow teachers while assuming leadership roles. Moreover, these teacher leaders support claims in the literature that timetable constraints often make it difficult for teacher leaders to find adequate time during regular school hours to take on the extra leadership tasks (Beauchum & Dentith, 2004; Rinn, 2003). Again, in line with the literature (Crowther et al., 2002; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001), these teacher leaders were clearly of a mind that professional development is an important aspect of teacher leadership development. However, there was criticism of irrelevant professional development - informal, collegial professional development opportunities were preferred. Finally, this research study highlights the importance of practical administrative support for teacher leadership, and in line with the literature (Crowther et al., 2002) sees an important role for principals in nurturing teacher leadership through the provision of administrative support. This interpretation of research findings leads to the identification of the fifth assertion.

ASSERTION 5: Collegial relationships, the provision of time, relevant professional development and administrative support enable teacher leadership.

A sixth assertion emerged following the application of the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism.

ASSERTION 6: There is a need for a role-making process to support teacher leadership.

In applying symbolic interactionism to the findings of this research study, the researcher applied the “root images” of symbolic interactionism advanced in Blumer’s (1998) seminal work. These root images focus on the symbolic nature of reality, the social sources of humanness, society as symbolic interaction, and the constructive, emergent nature of human conduct. Following the application of these root images, the researcher considered the role-making process advanced by contemporary symbolic interactionism Stryker, (2002). Symbolic interactionism offers a role-making process that clarifies role expectations, and in the course of this activity, develops a shared symbolic language. The findings of this study suggest the absence of a shared symbolic language in respect to teacher leadership, has reduced the possibility of obtaining a clear understanding of the concept and created confusion surrounding the role. Consequently, there was evidence of “role conflict” where there are “contradictory expectations that attach themselves to some position in a social relationship” (Charon, 2004, p. 73). Hence, there is a definite need to establish deliberate role-making processes to clarify the role of teacher leader.

7.6 Recommendations following this study

This study has resulted in a more informed and sophisticated understanding of teacher leadership in South-East Queensland Anglican schools. Consequently, the researcher was able to gain insight into the activities, motives and feelings of teacher leaders. This research study presented a number of assertions in respect to teacher leadership in this system of schools. With these assertions in mind, the researcher is confidently able to make a number of recommendations in support of teacher leadership in South-East Queensland Anglican schools.

In South-East Queensland, there is a variety of Anglican schools¹⁰. Some are long-established 'high fee' schools with a rich tradition over 100 years, some are 'low fee' schools established within the last 15 years, and others fall somewhere on the continuum between these two extremes. Whilst South-East Queensland Anglican schools follow the same Ethos Statement¹¹, they are renowned for their unity through diversity. Despite differences in policy and practice across each school, the following recommendations triggered by this study, apply to the Anglican Schools Commission, all South-East Queensland Anglican schools and their principals, and to the aspirant teacher leaders in this system of schools.

7.6.1 Recommendations for the Anglican Schools Commission

RECOMMENDATION 1: Develop and promulgate a policy for teacher leadership in South-East Queensland Anglican schools.

¹⁰ Anglican schools in South-East Queensland are either: Diocesan-owned, separately incorporated, Anglican order-owned or jointly owned by the Anglican and Uniting Churches

¹¹ All Anglican schools in the Province of Queensland operate according to *An Ethos Statement for Anglican Schools in the Province of Queensland*.

This study found that whilst the conceptualising and implementing of teacher leadership is largely unrecognised in the field of education, there is untapped potential for teacher leadership within this system of schools. From a symbolic interactionist perspective, this lack of recognition is due to the absence of a shared symbolic language to describe teacher leadership. Since a shared symbolic language is a prerequisite for social communication and social action, it is likely that, without a shared conceptualisation, the potential for teacher leadership will remain untapped. The development and promulgation of a policy of teacher leadership represents an opportunity to develop a shared symbolic language around teacher leadership in South-East Queensland Anglican schools.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Review the Anglican Schools Industrial Agreement, and, in doing so, consider the recognition of both formal and informal teacher leadership.

The current Anglican Schools Industrial Agreement¹² recognises formal positional leaders through Positions of Added Responsibility (PAR), which attract a time allowance and additional remuneration according to the hierarchy of the position. To implement teacher leadership across South-East Queensland Anglican schools, there will be a need to review this agreement to recognise appropriately formal and informal teacher leaders. In this way, the Anglican system of schools will formally acknowledge the complexity of teacher leadership.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Develop and offer leadership development programmes to aspiring teacher leaders.

¹² The majority of South-East Queensland Anglican schools are signatories to a collective Industrial Enterprise Bargaining Agreement.

This research highlights the need for relevant professional development of teacher leaders. However, participants in this study expressed frustration about professional development that was not relevant to their work as teacher leaders, but had been administratively imposed to cover perceived legal requirements. In short, where professional development is established and relevant it can enhance teacher leadership, yet where deemed irrelevant, becomes an inhibiting factor. Consequently, it is recommended that the Anglican Schools Commission provide regular, relevant professional development for teacher leaders in Anglican schools.

7.6.2 Recommendations for principals and their school communities

RECOMMENDATION 4: Recognise and celebrate examples of both formal and informal teacher leadership in school revitalisation.

This research study confirmed that participants engaged in both formal, out-of-class, and informal, in-class, teacher leadership activities. This confirmed the complexity of teacher leadership. Whilst the participants in this study were generally positive about their experience of formal and informal teacher leadership, there was some negativity around the relationship between aspiring teacher leaders and lack of support from their school administration. It was felt that principals, particularly, did not really appreciate the daily workload of teacher leaders, and had little concept of informal teacher leadership activities. Contemporary leadership theories argue that school revitalisation will be better served if teacher leadership is broadly recognised and the interdependent nature of formal and informal teacher leadership roles is accepted.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Review the organisational support for teacher leadership within schools.

This study found that collegial relationships, adequate time, professional development and administrative support enabled teacher leadership. Consequently, it is recommended that these aspects of school life be reviewed with a view to nurturing teacher leadership. In short, it is necessary to ask if the way human, financial and physical resources are organised, encourage collegial effort, the provision of professional development and allow time for collaborative effort.

7.6.3 Recommendations for aspiring teacher leaders

RECOMMENDATION 6: Seek opportunities for teacher leadership as a way of expressing their commitment to their work, their colleagues and their students.

Participants in this study shared a deep sense of commitment to their work, their colleagues and their students. Whilst these teacher leaders faced increased demands of longer hours, larger classes, more administrative tasks, greater accountability and more complex reporting structures, their leadership activities reflected principled action in support of learning. In this way, participants as individuals are able to contribute to an image of teachers as professionals who make a difference (Crowther et al., 2002).

RECOMMENDATION 7: Develop teacher leadership capabilities to act as change agents in school revitalisation

The findings of this study suggest that teacher leaders are proactive in developing their leadership capabilities. The participants in this research study were able to identify what they wanted to accomplish and seemed to know how to go about it (Rinn, 2003). Teacher leaders are capable of “promoting change, [and] improving practice and student learning outcomes” (Sachs, 2003 p. 153). As such they possess potential to act as significant change agents in school revitalisation.

7.7 Limitations of this Research Study

This research study focused on the phenomenon of teacher leadership “to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved” (Merriam, 1998, p. 19). This study was limited to 16 participants from only three South-East Queensland Anglican schools. The narrow breadth of research could bring the integrity of the project into question, yet the limitation in sample size means that the findings of this research study are specific to the participants and their schools, and cannot claim to represent all South-East Queensland Anglican schools.

Further, this research study acknowledges the limitations of the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism (as outlined in Chapter 4). There is strong support in the literature for using symbolic interactionism as a perspective in research design and as a tool to understand social situations. However, the literature also cautions the researcher regarding the limitations of symbolic interactionism in terms of ill-defined concepts and its failure to focus critically on the affective domain and social structures (Charon, 2004; Stryker, 2002).

Beyond these conceptual concerns, critics also highlight methodological problems that reject scientific explanation and result in few testable

propositions (Ritzer, 1996). This research study makes no claims regarding proven hypotheses, empirical testing or objective knowledge, as it sits firmly within a constructivist epistemology. As a pragmatic constructivist study, the researcher is concerned about meaning-making from the perspective of the participants. Given that each participant generated the data on 35 occasions during one week, it is possible to find some variance in the content and quality of the recordings. The data also reflect perceptions of the participants, which translates to their reality rather than truth. However, given the number of participants and the data collection strategies employed in this research study, concern over bias is not significant. The concept of triangulation is important here, and in this study, data were collected from multiple participants, in different formats to assure its credibility. However, as an evaluative study, this research sought insight and understanding, and sufficient data were collected to generate a thick description of teacher leadership.

As the researcher generated the topic for this research study from a professional interest in teacher leadership, the self-interest of the researcher could be identified as a further limitation. However, the understanding of teacher leadership sought in this study from the perspective of classroom teachers, arose from the 'voices' of the participants themselves, and were independent of the researcher. Further, the participants were unknown to the researcher prior to the study and there was no previous professional relationship or accountability to the researcher, as the participants were employed by other schools. Accordingly, the risk of researcher bias was considered limited.

7.8 Recommendations for Future Research

The review of the literature highlighted the lack of a clear conceptualisation of teacher leadership. Because of the resulting confusion, there has been no direct prior research conducted into the conceptualisation of teacher leadership in South-East Queensland Anglican schools from the perspective of the teachers themselves. Although this study sought to assist in redressing the gap in the literature, there is a need for further research. Additional research would greatly complement the phenomenon of teacher leadership and therefore, future research studies in educational leadership should:

- Investigate the conceptualisation of teacher leadership amongst teachers in schools in other contexts.

As a bounded study, this research was limited in its scope. It studied the phenomenon of teacher leadership from the perspective of teachers within three South-East Queensland Anglican schools. It would be useful to replicate this study in other Anglican schools in South-East Queensland and beyond, as well as in Australian secondary schools in the public, Catholic and independent sectors.

- Investigate the relationship between the 'style' of principal leadership and the prevalence of teacher leadership in South-East Queensland Anglican schools.

This research study highlighted the importance of the relationship between principals and teachers leaders. The literature review revealed that teacher leadership was enhanced where principals and teachers worked closely together on improving their schools. This was most effective where principals empowered their teachers. The style of principal leadership provides an insight into their willingness to engage in distribution of leadership and

authority. Given the importance of this relationship, this area warrants further examination.

- Investigate the correlation of informal teacher leadership in a school and enhanced student outcomes.

This research study found that teachers engaged in teacher leadership were motivated to improve student outcomes. By assuming greater ownership and responsibility for their work and that of their colleagues, in-class teacher leaders gained confidence in their leadership and were able to motivate their students positively. An empirical investigation into the correlation between informal teacher leadership and enhanced student outcomes could add credence to teacher leadership through a quantitative study.

- Examine the place of emotions in teacher leadership.

The literature review identified the feelings of teachers regarding formal and informal teacher leadership as a lacuna in the literature. This research study revealed the difficulty teachers had in expressing their feelings about their leadership practices, and the researcher found inconsistencies in the way that teachers measured their own feelings. Given that teaching can be regarded as an emotionally-charged profession, the impact of emotion on teacher leadership requires further investigation.

7.9 Conclusion

This study arose from a pragmatic concern for teacher leadership in South-East Queensland Anglican schools. Noting national and systemic calls for teacher leadership as well as the paucity of prior research in this area, I

commenced a learning journey with the intention of developing a more informed and sophisticated understanding of this phenomenon.

In the course of this learning journey, I came to appreciate that emergent theories of teacher leadership call for the recognition of both formal, out-of-class and informal, in-class teacher leadership in the context of school revitalisation (Crowther et al., 2002). However, this research study revealed that teacher leadership in South-East Queensland Anglican schools was narrowly defined in terms of formal, out-of-class leadership. Consequently, despite being nominated as teacher leaders by their colleagues and the school administration, the teachers who participated in this research study did not see themselves as leaders. Here, teacher leadership was deemed the prerogative of teachers in formal, out-of-class leadership roles. At the same time, it was heartening to find that, in reality, these teachers demonstrate qualities of teacher leadership by engaging in principled action and leading collegial teams, even though they are classroom teachers without a formal leadership position. As the recommendations of this research study suggest, the development of teacher leadership in South-East Queensland Anglican schools requires support from the Anglican Schools Commission, school principals and the teachers themselves, by deliberately developing appropriate policy and practice. In so doing, individuals and groups should be mindful that:

Most change initiatives that end up going nowhere don't fail because they lack visions and noble intentions. They fail because people can't see the reality they face (Senge et al., 2005, p. 29).

Appendices

Appendix 1 Experience Sampling Form

Appendix 2 Information letter to participants

Appendix 3 Consent form

Appendix 4 Ethics approval

APPENDIX 1

Australian Catholic University Doctor of Education Research Teacher Leadership in South East Queensland Anglican Schools

EXPERIENCE SAMPLING FORM

Researcher – Mark Sly (0419 779 227)

Data Collection – Stage One Experience Sample Form (ESF)

Day/date:

Message Number:

Time message received:

Time ESF completed:

Your location:

Name: (optional).....

School:

What are you doing?

.....
.....
.....

How would you rate the challenge of the activity?

very low low average high very high

Why are you doing it?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Was this activity important to you?

not at all a bit average quite a lot very much

How are you feeling about what you are doing?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Try to rate your feelings on a scale of 1 to 10.

Where 1 = Terrible, I wish I was doing something else

10 = Fantastic, there is nothing I would rather be doing

Feelings Rating

APPENDIX 2

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne

Educational Leadership



Australian Catholic University Limited
ABN 15 050 192 660
Banyo Campus (McAuley)
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Qld 4014 Australia
PO Box 456 Virginia
Queensland 4014 Australia
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INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

COPY FOR PARTICIPANTS

Dear Participant

You are invited to participate in a Doctor of Education Research project being undertaken through Australian Catholic University.

Title of project: TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND ANGLICAN SCHOOLS

Name of staff supervisor: Dr GAYLE SPRY
Name of student researcher: MR MARK SLY
Name of programme: DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

The purpose of this study is to investigate in-class teacher leadership in South East Queensland Anglican schools. The researcher will gather data from 5 classroom-based teachers, who do not necessarily have a position of added responsibility, about their leadership, what motivates them and what supports or inhibits their leadership.

As a participant you will not be placed at any risk or discomfort during this research. You or your school will not be formally identified during the research or the written findings.

During the research, you will be sent a SMS text message five times a day for one week between the hours of 7.30am and 10.00pm on weekdays, and between 9.00am and 10.00pm on weekends. Upon receipt of each SMS message, you will be asked to complete a response sheet within 30 minutes. You will answer three questions: what are you doing? why are you doing it? and how are you feeling? Each response sheet will take a few minutes to complete. Following the analysis of this data by the researcher some focus group interviews will be held with the participants in each school. These focus group interviews will be audiotaped to assist the researcher in data analysis. These focus group interviews will be held at a time that is convenient to you and the other the participants that does not impact on your duties at school. It is anticipated that the data gathering process will be fully completed by the end of June 2005.

It is anticipated that you will gain a more sophisticated understanding of your own leadership as an in-class teacher

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00004G, 00112C, 00873F, 00885B



leader as a result of this study. You will probably gain a great deal of confidence in your own ability and your teaching will be significantly enhanced.

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Given that there is very little Australian research of this type identified in the literature, the knowledge base of in-class teacher leadership will be significantly enhanced following this research. The findings of this study will be published as a Doctor of Education thesis and therefore will more than likely become accessible to the academic community through the ACER Cunningham library of digital dissertations.

As a participant, you are free to refuse consent to become involved in this research at any time without justification, and may withdraw consent to continue at any stage during the study without giving a reason. While the researcher has been granted permission from the school for each participant's involvement in this study, there will be no repercussions for you as a participant from your school for withdrawal of consent to continue in this study.

The confidentiality of participants in this study is assured. Names will be removed from response sheets following analysis of data. Focus group interviews will see a gathering of participants from each school. You will therefore be known to each other. The audiotaped interviews will be stored in a locked cabinet in the Principal supervisor's office at the University, along with all the data. While the write up of this research will result in a Doctor of Education thesis, your anonymity will be assured. At no time will the identity of individuals or schools be made known through the writing of the thesis.

Any questions you have concerning the procedures of this study should be addressed to the research student and the supervisor as listed below:

Mark Sly (Research student) and Dr Gayle Spry (Supervisor)
Telephone number 07 36237301
School of Educational Leadership
McAuley Campus
Australian Catholic University
PO Box 456
Virginia QLD 4014.

Throughout the study, you will be provided with regular appropriate feedback as part of the study design.

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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 about the way you have been treated during this study, or if there is any query that the Supervisor and /or student researcher have not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee at the following address:

Chair, HREC
C/o Research Services
Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Campus
P.O.Box 456
Virginia QLD 4014
Tel: 07 36237294
Fax: 07 36237328

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you should sign both copies of the Consent Form, retain one for your records and return the other copy to the principal researcher:
Dr Gayle Spry
P.O.Box 456
Virginia QLD 4014

Thank you for considering involvement in this research study.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sly
EdD research student

CRICOS registered provider:
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APPENDIX 3

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne

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CONSENT FORM COPY FOR PARTICIPANT

Title of Project: TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND
ANGLICAN SCHOOLS

Name of staff supervisor: Dr GAYLE SPRY
Name of student researcher: MR MARK SLY
Name of programme: DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

I (the participant) have read and understood the information provided in the Letter to Participants. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realising that I can withdraw at any time. I agree to completing the response sheets within the appropriate time frame. I agree to participating in the focus groups within my school and agree to having these focus groups audiotaped. I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

Name of Participant:.....
(block letters)

Signature:..... Date:.....

Signature of supervisor:..... Date:.....

Signature of student researcher:..... Date:.....

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APPENDIX 4

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne



Human Research Ethics Committee

Committee Approval Form

Principal Investigator/Supervisor: Dr Gayle Spry Brisbane Campus
Co-Investigators: Brisbane Campus
Student Researcher: Mr Mark Sly Brisbane Campus

Ethics approval has been granted for the following project:
Teacher Leadership in South East Queensland Anglican Schools
for the period: 9th February 2005 - 30th June 2005
Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Register Number: Q2004.05-19

The following standard conditions as stipulated in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (1999)* apply:

- (i) that Principal Investigators / Supervisors provide, on the form supplied by the Human Research Ethics Committee, annual reports on matters such as:
 - security of records
 - compliance with approved consent procedures and documentation
 - compliance with special conditions, and
- (ii) that researchers report to the HREC immediately any matter that might affect the ethical acceptability of the protocol, such as:
 - proposed changes to the protocol
 - unforeseen circumstances or events
 - adverse effects on participants

The HREC will conduct an audit each year of all projects deemed to be of more than minimum risk. There will also be random audits of a sample of projects considered to be of minimum risk on all campuses each year.

Within one month of the conclusion of the project, researchers are required to complete a *Final Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer.

If the project continues for more than one year, researchers are required to complete an *Annual Progress Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer within one month of the anniversary date of the ethics approval.

Signed:

Date: 9 February 2005

(Research Services Officer, McAuley Campus)

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